University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

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Curriculum Committee Minutes   Curriculum Committee

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UMN Morris Curriculum Committee

2019-2020 Meeting #8 Minutes
February 25, 2020, 9:00 a.m. Moccasin Flower Room

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

Members Absent: Adrienne Conley, Denise Odello, Miah McNiff, Ben Narvaez, Gwen Rudney

Others present: Rebecca Dean, Julie Eckerle, Brad Deane, KK Lamberty

In these minutes: GenEd proposals

#1 WLA GenEd proposal (presented by Brad Deane)
Aim: shared ownership of writing across campus, not so much just with English. English believes that for student writing really to improve, the entire campus community needs to get behind writing as a central concern.
Deane talked through background and general SEM-connected aims of the proposal. Faculty want students to get credit for what they've done and still do writing while they're here. Under this proposal, 10-20% of students would be exempt from first-year writing requirement, maybe 30% in future.

The second tier of a new writing requirement would then be required, taught by English and by "trained writing instructors" (training elsewhere, e.g., in grad school) across campus.

Eckerle noted the desire to separate the lingo, so that WRITING requirement won't be the same as Engl 1601.

Questions:
Franco: data on WLA being an impediment? And have you considered a 12-cr. requirement that includes senior seminars/capstones?
- No data ("no one has bothered" to collect data), but the AACRAO report cites WLA as a significant impediment
- Upper-level classes are still under discussion. As part of a writing-enhanced curriculum, teaching with writing would have to be designed by each discipline to figure out discipline's goals—pioneered by people on the UMN TC campus. Grant money from various institutions exists to help implement this kind of program.
Deane: Another option might be to put writing more firmly into first-year seminar course (if, for instance, we revised IC in a way that would allow doing so).

Ericksen explained that the lack of data on the role of WLA in prospective students' decision-making is not due to neglect, but to the difficulty of getting prospective students who don't choose Morris to identify why they did so. Attempts have been made. We need a better survey tool to find out why a student isn't coming. Right now, though, WLA is too similar to high school classes.

Eckerle: There's the general idea that 1601 is going to teach students to write well, and it should therefore predicate everything else. Structurally, that's not possible. Far better to have writing in multiple places.

R. Dean: For the WLA requirement, there are problems for students who've taken the class elsewhere, but is ACT score really a good indicator of writing proficiency? The proposal is a good idea, one that requires coordination, though, and who will run it, given our budget?
Response: We could begin to make this change before we hire someone.

Barber: What is the process timeline? Is the plan to start reform, then get try to secure grant(s), then hire a writing specialist? If so, are there problems with that regarding the authority/ideas of the person we might hire?

B. Deane: We want to press to make whatever immediate changes that we can, then work on next steps with timeline. Before we go farther, we would want to develop next stage.

Eckerle: The current proposal is really through step two of what we envision as three or four steps, and it's not entirely dependent upon a hire. Whenever we do hire, it might be better to have someone who is not located in a specific discipline to coordinate writing. Running the Writing Center and managing the writing program simply cannot be done well with a four-credit course release. We need to figure out what is do-able in terms of workload. Deane thinks we need a writing composition hire, not an English professor.

R. Dean: The situation, though, could be (is?) comparable to assessment oversight here. That is, we do not have a full-time professional assessment coordinator, like most campuses do. Can this writing reform go forward even without writing professional?

Eckerle: for next catalogue cycle, we want at minimum to change the name of Engl 1601, keeping WLA as the writing requirement (GenEd category) name. We would like to implement a two-part model right away. This requires a list of what a course would need to include (assigning writing and teaching writing are two different things, e.g., conferences required), and a list of courses that could carry the WLA GenEd designator. Staffing for oversight would, at minimum, require a 4-cr course release.

It was noted that we still can't carry dual GenEd designators on courses, which means that a lower level course that fulfilled a WLA requirement could not also fulfill another GenEd, which might reduce the interest from other disciplines in taking on teaching writing.

Ericksen asked, in sum what's possible for next year, and then what is possible for the next catalog? Partly that may depend on where we are with larger General Education program revisions, but English will move ahead with work on framing a proposal for changes to the next catalog, which is likely to include additional meetings with CC this spring.

EPiCC GenEd proposal (presented by KK Lamberty)
This proposal started with the question of what people think is important for students to know when they are finished with their UMN Morris degree. The challenge was to answer that question without "just a list." The proposal is well linked to CSLOs—the group chose just one to work with in this case. EPiCC aims (see proposal) to help students answer the following in relation to their General Education:
• Why am I choosing this option above other options?
• How does it impact the person I wish to become?
• What is the point of this journey and these waypoints?

The proposal fits within and maps neatly to the 4 -ates CSLO structure.

Flexibility is significant in this proposal. Lamberty walked the committee through the proposal pieces. She especially likes the "Create" category as an example of what might be possible with this program.

Ng: Could a double major in, for instance, CSci and French still stick with just those divisions—the French major could count a MathSci "create" class and vice-versa? Yes.
Ericksen: Why is "Create" just one course?
It's really important to be able to evaluate things in a wide variety of areas and important to be able to create in more than one area—they will do other creating in their major.

"Evaluate" is the most distributive requirement. Ng points out the problematic "three large divisions" phrasing; Lamberty explained that the distinction was intended not to exclude Education but to prevent Education from being overwhelmed trying to meet this requirement. They'd certainly be willing to include Education but did not want to without consulting with the division first, which they ran out of time to do for now—they're absolutely not opposed to including them.

Crabtree asked about implications for double majors. Lamberty explained that, as with "Create," each major is to be considered separately in terms of fulfilling requirement—a course cannot count for the given GER and towards the major for a given major.

"Participate," Lamberty explained, was the section that her group found this section most difficult to phrase, but the aims of the three categories are to express range and offer variety.
Crabtree question re: co-curriculars. Lamberty explained that in multiple ways, the proposal could include co-curriculars to *help* meet/strengthen a category, and this

proposal would help people talk about how co-curriculars would fit in around courses. This is, though, a GenEd *curriculum* proposal, at least for now.

Lamberty noted that the EPiCC program is clear, easily explained, and requires no new resources although would need some rethinking of how we assign GER categories.

The group addressed well all of the questions in the call for proposals (see slides).