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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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2-25-2021

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UMN Morris Curriculum Committee

February 25, 2021, 11:40 a.m. Meeting #14

Zoom

Members Present: Janet Ericksen (Chair), Stacey Aronson, Cameron Berthiaume, Barbara Burke, Simón Franco, Nic McPhee, Stephen Gross, Ben Narvaez, Peh Ng, Michelle Page, Shanda Pittman, Emily Wittkop

Members Absent: John Barber, Rebecca Dean, Jennifer Deane, Marcus Muller

Others present: Athena Kildegaard, Kerri Barnstuble, Jeri Squier, Robyn VanEps

In these minutes: Honors Program Review, First Year Experience, General Education

#1 Welcome and announcements

Reminder about General Education discussions and CC members' roles in them: note taking and discussion participation. Please add notes to CC folder in Drive or share with Robyn after your session.

#2 Approval of minutes

Motion and second (Ng, McPhee) to approve minutes from Meeting #13 - February 11, 2021. Motion passed (11-0-0).

#3 Academic Program Review: Honors

Reminder that the purpose of this step in program review is two-sided: the program shares highlights, challenges, and plans, and committee members have the chance to ask questions about particular programs. As a result, more people better understand UMN Morris programs and, in addition, are better positioned to make curriculum decisions. The Honors program continues to work well, despite the challenges of being mostly virtual this year and part of last. Applications for the next cohort of honors students are due March 1. Only three have been received at this point, perhaps because the information sessions normally organized through ACE and in person haven't been possible. The application deadline has been extended. Of those students already in the program, nine are doing capstones this semester, and overall participation in Honors continues to be strong. Kildegaard explained that students are encouraged to participate, even if their GPA does not (yet) meet the requirement for graduating with Honors. Students can and do take and benefit from Honors classes even if they do not complete the program. A particular challenge for Honors students is completing their capstone project when they are preparing to graduate. It is often perceived as the only thing that can give when students faced with multiple priorities. The program also has challenges in finding enough faculty who want to and can teach honors courses. Narvaez asked if the program really needs to have a capstone project. Kildegaard responded that students really love their honor capstone projects, and she has seen amazing presentations. Honors capstones also provide a distinctive experience of faculty discussion on a topic that is student driven--very much a liberal arts college ideal. Narvaez shared an experience of a smaller report balanced with additional coursework instead of a larger project; might that be an option for Honors projects? Kildegaard will consider the idea. Narvaez also asked about interdisciplinary teaching. Does the program require faculty who co-teach to be from different disciplines? He would like, for instance, to

pursue history from two different perspectives. Kildegaard confirmed that Honors courses do typically pull from different disciplines.

McPhee commented about the challenges students face with multiple majors and Honors participation. Some discussion has occurred about the possibility of having a single capstone project required for all students regardless of the number of majors or participation in Honors, and he asked Kildegaard about how she feels about it. She acknowledged it has challenges, but seems to be a great idea. She questioned, however, if the capstone project in their major has impact on the student's future, both in completing the major and outside of UMN Morris. That is, does the capstone in the major provide students with experiences and knowledge they need for post-college career paths, and, if so, wouldn't reducing that opportunity for students be problematic, too? McPhee commented that capstones aren't equivalent in all majors and some don't have the same credit weight. Kildegaard shared that it may need to be a continuing conversation. Squier clarified that a student's transcript reflects they graduated with honors when they complete all elements. If they don't complete it, they took honors courses, but didn't graduate with honors.

Burke commented that some faculty don't have a full understanding of the honors program, which may contribute to low participation among faculty just as it can among students. She suggested that communication could be improved. Kildegaard agreed but feels that with current staffing, the honors program can't grow bigger than it is. Honors does have a website and information sessions as well as program events. Interdisciplinary courses really embody the liberal arts. Ericksen suggested that if new faculty are encouraged to teach an honors course early in their time at Morris, they learn more about the program and are more likely to continue to support it. Kildegaard noted that Honors courses are not more work intensive, but are challenging for students and faculty because they are an interdisciplinary experience. An Honor course brings together students who do not have the same background or focus, which can be challenging (and rewarding) for faculty teaching the class as well as students taking the class.

#4 Request for GenEd designator

Motion by McPhee, Berthiaume. Motion passed (9-0-0).

#6 First Year Experience

Barnstable explained the discussions that have continued since the previous Curriculum Committee meeting. The course objectives have been more honed to three buckets: a strong connection to campus; academic success strategies; health and wellbeing. The course names are now Morris 1101 and Morris 1102, and drawing on instructor feedback from the fall as well as other campus models, the course has been changed to S/N grading basis. The ECAS was shared and reviewed. These courses are intended to be taken only by first year students, although a special section for transfer students may also be developed. IS 1102 will be changed to include IS 1101 or instructor consent as a prerequisite. Motion by Ng, seconded by Narvaez to approve via electronic voting.

#5 Other catalog clean up

Ericksen stressed the plan is to move away from provisional approval, and so we are trying to give regular approval still to a few clean up classes ahead of registration for next fall. Starting next year, provisional approval will be much more restricted, but regular approval of new classes will be allowed at the beginning of spring semester. She and the Division Chairs will

work on making sure faculty understand the new need for planning ahead and the timeline for regular approvals outside of catalog change years (September and January CC review). Education has three courses. SSA 1220 is a new course, Strength Training II. This requires SSA 1219 to have a name change to Strength Training I. The other is a new IC course being developed, Ed 1804 Games and Learning.

Humanities has four new courses from English. Engl 2162 Careers for Writers is back again after getting division approval for the change in course description. Other courses presented are new offerings. McPhee noted a small typo in Engl 3064. Motion by Ng, seconded by Franco to approve catalog changes. Motion passed (10-0-1).