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Curriculum minutes 10/16/2014

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2014-15 MEETING #6 Minutes
October 16, 2014, 10:50 a.m., MFR

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Sarah Ashkar, Donna Chollett, Carol Cook, Stephen Crabtree, Dan Demetriou, Pilar Eble, Janet Ericksen, Pieranna Garavaso, Sara Haugen, Peh Ng, Ricky Rojas, Gwen Rudney, Emily Sunderman, and Sonja Swanson

Members Absent: Maryanna Kroska

Visitors: Jayne Hacker, Nancy Helsper, Judy Korn, Kellie Meehlhause, and Jeri Squier

In these minutes: Discussion of minimum credits required in a major; catalog course change clean-up in the Division of the Humanities, Division of Science and Mathematics, Division of the Social Sciences, and Interdisciplinary Studies

Approval of Minutes – October 9, 2014

MOTION (Rudney/Cook) to approve the October 9, 2014 minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Minimum Credits Required in Majors

Finzel noted that there is nothing in the catalog that refers to a cap on the minimum credits required in majors. There is an unwritten but understood cap of 60 that has been followed over the years, with only one exception. The catalog refers to the requirement of 120 credits to graduate, with a minimum of 60 credits of GenEd outside of the discipline of the major. It also states that no major may require more than 40 credits in any one discipline. Finzel asked that the committee begin a discussion on the importance of a 60-credit maximum on minimum credits required in the major, and whether the committee should propose a statement about it in the next catalog. A hand-out was provided that showed the current and proposed minimum number of required credits in each major. Helsper had prepared it by taking the numbers off recently submitted Form As. She stated that she did not verify nor could she vouch for the accuracy of the numbers.

Ericksen asked how many credits are required in each discipline for majors like environmental science or biology, as opposed to the number of credits required outside of the Division of Science and Mathematics. She also asked if the students on the committee would speak to what they think about a major that dictates half or more than half of the credits they take while they are at UMM. Finzel answered that the number of required credits will be seen when we look at program changes in upcoming meetings. Most majors are abiding by the 40-credit limit in the discipline of the major. Ericksen stated that her question is whether the remaining 20 credits are in one division. Ng stated that the biology major is very interdisciplinary in nature like most programs in the sciences, and it requires two semesters of general chemistry, one semester of organic chemistry, mathematics, and statistics. General chemistry satisfies the Sci-Lab GenEd. Students have room to take courses outside of the discipline to graduate. Ericksen stated that it does not give them a choice to go outside the division when the requirements within the major satisfy GenEds inside the division.

French, for instance, might wish to require courses in English and art history. Will students be better prepared in a particular field if the minimum requirements in majors go up to 70 credits? Ng stated that the requirements in biology are that high across the country. Ericksen asked if there is a liberal arts biology major that dictates half or more of the total credits a student can take. Ng asked which courses biology should remove. Ericksen answered that she is not asking to take away a course; she is talking about a credit number. Now that she sees the impact on numbers in major requirements, she would not have approved the increase in general chemistry.

Crabtree noted that the environmental science major includes requirements in eight disciplines, including chemistry, math, physics, statistics, and environmental studies. Ericksen responded that all of those disciplines are within science and mathematics except environmental studies, which is an interdisciplinary major. Finzel stated that it has been his understanding that there is a 60-credit cap and the environmental science discipline did not have an understanding of that limitation when the major was created. It would help the campus to clarify it in writing once and for all. Ng noted that at this time environmental science is not in violation of the rule since the rule is not in the catalog.

Ng stated that there already is a rule of a maximum of 40 credits in the discipline of the major. Finzel stated that while some students do take more than 40 credits in their major, they are not required to do so. Ericksen stated that this issue is not just aimed at science and math majors. Are we prepared for any interdisciplinary major to require 80 credits from a student because the major is interdisciplinary? It seems counter to a liberal arts idea. Sunderman stated that students with majors in science and mathematics are encouraged to take a foreign language, but unless they come into the major at the 3xxx-level, there's no time for them to pursue a language. If a student in a science and math major is going for licensure in secondary education, it's not feasible to do so in four years when the major requires more than 60 credits. Ng replied that all environmental science majors have graduated in four years, and all students have to take a year of FL to graduate from UMM. Ericksen answered that she is not saying they cannot graduate in four years, but they did so without a lot of options. The debate is over how much of coursework should offer options and if the whole campus wants to set a number as a pivot point. Ng stated that even with 70 credits required in the major, students have 50 credits to take most GenEd. Garavaso noted that we are trying to provide all students with a broad liberal arts education. We are short-changing students in majors with more than 60 required credits by regimenting their education and not allowing the same amount of freedom that other majors allow. It is true that students can get a number of their GenEds within science and mathematics, but those students are then spending time earning 80 credits in the same area of the campus. It's not as broad of an education as when students are encouraged to split their credits 60/60. Garavaso added that it is hard to find high school science teachers, and having a program that makes it difficult to get a secondary education licensure in the sciences is not good. Ng answered that students with majors in science and math areas are encouraged to go into education. When UMM switched to semesters, it was made clear that typically, education students will need an additional year.

Finzel stated that the discussion needs to broaden beyond the science and math division. That's where the numbers are now, but disciplines in other divisions will push the numbers up, especially as more interdisciplinary majors are created. If the committee does not provide guidance, other majors will certainly come back and want to add credits and limit student options to double-major or explore other areas.

Rudney stated that there is logic to setting the limit at 60. The principle proposed is to have a full and complete major and still have options beyond the 60-credit cap. Having a 60 credit limit would still allow choices even within that discipline. Finzel agreed and added that the cap would not prevent majors from offering optional tracks where the requirement might be closer to 70 (as with biochemistry). The difference is that it is an *optional* track, and a student would get a major in fewer than 60 credits.

Crabtree stated that environmental science covers eight different disciplines, but it only covers four GenEds: Sci, Sci-Lab, M/SR, and ENVT. Rudney replied that most disciplines include some set of GenEds. But this discussion has to do with the choice beyond the requirements. Crabtree added that the major also has 26 optional electives in the major.

Finzel stated that the discussion will continue at the next meeting. Ericksen added that it would be nice to have it clarified before the committee begins looking at program changes. Finzel encouraged student members to consult with other students and report back on how students feel about a maximum on the minimum number of credits required in a major.

Catalog Course Clean-up

Division of the Humanities

Communication, Media, and Rhetoric (CMR)

CMR is proposing one new course. This course was taught under the topics umbrella in the past and students have been expressing an interest in taking it.

CMR 3125: Rhetoric of Free Speech in American Schools: Case Law and Queries (4 cr; SS)

Ashkar asked if the course has a prerequisite, and if so, does it cover case law. The course description says that it assumes a fundamental understanding of case law. Helsper stated that one of the prereqs is CMR 1801 – Legal Argument and Free Speech.

Humanities (Hum)

Hum 1055 is being deactivated. It was taught by last year's pre-doctoral fellow and will not be offered in the next catalog.

Theatre Arts (Th)

Th 3004 is being deactivated.

MOTION (Garavaso/Ericksen) to approve the humanities course changes. The motion passed unanimously (13-0-0).

Division of Science and Mathematics

Chemistry (Chem)

Chemistry is proposing two new courses.

Chem 1553 – Global Perspectives on Chemical Applications (4 cr; IP)

Chem 4553 – Physical Chemistry Applications and Global Perspectives (4-6 cr)

These courses were presented at the September 25 meeting and were sent back to the discipline for clarification of the cultural component of the course in the course description. The titles and the course descriptions have been revised. Finzel asked if the new description satisfies the previous concerns of the committee. Garvaso answered that she was one of the members who had raised the concern and that the new descriptions are much better.

MOTION (Cook/Ashkar) to approve the science and mathematics course changes.
The motion passed unanimously (13-0-0).

Division of the Social Sciences

Economics (Econ)

Econ 3023 is a provisionally approved course that is being deactivated. Economics has one new course that will be taught by a new faculty member, David Brown:

Econ 3172 – Strategic Firm Interaction and Market Sources (4 cr)

Management (Mgmt)

Management has eight courses with minor revisions: Mgmt 3134, 3141, 3142, 3151, 3152, 3171, 3503, and 3513. Management also has one new course that will be taught by a new faculty member, Satis Devkota:

Mgmt 3703 – Health Care Markets and Institutions (4 cr)

History (Hist)

History has decided to deactivate Hist 3466 and seek regular approval for an IC course:

Hist 1817 – Introduction to American Political History and Television (2 cr; IC)

Political Science (Pol)

Pol ~~3261~~/2261 was approved by the committee on October 2, but the discipline has since discussed the GenEd and found that E/CR is more appropriate than SS.

Two new courses were approved by the committee on September 25 but are being brought back with new GenEds:

Pol 2262 – Power and Politics in American Cities and Communities (2 cr; E/CR)

Pol 2411 – The United Nations: Simulated Negotiations (4 cr; IP)

Eble asked if GenEds are tracked to be sure there are enough. Finzel asked Squier to run a list prior to each registration period.

MOTION (Eble/Crabtree) to approve the social sciences course changes. The motion passed unanimously (13-0-0).

Interdisciplinary Studies

Interdisciplinary Studies (IS)

There are two IS course changes. The first is a name change: IS 2013 – London Arts Tour is changing to Fine and Performing Arts of London. IS 1043 is being eliminated. It was a summer course in sustainability that offered an ENVT GenEd. It was on the books for two summers without interest so it likely won't be offered again.

There is one new study abroad course that has provisional approval and is going forward for regular approval. It is being taught by long-term faculty so it is likely to be offered again.

IS 2024 – Linking the Global with the Local: Development in Nepal (6 cr; IP)

MOTION (Chollett/Rudney) to approve the interdisciplinary studies course changes. The motion passed unanimously (13-0-0).

Finzel reminded the members to consult with colleagues about a maximum to the minimum number of credits in a major.

Submitted by Darla Peterson