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Scholastic minutes 03/21/2012

Scholastic Committee

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Minutes
Scholastic Committee 2011–12, Meeting #16
March 21, 2012

Members attending: Michelle Page, chair, Luciana Ranelli, Dennis Stewart, Steve Gross, Jen Zych Herrmann, Peh Ng, Peter Wyckoff, Hilda Ladner, Clare Dingley, Erin Christensen, Chad Braegelmann, Allison Wolf, Dillon McBrady, Tammy Berberi, special guest Chlene Anderson, Judy Korn, executive staff, Absent: Holly Gruntner

1. Approved March 7, 2012, minutes
2. Chair report

Chair provided an update on Scholastic Committee topics for the remainder of the academic year. Dean Finzel will speak to the committee next week on the status of the writing requirement. On April 4, we'll be discussing SCEP's work on the contextualization of grades, and if time, IELTS scores. On April 11, Jen Zych Herrmann, retention coordinator, will provide information on retention and academic alert. On April 18, Bryan Herrmann, director of admissions, will provide admissions information based on student groups. April 25 will be a "wrap-up" meeting that will include forming a summer appeals group. The committee will not meet on May 2 unless we need to act on petitions. The Chair also notes that she expects several requests for policy exceptions before the end of the academic year.

3. Finalize report to Curriculum Committee in regard to IC

The committee discussed the data provided by the retention coordinator.

Fall 2010 Cohort

F = 10

W = 12

of students with F/W grade who eventually passed in a future semester = 9

of students with F/W grade who withdrew or cancelled from UMM = 14 (4 had eventually passed an IC course)

of students with F/W grade who are still at UMM (retained) = 6

of students from Fall 2010 cohort who still need to complete their IC requirement = 2

Spring 2011 Cohort (*does not include students who did not pass in F10 and repeated in Sp11 - they are included in the Fall 2010 cohort statistics*)

F = 1

W = 2

of students with F/W grade who eventually passed in a future semester = 0

of students with F/W grade who withdrew or cancelled from UMM = 2

of students with F/W grade who are still at UMM (retained) = 1

of students from Spring 2011 cohort who still need to complete their IC requirement = 1

Fall 2011 Cohort

F = 9

W = 11

of students with F/W grade who are registered for an IC course in Spring 2012 = 5

of students with F/W grade who withdrew or cancelled from UMM = 7

of students with F/W grade who are still at UMM (retained) = 12

of students from Fall 2011 cohort who still need to complete their IC requirement = 7

Currently, 10 students have not met the IC requirement after the first year. Although registration changes made by the Registrar may allow more "wobble room" with the ability to change IC courses, we still need a plan of action for students who do not fulfill the requirement.

The committee reviewed and responded to an IC report for the Dean drafted by the Chair. Suggestions were discussed and changes made to the document below.

To: Bart Finzel (Dean, Chair of Curriculum Committee); Clare Dingley (Registrar); Brenda Boever (Director of Academic Advising)

From: Scholastic Committee

Re: Intellectual Community Courses: Report and Recommendations of the Scholastic Committee

Date: March xx, 2012

At the request of the Curriculum Committee and Dean, the Scholastic Committee has taken up the issue of students not completing their Intellectual Community (IC) general education requirement. Though this issue was first noticed among a subset of international students, the importance of having procedures that support all students is noted. The committee discussed two topics extensively: First, what can UMM do to ensure that students complete their IC requirements? And second, what shall be the response be of the Scholastic Committee—charged with granting policy exceptions when merited—if students fail to complete their IC requirement?

Education/Communication/Prevention

The Scholastic Committee recommends the following actions be taken and the following issues be discussed and considered by the Curriculum Committee, Dean, Registrar, and Academic Advising (responsible parties/offices are suggested in parentheses).

- It would be extremely helpful if the Dean or Curriculum Committee appointed someone to *monitor the IC requirement* and to work on *enrollment management* issues. It was the opinion of the committee that students will be more likely to complete their required IC course if they can enroll in a course that interests them. Also, if there were room (enough seats in the courses) to allow for last minute drops and adds, this would enhance student retention in courses. Finally, someone needs to manage the need for sections in the spring semester as some transfer and new high school students might enroll at this time and students who fail to complete in the fall may need to enroll in spring. It was beneficial when the Assistant Dean monitored First Year Seminar and Intellectual Community course needs. Related to this, the Registrar has already implemented a *change to the prerequisite system* to allow students to more easily add, drop, and change sections up to the Essential Deadline. Students can also now put themselves on waiting lists for IC courses, which was previously not possible.
- The Dean's office, Academic Advising, Retention Office, and Office of the Registrar should work with IC instructors (within their unit abilities). IC instructors should be educated and asked to monitor their class lists and submit academic alerts or work with Academic Advising if they notice students dropping from their IC courses. Instructors could have a syllabus statement (created by Dean's office or Curriculum Committee) stating the importance of completing this general education requirement. Alternately, handouts or other materials accomplishing this goal could be created and distributed to students. (Dean, Curriculum Committee, IC Monitor)
- Summer Registration and Advising
 - Information should be added to the brochure available online and used in new student registration.
 - Summer advisors should be encouraged to guide students in using the search function online to ensure that they know if a course is IC or not and get registered for IC.
 - During advising sessions (during orientation) advisors should be asked to check students' APAS, talk to them about importance of IC and why they should not drop
 - Advisors should be asked to put information about IC on their advising syllabus
 - After summer registration, Advising should check to make sure that students are registered for IC; this may not prevent dropping later, but we would know that students registered (Office of the Registrar, Academic Advising, Student Activities, Admissions, everyone who works with summer registration).
- Have IC instructor cohort meet; educate IC instructors—for example, faculty need to understand core components of IC class and ensure these are present in their course offerings (Dean's office, IC Monitor mentioned above)
- Add text to IC category on APAS (similar text as in "implementation consideration" on IC form). Add information to general education worksheet used in registration (already complete). (Office of the Registrar)
- Registration in IC should be monitored by the Office of the Registrar and Academic Advising. When a student drops (receives a W) or fails, the student should be flagged and most would be counseled into an upcoming IC course. Because students may drop or fail for a variety of reasons, the Registrar and Director of Academic Advising are empowered by Scholastic Committee to make case by case decisions as to how to counsel students. This will not "catch" all students who do not complete (for example, a student who drops before the Essential Deadline) but would help to track many students who cancel, drop, or fail. If the Registrar and Advising need input on a particular student case, this can be referred to Scholastic Committee for discussion and guidance. Permission numbers would no longer be generated for instructors but the Registrar and Advising instead would monitor enrollment in second semester IC courses (Registrar, Advising, Scholastic Committee)
- To date, most the students we know of who have had issues completing this requirement are international students. Though many of the issues, we believe, are being resolved through better communication and advising, the committee noted and discussed the fact that a seminar-style, discussion-oriented course is not culturally congruent for many of the international students. Also, a few have language proficiency issues that might impede their progress in a seminar-style course. These students might benefit from taking their IC course in the second semester or taking an IC course that has been deliberately crafted to be multicultural in approach, taught by an instructor adept at assisting with acculturation. Having this as an option (not a requirement) will prevent segregated IC sections, we hope, as segregating all international students to particular sections is also not desired. (IC Monitor, Dean)

- Now that IC has been piloted for two years, the Curriculum Committee may want to *assess the success* of the course. The most distinctive component of the course (the part that is not found in other courses) seems to be the cohort aspect, the fact that the course is comprised of all first-year students. The question arises: is this aspect *distinctive* enough to merit students making up an IC course if they failed to complete it in their first year or “has the boat sailed”? If the primary value of the IC course is the cohort nature of it, there is no real replacement for such a course; but completing IC is a graduation requirement. The institution will find itself in a double-bind if we do not allow some sort of exception (students will not graduate) or if the requirement is empty and exceptions granted too liberally. Is there assessment data that would tell us how successful IC is in accomplishing its goals? Some committee members ask, is the course really a seminar (the style of course noted on the IC proposal form) if numbers of participants are as high as 25? It may be wise to monitor and evaluate the IC course in general. The very nature of this requirement creates a challenging set of policy and procedure issues.

Response

The Scholastic Committee recognizes that despite best efforts to communicate with and educate students, instructors, and advisors, there may be cases where the student still fails to complete the IC requirement. The committee feels that there must be a procedure or alternative in place for these cases—if there is not, students will not graduate because they will have failed to complete a graduation requirement. We recommend the following:

- Students who do not successfully complete IC should take an IC course the next semester on a space available basis. Registration would be monitored by Advising and Registrar in order to respond to individual student circumstances (students drop or fail for a variety of reasons) and in order to ensure that any student population is not dominant in a section (for example, a section comprised primarily of students who are struggling academically and who have failed). (Registrar, Advising)
- If student still fails to complete the requirement, or if so counseled by Advising and the Registrar (empowered by SC to guide students), students will be required to file a special petition (attached) and include documentation related to course requirements. Petitions would be submitted to Scholastic Committee for consideration. Courses may count for one general education requirement only—if a student petitions a course to fulfill their IC requirement, it cannot meet another general education designator. (Scholastic Committee)
- If the petition is denied, another alternative may need to be devised. This is as yet unresolved and an ongoing discussion in Scholastic Committee. It is likely that alternatives would be suggested on a case-by-case basis. (Scholastic Committee)

Conclusion

The Intellectual Community course requirement is unique among general education requirements because it explicitly requires completion within a particular time window. In addition, the timing of the course is the element that makes the course distinctive. This presents a unique challenge as to policy and procedure and makes devising mechanisms for intervention quite challenging. We are optimistic that all units can work together to ensure that failure to complete the IC requirement does not become a larger campus issue.

Petition Form for IC

Petition to substitute an alternative course for the Intellectual Community [IC] general education requirement

This application for permission to substitute another course for the [IC] requirement will only be considered once an [IC] course has been attempted unsuccessfully. A course substitution neither removes nor changes grades earned in prior courses. *If the petition is approved, the course which meets the IC general education requirement may not be used to fulfill an additional general education designator.*

Student Name: _____
 ID #: _____
 Course(s) completed unsuccessfully: _____
 Proposed substitution (course number and title): _____

Procedure

On another sheet of paper, answer the following questions related to the core objectives of the Intellectual Community requirement. **Detailed responses which cite course experiences and evidence from the syllabus** will enable the Scholastic Committee to better assess the merits of your request.

1. Describe how the course introduced the intellectual and practical skills needed to participate effectively in an intellectual community.

2. Describe how the course promoted active participation in each of the following areas: written, oral, and creative.
3. Describe how the course enabled you to work with and to get to know others from your cohort well.
4. Describe how the course provided the opportunity for close interaction with the instructor(s).

Attach a hard copy of the complete syllabus for the course for which you are requesting the substitution.
Route this petition to the Scholastic Committee (via Brenda Boever in Academic Advising, 110 Library) for consideration.

The committee discussed the implications of a student withdrawing from just the IC course or full withdrawal. It was noted that students are not guaranteed a seat, because first year students have preference. If not seat, the student must use the petition route.

Discussed if three steps are too many for the student. The IC experience is better than the petition route. As an institution, we are saying that IC is an important gen ed requirement, yet a student can petition for another course to count as IC...and only IC. The Registrar suggests that we pilot the process outlined above for two years.

The motion is made, seconded, and carries: 10 yes; 0 no; 1 abstain.

The chair will forward the report to the Dean, Advising, and the Registrar, with a copy to Scholastic Committee members. Advisers will receive a summary of the document from the Chair. Korn will place the document on the website.

The Dean plans to establish an IC cohort for fall 2012.

4. Nondegree student probation discussion

Chlene Anderson, online education coordinator, joined the Scholastic Committee for a discussion of policy and procedures related to nondegree seeking students falling below a 2.0 GPA. The committee reviewed examples of policies from the Twin Cities and Crookston campuses. The goal of a Morris policy would be to protect nondegree seeking students from being suspended, and therefore unable to be admitted to any University campus. It was noted that MNSCU also has denied admission based on University suspension.

At Morris, we treat College in the Schools and PSEO students as the same population. PSEO students are not eligible for Multi-I status. Morris has one College in the Schools history course at Morris Area High School.

Brenda Boever, coordinator of Advising, and Bryan Herrmann, director of Admissions advise PSEO students and monitor progress, as does Anderson. The concern was expressed that if students are "dropped" they may not be eligible for high school graduation. We need to communicate our policy and procedure to the high schools.

The Scholastic Committee will review and vote on the following policy at the March 28, 2012, meeting.

Educational Policy for Nondegree Seeking Students

Dismissal

Nondegree seeking students, including Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) and College in the Schools (CIS) students, are required to maintain a 2.50 cumulative and term grade point average in their University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) courses. Students who fall below this criterion will be prohibited from taking UMM courses (dismissed) for one semester. However, students may file a written appeal of the dismissal decision with the Scholastic Committee by the specified deadline. Typically, the strongest appeals are those in which students present documentation of extenuating circumstances beyond their control.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Korn
Executive staff