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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2017-18 MEETING #7 Minutes

February 12, 2018, 3:00 p.m., Moccasin Flower Room

Members Present: Janet Ericksen (chair), Arne Kildegaard, Stacey Aronson, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, Tracey Anderson, Denise Odello, Jennifer Deane, Kellie Meehlhause, Mitchell Scanlan, Sarah Severson, and Stephanie Ferrian

Members Absent: Stephen Crabtree, Judy Korn, and Annika Nelson

Visitors: Rebecca Dean, Nancy Helsper, and Jeri Squier

In these minutes: General Education Program Assessment

Approval of Minutes from Meeting #6, January 22, 2018

Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

General Education Program Assessment

Ericksen explained that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will be coming to campus in fall 2019. They will expect us to have assessed not just our major programs but also our Gen Ed program. They will ask for results of a Gen Ed task force and where our assessment of Gen Ed is housed. Many have filled out the faculty survey on Gen Ed. That's part of this meeting's discussion. She introduced Rebecca Dean, associate professor of anthropology and faculty coordinator of Gen Ed.

Dean explained that there are two parts to academic assessment. The first is academic program assessment. The HLC thinks that program assessment at UMM is going very well. An interim report is due to them in two weeks, in which we will say we believe we are meeting criteria in that area of assessment.

The second part of academic assessment is General Education. Helsper has run a number of surveys asking incoming students and graduating seniors about the importance, goals, and student learning outcomes (SLOs) of the Gen Ed categories. For the VALUE Rubrics Project we were part of a Minnesota collaborative group working with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to establish rubrics for our SLOs. The resulting data was not very useful. We are working to have a direct assessment of student achievement in each of the Gen Ed categories before fall 2019. By the time of the HLC visit we can have a full report of some direct assessment of each of those categories. We have some ongoing direct assessment that was done in spring 2018 in the categories of Human Diversity (HDiv), Sci-without lab, Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA), Artistic Performance (ArtP), and Foreign Language (FL).

In order to facilitate data gathering, the task force focused on small subsets of goals within a Gen Ed category. They picked one thing in Sci-without lab that is nationally tested by a scientific survey used to look at science courses: scientific literacy. They picked some type of assignment/criteria/rubric to look at all classes within that Gen Ed. All Sci-without lab are using the same survey of scientific literacy.

Instead of trying to assess every class that has a Gen Ed designator, they are picking a few of the large courses where students are likely to pick up that particular Gen Ed. By using large introduction to science courses taught this semester, we are given large sample sizes. This will result in higher quality data than some of the VALUE rubric data, which was confusing. In doing it this way, we are comparing apples to apples. We are seeing the results in terms of student achievement. Ericksen added that the survey was sent out to those who taught the courses as well.

Dean noted that the specific Gen Eds surveyed were chosen before SLOs were defined. There was an 80% response rate on the survey. Essentially, we chose categories this semester based on whether the Gen Ed could be easily assessed for the purpose of the survey. We looked at catalog descriptions and any campus SLOs that used similar language to describe the Gen Ed, or seemed to clearly connect with some Gen Ed category and UMM's mission. Language was pulled into statements that could be SLOs that were sent out in the survey. Faculty were asked if they taught HDiv, not to conform to these expectations, but to use reverse engineering. They were asked to look at what they are teaching right now and tell us what to assess within the category. The course descriptions and SLOs can be compared by students.

Dean then presented the data results. One of the things that comes out of the process is that it would be helpful from an assessment perspective to define goals of Gen Ed classes. The Curriculum Committee would have to take that on. Other issues that came up during the discussion were the need for better definitions of Gen Eds so there is a clearer assessable outcome. Human Behavior, Social Processes, and Institutions (SS) is problematic in that it looks as though each of the disciplines in the Social Sciences Division wrote one sentence describing their discipline. Dean noted that it's not inherently a problem. It just makes it harder to make coherent arguments for the program overall. Global Village has four options but students can take any two. That also makes for a difficult assessment. Ericksen noted that we should not expect every student to get all of the SLOs. The Twin Cities campus is only assessing SLOs and not their Gen Ed program.

Ericksen noted that Intellectual Community (IC) is worth a lot of discussion at another meeting. It's about creating that intellectual community and showing what a collaborative classroom would be like. We could push that. It's what employers say they want most of perspective employees.

Ericksen noted that we need to figure out how to assess WLA. We have one WLA instructor who has collected WLA papers and could meet with people who teach the course. Deane suggested we assess fall semester rather than spring since the second semester would mostly be students who have more problems with writing. Ericksen agreed that it would be better if data had been collected from the beginning, but it wasn't done. Dean suggested that later this semester we could ask WLA instructors to collaborate on a shared rubric or assignment where we can have apples-to-apples comparisons across classes.

Ericksen thanked Dean for her work and presentation. Kildegaard asked if the spreadsheet that was presented could be shared with the Committee members. Dean agreed to share it after she has a chance to update the data and adjust the bar graphs.

Submitted by Darla Peterson