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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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3-11-2021

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## **UMN Morris Curriculum Committee**

March 11, 2021, 11:40 a.m. Meeting #15

Zoom

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

Members Absent: Rebecca Dean, Stephen Gross

Others present: Dan Demetriou, Mark Collier, Jim Cotter, Jeri Squier, Robyn VanEps

### **In these minutes: Philosophy Program Review, Geology Program Review**

#### #1 Welcome and announcements

We have two program reviews today. General Education discussions continue, and please watch for more information by email regarding the working groups that will try to incorporate feedback from these General Education conversations into the program proposals.

#### #2 Approval of minutes

Motion and second (McPhee, Ng) to approve minutes from Meeting #14 - February 25, 2021.

Typo on page 3. Motion passed (9-0-0).

#### #3 Catalog

Motion from Science & Math to approve IS1818. Seconded by McPhee. Motion passed (10-0-0). This will be shared with Campus Assembly at the next meeting.

#### #4 Academic Program Review: Philosophy

Philosophy's biggest challenge is the low number of students who come in knowing about Philosophy as a major and who major in Philosophy. Courses continue to be well enrolled at the lower level, but majors have been constant at around 3 each year for the last five years at least. Philosophy no longer offers 4xxx level elective courses because of the small number of upper level students. The program is, though, reaching out in new ways to highlight the role of philosophy in other areas. They are creating a template for a Legal Studies area of concentration minor that they hope will grow into a regular minor and thinking about a PPE (Philosophy, Political Science, Economics) program as well, which is interdisciplinary and very much in accord with both a liberal arts education and career-ready outcomes. Ericksen asked about the possibility of creating a track for students within the Philosophy major rather than creating a new minor or major. Whichever route they take, faculty stressed that Philosophy is impacted by the marketability of the major, especially in the current market. Collier stated that if collaborative majors are framed in a more practical way, there could be more interest: "Call it something useful." Barber commented that he would like to see more classical instruction. Pittman noted that the Philosophy website has some outdated articles, but very good content about career options. McPhee stated that the campus could do better to market and promote Liberal Arts and how different majors can fit into students' futures. Ericksen stated that there have been and continue to be numerous efforts on that front. She also noted that in her view, a Philosophy is a fundamental field at a liberal arts college. Collier noted that he and Demetriou would welcome any interdisciplinary discussions of how philosophy courses might intersect with

or support other programs. Ericksen thanked the discipline for its creative thinking and good work.

#### Academic Program Review: Geology

The UMN Morris Geology program has graduates who have had excellent career and graduate studies successes for decades. Geology's impact on the world is in the news every day; it is both a liberal arts field of study--interdisciplinarily relevant in a wide array of ways--and a field of knowledge with broad relevance in the world. At Morris, that cross-discipline relevance is evident in, for instance, the fact that Geology provides three of the required courses for the Environmental Science major. Our Geology program, Ericksen noted, has also been central in helping to diversify STEM. Ericksen asked Cotter to say more about how he sees Geology fitting into the Liberal Arts experience, particularly given that the introductory classes are so large. Cotter responded that the size of the class does not necessarily limit students' engagement with material. Geology is quite interdisciplinary but does rely on the student to apply it to their interests. Barber asked about making 2xxx and 3xxx level courses more inviting. The major is designed to begin in students' sophomore year.

Ericksen noted the difference in tone between the two disciplines discussed today, despite a close similarity in the number of majors each graduates and in the balance of enrollment between lower and upper level classes. STEM disciplines do have the reassurance of clearer career pathways. Franco commented that there is no Philosophy factory, but Geology majors can go be geologists. Cotter recalled a time when faculty felt Geology was too vocational, and now that is one of its strengths. Ericksen thanked Cotter for the program review report and his good work.