

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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3-25-2021

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## **UMN Morris Curriculum Committee**

March 25, 2021, 11:40 a.m. Meeting #16

Zoom

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

Members Absent: Stephen Gross

Others present: Nadezhda Sotirova, Jeri Squier, Robyn VanEps

### **In these minutes: CMR Program Review, GenEd discussion**

#### #1 Welcome and announcements

Acknowledgement of award winners on our committee.

#### #2 Approval of minutes

Motion and second (Franco, McPhee) to approve minutes from Meeting #15 - March 11, 2021. Motion passed (11-0-2).

#### #3 Academic Program Review: CMR

Burke summarized some of CMR's recent successes, including the fact that course enrollments and majors numbers have remained quite stable even as campus enrollments overall have fallen. She mentioned two introductory level courses that continue to be large by Morris standards. Upper level course enrollment is typically between 15 and 22. Discipline assessment also shows that milestones and learning outcomes are being met. The discipline went from three to two full time faculty members, following a retirement in May 2020. A part-time instructor was hired to fill the gap this year and for next, as otherwise the faculty simply cannot meet the demand for public speaking and other CMR courses that serve other programs as well as the CMR major. Because of the retirement, and recognizing the hiring challenges right now, they are revising the major to make it run more smoothly with just two tenure lines. With one faculty member in each of the three areas--communication, media, rhetoric--as they had for years, the program could and did require majors to take coursework in each area. Without a specialist in rhetoric, the program needs to be reshaped and become more flexible for students. Sotirova noted that other institutions, including liberal arts colleges, are seeing the number of communication majors increase, and we should as well. Perhaps restructuring major requirements will help, and additional faculty resources would be greatly appreciated. An additional faculty member who could specialize in social activism and social justice would be a huge benefit.

Ericksen asked what other programs already require CMR courses. Those that have at least one CMR course requirement include education, management, sports management, and human services. Ericksen asked if restructuring the program would necessitate a change to their discipline name. Burke explained that the program would be more in line with external expectations if it were renamed. Narvaez asked for clarification on what the name might be. Reply: Communication Studies (or a variation of that) is more widely recognizable and more flexible. Discussion about transfer courses followed, including the point that transfer will be smoother with the new program structure. Franco pointed out that public speaking may be included in the revised General Education requirements and asked what the CMR faculty think about this. While such a requirement would

increase the need for CMR courses, they still would welcome the requirement, as they agree that speaking skills are of fundamental importance. If the general education program is revised, new requirements may have significant impact on the discipline. Sotirova expressed great enthusiasm for a campus-wide speaking requirement. They have a structure that other faculty can step into and it can be offered during any semester, including summer. Student members of the committee attested to the importance of public speaking, especially in senior seminars, and public speaking courses as preparation. The public speaking curriculum is structured enough that faculty outside of CMR might be successful at teaching it, and it allows flexibility. If it became more widely required, perhaps it could follow the structure of the writing enriched requirement. Berthiaume questioned, however, how adding requirements would impact students' ability to complete the general education program.

#### #4 GenEd Working Groups preparation

Ericksen asked that everyone add any notes they have from the recent general education discussions to the shared documents in the Google drive, so that the working groups have access to them, although those groups can go ahead and begin their review of them. She explained reasons for keeping the notes in their basic form, despite repetitions and other issues: going through the notes is an important step in understanding people's perspectives, and we need to see what was repeated. Due to the limited committee time remaining the semester, work by the sub groups will need to be done outside of the meeting time. April 5th Janet and David Israels-Swenson as well as any willing Curriculum Committee members will meet with MCSA. Pittman, Barber and Berthiaume stated that they will be present and able to take notes.

Staff discussions are tentatively scheduled to take place on Tuesday, March 30, 3-4 pm, and Wednesday, April 7, 1-2 pm. Ericksen asked who might be available to help with note-taking. Muller and Franco will help with the March 30 discussion; other committee members are also welcome.

As stated in the agenda:

As outlined earlier this semester and now that the faculty round of discussions of our three proposals (with staff and student discussions still to come) has concluded, it's time to identify and charge the working subgroups, with hope that we can make further progress on these proposals this semester.

The two groups (no group for the third option, which is our current program):

<u>Approaches</u>	<u>Skills, Perspectives, Themes</u>
Stacey, Michelle	Jennifer, Peh
Nic	Barbara
Rebecca	Ben
Steve	Simón
Marcus	Jeri
Shanda	John
Emily	Cameron
Stephanie (new committee member)	

#### **The task:**

To answer the questions posed by the discussion groups and provide revisions of the proposal in response to the pros and cons. Do as much as possible by the end of this semester, and preferably by the last CC meeting, which is Thursday, April 22. The DCs on each group will find meeting time(s) outside of CC meetings for the group. Each group should label their revisions (e.g., Approaches 1.2) and put them in the CC shared Drive folder, and the group can offer multiple versions (e.g., Skills, Perspectives, Themes 1.2, 1.3, 1.4).

McPhee noted that the Approaches option seemed to be losing interest because of the vagueness of the plan. He suggested that it be presented in greater detail to avoid people being confused and cautious. Dean shared an opposite experience. She said faculty felt that if change was going to happen, make it a big change. Franco experienced people who had not carefully read the full program outline, instead only focusing on their own area. Longer presentations of each option could and should be shared in the fall, once they are more developed. Narvaez shared that he experienced both hesitation from vagueness and readiness to see big changes. In the faculty discussions, many heard concern about Fine Arts not being as prominent in the two new proposals as it is now. Deane commented that she heard fundamental concerns about workload required to implement a new program. People also appreciated the inclusion of high impact practices. Aronson has heard from enough faculty in the arts to be concerned about the Humanities faculty supporting any of the proposals. The First Year Experience course was discussed, along with the idea of a single capstone requirement. Dean reiterated that the group she was part of was ready to try something new.

Narvaez suggested much more discussion, framed as a division or cross-division meeting, so that more intense conversation can occur, preferably in person (next fall).