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Curriculum minutes 03/28/2019

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2018-19 MEETING #13 Minutes

March 28, 11:40 a.m., Moccasin Flower Room

Members Present: Janet Ericksen (chair), Stacey Aronson, Arne Kildegaard, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, Stephen Crabtree, Stephen Gross, Benjamin Narvaez, Denise Odello, Simon Franco, Christina Munoz, Julia Scovil, and Josh Westfield

Members Absent: Stephanie Ferrian, Annika Nelson, Kellie Meehlhause, and Judy Korn

Visitors: Brenda Boever, Nancy Helsper

In these minutes: Campus Student Learning Outcomes (CSLO) Discussion

Ericksen stated that Rebecca Dean was unable to attend, but the discussion about CSLOs would take place as scheduled. At the next meeting, the models will be discussed and will hopefully be ready for this committee to vote on them. Steve Gross will share a history of the Gen Ed program at the last meeting on April 25.

Following are the models for discussion:

CSLO Model 1

Scholar

- UMM graduates are Scholars who can address global and local problems through an interdisciplinary lens

Environmental Stewart

- UMM graduates are Environmental Stewards who apply a holistic understanding of the environment to protect and sustain the environment

Global Citizen

- UMM graduates are Global Citizens who communicate within and across cultures

Community Contributor

- UMM graduates are Community Contributors who engage in creating positive changes in their community

CSLO Model 2

Create

- UMM students will be able to create works of artistry and scholarship
- UMM students will be able to generate ideas to address global and local problems – both academic and applied – through an interdisciplinary and/or inter-cultural lens

Communicate

- UMM graduates will be able to communicate effectively within and across cultures, and within and across disciplinary boundaries

Appreciate

- UMM graduates will be able to evaluate and contextualize artistic and scholarly endeavors
- UMM graduates will be able to express the value in diverse perspectives and sustainable communities

Evaluate

- UMM graduates will be able to evaluate information from many sources and perspectives to reach wise judgements

Participate

- UMM graduates will be able to create positive change in their community
- UMM graduates will develop the skills for personal well-being and growth within a sustainable, diverse community

Our Current CSLOs

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World through:

- Core studies in the liberal arts: arts, histories, humanities, languages, mathematics, sciences, and social sciences
- In-depth study in a particular field; its schools of thought, advanced theories, language, and methods of inquiry
- Engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

2. Intellectual and Practical Skills, practiced extensively across students' college experiences, including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Creative thinking and artistic expression
- Written, multi-media, and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information and technology literacy
- Collaboration

3. An understanding of the Roles of Individuals in Society, through active involvement with diverse communities and challenges, including:

- Civic knowledge and engagement – local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Aesthetic/artistic engagement
- Environmental stewardship
- Ethical reasoning and actions

4. Capacity for Integrative Learning, including:

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies, and through co- and extra-curricular activities
- Application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and progressively more complex problems
- Skills for sustained learning and personal development

Ericksen explained that the models have come out of discussions on campus, forums, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee, and the Assessment Council. A subset was presented at the Assessment Institute at Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). They looked to see what other institutions, including our peer institutions, are doing and came up with these two models. This committee's feedback is now requested. Ericksen asked members to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each model.

Comments about CSLO Model 1:

Pros

- Brevity is more manageable.
- The mention of local problems in the first line is good. We could do more with that. It does distinguish us. (As long we don't confine our students by saying that everyone has to do it.)
- This model is mission-driven.

Cons

- This model is mission-driven only and lacks academic content.
- This is more extra-curricular than academic.
- Three or five points are more memorable. This one has four, and one will be forgotten.
- A significant con is that proclaiming that our students universally do these things isn't true because it's possible to never do any of these things and still graduate.
- Both models talk about an interdisciplinary lens as if that's the way everything will be done, when that hasn't been decided across the disciplines.
- The statement that our students *are* these thing is not true. What is true is that we prepare students to *do* these things.
- The community contributor bullet point is odd. It's not clear what "positive" means; it's incredibly equivocal; and engaging community doesn't always involve promoting change – it may mean promoting stability or tradition.
- The use of the word environment three times seems a little like overkill.

Suggestions

- The CSLOs require specific things that are pretty hard to accomplish. It would be better to focus on the rigor of our programs. It might be improved if we take the focus off interdisciplinary and focus on the rigor and liberal arts.
- There is a term "transdisciplinary" where a person takes ideas from several disciplines and uses a holistic approach to solving a problem. It would make us more distinctive than saying interdisciplinary.
- There are too many words. Go with the big concepts that will allow for change: They will be scholars, they will be stewards, and they will be citizens.

Comments about CSLO Model 2:

Pros

- There are five, which would be easy to remember.
- This set is less restrictive than the first model.
- This set is more process based and less outcome based.
- This set is more holistic than model 1 because it applies more to students.

Cons

- This model is mission driven only and lacks academic content.
- This model is not inspiring.
- The scholarship part seemed really small.
- Why all the "...ates? The "...ates" should be "...ors."
- These are less accessible than the current SLOs.
- The statement is not true that all our students will do these things.
- There are too many words. Strength comes in short, concise sentences.

Ericksen stated that no matter what model comes forward, we can find weaknesses. She asked the committee if they would recommend either of the models, or are the members confident a better model is out there upon which the committee and the community at-large can agree? Ng noted that when the Assessment Council came to her division meeting, the faculty put forward the current CSLOs in reference to these two models. In the current model, the first three items are assessable, and the fourth is not easily assessable. Our current CSLOs may be salvageable if we stick to just the number points and not worry about the bullet points. We cannot have the expectation that everyone will achieve each outcome in the same way.

It was determined that it was too early for the committee to vote on the models as well as any suggested alternatives. This is a good starting point. Ericksen stated that she will say that the committee is not yet ready to endorse either model.

After the meeting, Kildegaard shared the following alternative model with the committee:

Students will:

- 1. Demonstrate successful mastery of the methods and content of at least one field of inquiry or artistic expression. [i.e., major in something]**
- 2. Demonstrate foundational skills in writing, quantitative methods, artistic performance, and foreign language. [i.e., complete the skills courses]**
- 3. Demonstrate their preparedness for operating in the complex environmental, multi-cultural, international world that awaits them after college. [i.e., complete the Global Village requirement]**

The argument in favor of this stripped down approach is that:

- a) It is dead simple to assess
- b) It is actually true of all students who pass through UMM
- c) It imposes no new demands on the general education curriculum, which is a highly contested space

Anticipating a couple of arguments against this approach:

- a) It doesn't include all of the many and varied experiences of UMM students (SCI, HUM, SS, HIST, co-curricular, social development . . .)
- b) It is not very sexy sounding

With regard to objection (a): first, there's still room for tinkering; second, so what? If we over-deliver, that's great! And the things left out are a real bugger to assess.

With regard to objection (b): I think we should separate marketing entirely from what we're doing here. We have, collectively, zero marketing expertise. I don't know why we couldn't have our communications people work on a marketing piece -- one that would be held to a much lower standard when it comes to assessment. The HLC doesn't care about our promotional material that says "Fit in, Stand Out" or our campaign that says "In the Middle of Somewhere, In the Heart of Your Future" or our slogan from a few years back "A Renewable Sustainable Education." So let the communication folks come up with some promotional material with 4 jigsaw puzzle pieces labeled "Create" "Analyze" "Engage" "Achieve" ... or whatever. Things tied to the mission statement would be good. Let that be our aspirational and inspirational marketing message, rather than trying to get our CSLOs to do some impossible contortions to meet demands from all sides.

Submitted by Darla Peterson