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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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2-11-2021

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UMN Morris Curriculum Committee

February 11, 2021, 11:40 a.m. Meeting #13

Zoom

Members Present: Janet Ericksen (Chair), Stacey Aronson, John Barber, Cameron Berthiaume, Barbara Burke, Rebecca Dean, Jennifer Deane, Simón Franco, Stephen Gross, Nic McPhee, Marcus Muller, Ben Narvaez, Peh Ng, Michelle Page, Shanda Pittman, Emily Wittkop

Members Absent: none

Others present: Kerri Barnstuble, Jessica Porwoll, Jeri Squier, Robyn VanEps

In these minutes: First Year Experience, General Education

#1 Welcome and announcements

Kerri Barnstuble and Jessica Porwoll will be joining us today to talk about the First Year Experience.

First, though, an update: Curriculum Innovation grants are, as you may recall, different from our past EDP grants. Those historically have been broadly for course development. The Curriculum Innovation grants, while still in support of course development, are donor funded and need to be truly innovative. The donor wants to foster development of creative and bold thinking. The subcommittee that reviewed proposals made its recommendations to the dean, who then considered the information with guidance from our donor relations staff regarding the donor's interests. Based on that, two applications will be funded, and Ericksen shared a bit about the applications. Barbara Burke and Nina Ortiz are funded to create a course that explores "racial justice and responses within a broader context of popular cultural forms addressing the digital spaces we live in and providing students with a complex of literacy and citizenship skills." Nade Sotirova is funded for a course on communication across disciplines that focuses on "the intersections between different disciplines in the ways complex contemporary problems require complex and multidimensional critical thinking." Next year's instructions will more specifically define what the donor is looking for, to help both the applicants and the subcommittee more clearly understand the parameters of the program. Ericksen thanked all who applied and the excellent review committee for their work.

#2 Approval of minutes

Ng made a minor editorial change in the minutes prior to the meeting. Motion and second (Ng, McPhee) to approve minutes from Meeting #12 - January 28, 2021. Motion passed (12-0-0).

#4 First Year Experience course

Barnstuble shared that she currently has a 10% release to continue our work on the First Year Experience course (note that two of those who were central in developing the first pilot, in fall 2020, are no longer working at UMN Morris). Barnstuble gave some background to the project. Three classes were taught this past fall as part of the pilot program. Such courses in general are nationally considered a best practice, and FYE courses are offered at peer institutions; they are widely perceived as a foundation to institutional effectiveness, and FYE course aims also match up well with several system partnerships and grants. A lot of the focus for this course lies on what our students want, but also what we learned from the first offering last fall. The fall

instructors, Barnstuble, and Jessica Porwoll now believe that S/N grading is most appropriate (the fall 2020 course was A-F). Ng asked what topics were covered and what students gave the highest priority. Barnstuble responded that many topics were covered in the fall course, probably too many. She shared many examples, but also noted that topics need to follow the highest priority objectives that are determined for this course--and determining those objectives is one of the areas of greatest focus right now. McPhee asked about how the FYE course connects with IC. The IC course is an academic seminar that introduces students to how we study something at a liberal arts college (*this* liberal arts college, and through *discussion*). The FYE course is a college transition and success course. IC instructors will meet this spring to talk (as they have in the past, but usually not until August) through issues and make sure that instructors understand what the goal of the IC course is (sometimes people forget to read the GenEd description). Narvaez asked about students asking to meet more than once a week--is the FYE course better as a two-credit course? They did meet just once a week last fall, and instructors and students noted some disconnects. This will continue to be part of the conversation. Squier asked about faculty staffing the courses if it becomes a General Education requirement. Ericksen shared that it will be mainly taught by staff who have the expertise, rather than regular faculty. There are many benefits to staff teaching these type of courses. Franco noted that the course is *one part* of the first year experience, which really involves so much more. The FYE course is a starting point. Voting on the ECAS may happen at Curriculum Committee later this month if Barnstuble is ready to bring one forward.

#3 General Education

Prior to today's meeting, Ericksen asked committee members to document pros and cons as well as questions about the three options we decided last spring to pursue more fully. Based on the responses, Ericksen asked if the committee believes this approach would be effective with our broader campus audience. The small group discussions would gather similar feedback, either kept separate from the Curriculum Committee member comments or folded into them. Ericksen continued to go over the proposed timeline (see below). Ng asked if each group would have separate documents. They can all be kept in the Curriculum Committee drive folder. After gathering questions, subgroups will need to meet to discuss and answer the questions. Additional time at the March 25th CC meeting will be utilized, but other work will need to be done outside of regular meetings.

After discussion here and with the DCs separately, Ericksen shared this plan for the GenEd discussions this semester:

1. Small group discussions between faculty and members of CC of pros/cons/questions regarding the 3 options (other meetings TBD later, but GenEd is an academic and largely instructional program, so we're starting with faculty. We're not stopping with them, though). CC members are to answer questions as they can, but the main goals of these discussions, as will be announced to campus, are:
 - a. Greater familiarity with the options
 - b. Feedback on pros/cons/questions – meaning CC members need to take notes and give them to Robyn after each meeting. TWO students have been invited to each meeting, but only to try to ensure that at least one student is present at each. Discussion dates and CC member participation, determined so that each

has a division chair and at least one student, as well as a mix of division representation as much as possible:

Monday, February 22, 10.30-11.30 (Shanda, Emily, Barbara, Ben, Michelle)

Friday, March 5, 3.30-4.30 (Emily, John, Rebecca, Peh, Janet)

Wednesday, March 10, 3.45-4.45 (Cameron, Shanda, Stacey, Steve, Marcus)

Wednesday, March 17, 11.45-12.45 (John, Cameron, Jennifer, Nic, Simón)

2. Curriculum Committee sub-groups will be assigned to work on answers to the questions raised for two new proposals. I'll try to take preference into account here, but we also need balance among divisions and roles. Feedback from the four discussions will be shared with both groups, and while we'll allow some time in CC meeting on Thursday, March 25 to discuss, we'll also need to work on this, Ericksen expects, outside of meetings.

3. MCSA-led discussion to be scheduled, March or April

4. Division meetings, April 13: discussion of pros/cons/questions, as divisions have time (or they can set a separate division meeting)

5. Staff discussion, April (best timing?)

6. Future CC meetings, Campus Assembly

a. CC, April 22: questions answered (shared ahead of meeting), pros/cons discussion

b. For information – discussion at Campus Assembly, with questions answered, proposals possibly further refined

c. May 6: This committee votes on its preferred proposal, if possible, and next steps laid out. Fully understood: we may not yet be ready to vote at this meeting.

7. Campus Conversation, for all, added in somewhere?