

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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8-27-2020

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#### Recommended Citation

Curriculum Committee, "Curriculum minutes 08/27/2020" (2020). *Curriculum Committee Minutes*. 374. <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/curriculum/374>

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## **UMN Morris Curriculum Committee**

August 27, 2020, 11:40 a.m. Meeting #1

Zoom

Members Present: Janet Ericksen (Chair), Stacey Aronson, Barbara Burke, Jennifer Deane, Simón Franco, Nic McPhee, Marcus Muller, Peh Ng, Ben Narvaez, Michelle Page

Members Absent: Stephen Gross

Others present: Rebecca Dean, Jeri Squier, Robyn VanEps

### **In these minutes:**

#### #1 Welcome and announcements

Welcome to our first meeting of the 2020-2021 academic year. John Barber will be one of the student representatives and we hope for others to be assigned soon.

New catalog plan follows the other UMN campuses in moving to web-based information rather than a print or pdf catalog. The 2021-23 catalog, in other words, will be digital only, a move that has been coming for some time but was really pushed by Nancy Helsper's retirement.

Information in the printed catalog includes things outdated before the bound version even arrived, and the information is or now will be entirely available on campus webpages. McPhee asked if the cycle will still be in 2-year cycles. Ericksen confirmed that this will continue. This allows us and students to track more easily which version of a program they are completing.

Smaller changes: If a course is only changing when it is offered, Ericksen would like that to be handled in OTR without going through Curriculum Committee. Page asked if other "minor" changes would be handled the same way. Ericksen said that already some minor changes, those deemed editorial, are handled in OTR and that practice would continue. Franco asked if the change would violate the constitution charge to the committee. Ericksen does not believe so and will review the charge when students are present.

The first year experience pilot course that the committee heard about last year is being taught in three sections this fall and spring (IS 1101, College Pathways I and II, 1 credit each semester). The instructors are Kyle McClure, Leslie Meek, and Charise DeBerry. Ericksen noted that we may wish to continue it as a pilot program for one-two more years rather than trying to approve it as a General Education change this fall. This will allow for evaluation and revision before seeking official approval. Discussions with the instructors and others this fall will help determine the timeline.

#### #2 Approval of Minutes

Franco, Narvaez motion to approve the minutes from April 23, 2020. Motion passed (4-0-4).

#### #3 Curriculum Committee 2019-2020 Annual Report

The annual report for last academic year was shared with the current committee, but approval will be sought from last year's committee members.

#### #4 Writing requirement possible revision

A small inter-divisional committee last spring reviewed the writing requirement change proposed by the English discipline. In answer to the questions from that committee, English provided the FAQ that were shared with Curriculum Committee. Ericksen would like to see the writing requirement revised somehow in the upcoming catalog, and much work remains to be done to get there.

Ericksen asked if the members think the FAQ adequately answered questions about the proposal--are we ready to share this (see attached) more widely with campus or not? Ng is concerned about the timeline and commitment to offer options from disciplines. If the committee approves of the framework, then next steps can be finalized, but disciplines will need as much advance notice as possible if they are going to revise courses or propose new ones. Page would like to refine the language regarding what will count from other institutions as fulfilling either the first-year or the new writing course requirement. Dean commented that English is willing to provide half of the courses required and supports moving forward with it. Deane feels how the proposal is presented to campus will significantly influence how it is received, and she encourages stating that it is building on what is in place, not requiring something entirely new. Franco asked for data to the committee to show where the problem is. Ericksen doesn't believe that such data exists. The anecdotal evidence of the first-year writing course as a problem comes primarily from years of Admissions counselors' reports and our Office of the Registrar, backed up by the report last year from our AACRAO consultants on recruiting and retention. He would like to see the proposal framed in a way that more clearly reflects the intended result.

Squier had a couple questions about the second requirement, and Ericksen asked her to add them to the FAQ document to bring back to this committee and to the English faculty.

McPhee and Burke both are wondering if the 8-credit requirement is necessary. It excludes or makes more difficult to attain the next part of the requirements. Muller noted that the requirement would be more APAS-manageable as two courses, not a specific number of credits. McPhee expressed concern about where the courses will come from because students may not want to take more English courses (primarily a concern when disciplines are working to offer more courses). He recommends identifying courses before the proposal is shared more publicly.

Narvaez commented that he agrees with Franco about what the purpose of the change is. He also commented that he has concerns about how much feedback is required in the proposal. He would have to adjust how his class runs--he would have to not teach some things in order to devote time to teaching writing, for instance--and is concerned about that. It will be a compromise when courses would have to give up some topical content in order to add the

writing requirements. Ericksen commented that the Curriculum Committee can provide feedback back to English and ask for more discussion before any broader sharing of the proposal.

Burke spoke about writing intensive classes—this plan is not reinventing the wheel. She also asked about a senior seminar meeting the requirement. Dean explained that this second-tier requirement is still meant to be developmental, so the final senior seminar would not meet that requirement. WLA was originally instituted because students were not coming in with the skills, even if they had taken a college level course, and many (most?) still seem in need of developmental writing instruction. Burke commented that English faculty have the skills to teach writing, while other disciplines primarily use writing for communication and may not feel comfortable providing a course that meets the W requirement.

Ericksen tabled the conversation, which was intended to be preliminary at this point, and asked members to continue to comment and question the FAQ document. She will have the English faculty help answer questions. Consensus is that it needs a more developed framework before sharing more broadly.

#### #5 General Education summer report

A small interdisciplinary group, including a student, worked over the summer on further developing two General Education proposals. The group was Rebecca Dean, Nic McPhee, Denise Odello, and Julia Scovil. Fabulous No-Nonsense and Themes were the top two by CC vote last spring.

While not ruling it out completely, Ericksen noted that a major change to the general education program seems unlikely for the 2021-2023 catalog. She does not intend to rush this through and recognizes that significant work on the proposals and the preparation for implementing which proposal we settle on will need time.

Dean shared a summary of the group's work (which, Ericksen noted, will be shared as documents later in the semester, when we actually have time to discuss them). The FabNN proposal uses many of the same categories we currently have. It's not so different that faculty would have trouble understanding it. The most significant change would be:

- combining classes that currently have HUM, FA, or ArtP designators into one HUM category, but requiring more than one course
- combining HIST and SS classes into one SS category, but requiring more than one course
- requiring all four of the "Global Village" courses for all students, but some classes could double-dip within the Global Village categories

The Theme-based proposal is much more different and the group has many pages of explanation. Even though it is very different, Dean shared that she doesn't believe it would require significant changes to courses themselves. The group proposed four possible themes: Social Justice and Equity, Global Perspectives, Environment and Sustainability, and Creative Problem Solving. Each theme would have a dedicated 8-credit year-long, first-year, co-taught course that would combine the current IC, WLA, and FYE courses. Students would take classes that pertain to each theme in at least 3 of the 4 divisions. Some other requirements would be

specific to themes, such as credit for a 2xxx world language class for Global Perspectives students, or multiple art performance and science lab classes for Creative Problem Solving students.

#### #6 Program Review

Last spring, we finished a cycle of program review, and last spring and over the summer, the dean and Division Chairs, with our Assessment coordinators, worked on a plan for the next cycle of program reviews, which need to be completed on a swifter timeline than the last cycle was (which took 12 years). In the past, Curriculum Committee has endorsed the academic program review plan, and Ericksen is asking for that endorsement of the new plan. Ng agreed that Curriculum Committee should be included in the process. The draft has been shared with the committee. Please send Ericksen any questions or comments. Ericksen would like to share the framework with disciplines soon, and the committee will be asked by email if they endorse, don't endorse, or want more discussion of the new program review plan.