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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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UMN MORRIS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2019-2020 Meeting #4 Minutes

October 24, 2019, 11:40 a.m. Prairie Lounge

Members Present: Janet Ericksen (Chair), Stacey Aronson, John Barber, Stephen Crabtree, Simón Franco, Stephen Gross, Arne Kildegaard, Julia Scovil, Jeri Squier, Josh Westfield

Members Absent: Adrienne Conley, Stephanie Ferrian, Ben Narvaez, Peh Ng, Denise Odello, Gwen Rudney

Others present: Sheri Breen, Rebecca Dean, Kiel Harell, and Matt Tollefson, Brad Miller

In these minutes: Study Abroad Grading Discussion, Music Program Review presentation

#1 Welcome and announcements

#2 Grading study abroad performance courses

Sheri Breen and Matt Tollefson joined the meeting for this discussion.

An A/F grading restriction for study abroad courses was part of our contract with the UMN Learning Abroad Center, to which we are no longer bound. The question to consider is if the A/F restriction should still apply to all study abroad courses or if it might be modified—or if study abroad courses, like other UMN Morris courses, should be allowed to run as student option or left for the instructor to determine the grading options. In particular, a question at the moment is whether or not the A/F scale is the best fit for performance and athletics study abroad courses, or if they could be S/N. Tollefson, Director of the Academic Center for Enrichment, has consulted with ACE staff; they support staying with A/F. This would keep us in alignment with how other schools grade, which is important for students who transfer, and would also give faculty more freedom to give a C versus N. We want to grow the programs, but S/N would not transfer to other entities. Breen, as faculty liaison for study abroad, encouraged flexibility, not just a universal policy. We offer other S/N courses on campus, including in both athletics and music, and that doesn't make these any less of a course. A/F is better choice, but there may be times when the S/N option is appropriate.

Squier reminded the committee that financial aid is involved, and study abroad is a student's choice. A/F gives the course more strength.

Other discussion included the fact that performance courses don't tend to have many students receiving less than an A, which can then look like the course suffers from grade inflation. Miller pointed out that the pass/fail approach really works well for performance courses. He tries to base such grading (for choir courses) on growth, preparation, and commitment.

Scovil expressed that she likes giving an option to the professor – they know best what the expectations could be. Kildegaard agreed. One of this year's study abroad course proposals is for a program that will actively recruit students from another institution. If the course were S/N, would credits transfer?

Ericksen drew a parallel with how we grade on campus. She suggested that if the program is offered for one credit or less, instructors could have the option of grading but must work with ACE office before a final determination is made, and the ACE office has the final say (in consultation with this committee and/or the VCAA/dean).

Harell shared that international student teaching is S/N. If a student from another school goes through our program and needs A/F, there is another course they register for. This might be an option for other study abroad courses as well.

Miller expressed that not going through the ACE office would be beneficial in some ways for his program. It adds another layer and more expense. He feels that even losing the credit would not keep students from going. ACE offers, however, the protection that all policies are followed and safety pieces are in place. Credit allows for financial aid to be applied.

Currently, study abroad courses are A/F, although exceptions are possible. With advice from ACE and Breen's role, the Curriculum Committee has to approve these anyway. Requiring A/F may put a burden on the professor to create a more academically rigorous trip. Once precedent is set, a similarly structured course could/should follow it.

Music 1360 – concert choir tour – S/N – already on the books. Is Miller's trip registering as a new course or using MUS 1360? Ericksen would rather have them be specific courses. Squier will remember to remove MUS 1360.

Proposal: study abroad courses' default grading is A/F, but exceptions are possible if agreed upon by ACE office and faculty coordinator (not just at instructor discretion). Being in line with "best practice" is beneficial to keep us consistent with other colleges.

Franco moved to create an administrative procedure that default is A/F, but exceptions can be made by the Curriculum Committee in consultation with ACE Office and Study Abroad Coordinator, Kildegaard seconded. Vote: 8-0-1

#3 Approval of Minutes

MOTION (Franco, Scovil) made to approve the minutes from Meeting #3 on October 10, 2019. VOTE: Motion passed 8-0-0.

#4 Academic Program Review: Music

Wes Flinn and Denise Odello were presenting a conference about the Music discipline curriculum and were unable to be present. Brad Miller attended to present on behalf of the discipline.

Strengths: Good understanding of place, new curriculum (2017) is less euro-centric. Old model is still being used at other colleges. Students are pushed to think about larger ideas, something often not reached until graduate school at other locations. New

curriculum has increased sense of cohort (sequence of courses) – students bonding with shared classes. Non-music majors are taking 2xxx, 3xxx courses for GenEd now that prerequisites have been removed. Faculty are strong in creative works and have received external recognition and awards. Jon Campbell has sought and received funding from outside sources for jazz program. Music major students have one-on-one contact with professors for 7 semesters (also available to non-majors). Recruiting efforts are strong, but unsupported directly (not officially part of faculty load). Faculty put on workshops which bring in over 750 high school musicians each year. They also interact with alumni – especially those teaching in local schools.

Challenges: Recruiting high-level students is intensely competitive. Private colleges offer scholarships and draw the best-prepared students, while in general, Morris students are not as well prepared for the major experience. They may not have had private lessons at all, for instance, and in general Morris students come with a large variety of preparedness. The program's foundational courses have helped greatly. Ensemble groups have trouble with rehearsals because of scheduling. If retention is increased by participation in large groups, making participation easier could help support that effort. Faculty are accommodating, but that doesn't help in the big picture.

Lesson instructors can be difficult to find; having mileage covered is key.

Miller was asked in the Music discipline is tracking retention with cohort model. He replied that they are only three years in, but could start doing that, which could be helpful for retention discussions. The current cohort has 13 students, both majors and minors. Last year the cohort was 24, although that group is now down to 15. Between 10-20 in each year is so far average. Franco cautioned that the percentages of retention will be skewed by the small n.

Faculty get along and have the best interest of students at heart. Instructors meet every other week and discuss student/program issues and progress. Graduating 10-12 vs. 3 has a huge impact on the program and for the students in it.

Another question: how do they incorporate in new transfer students or after first year? Miller replied that students can enter the program in their second year and still complete a degree in four years (total).

Discussion of the course conflict issue: ensemble practice time has changed over the years because of course conflicts. Could 4-7pm primarily be reserved for sports/ensemble/etc.? There would be challenges to doing so, but it is well worth further discussion. Franco commented that retention is supported in studies with extracurricular involvement, so making participation more accessible to students is important.

Committee members agreed in general that the recruiting efforts of Music faculty should be more visible in their evaluations and on campus, but how to do so will have to be pursued first within the Division of the Humanities.

#5 EDP and ICDP proposals: formation of review committee

Crabtree and Franco volunteered. Ericksen will ask Odello. Students will attempt to find another student to be on the review committee. Westfield will do if no other.

Only EDP/ICDP review committee will meet 11/14, not the full Curriculum Committee.

#6 Working groups: General Education

These subgroups can and should continue to meet as possible and work on proposals. Progress reports will be expected at the December meeting, and this work will be the focus of the spring semester meetings.

Meeting adjourned.