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MINUTES--1996-97 JOINT MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE AND THE GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

April 8, 1997; 3:00 p.m.; Behmler Conference Room

PRESENT:

Curriculum Committee Members--Ballou, Bauer, Farrell, Frenier, Hansen, Kissock, J. Lee, Schuman, Vickstrom, Whelan

General Education Committee--Guyotte, Klinger, Lopez, Togeas, Skinner, Strand

ABSENT:

Curriculum Committee Members--Barbour, Ellis, Imholte, Korth, M. Lee, Thielke

General Education Committee--Kuechle, Garavaso, Gremmels, Kjolhaug

GUEST(S): DeJager

SEMESTERS GENERAL EDUCATION PROPOSAL:

Togeas distributed copies of the response of the General Education Committee (GEC) to Curriculum Committee (CC) concerns about the proposal for a semesters general education program. The response had been distributed previously via email.

Schuman welcomed both committees and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. The CC is looking at schedules to determine two meeting times each week during spring quarter. The best times seem to be Wednesdays from 3:00-4:00 p.m. and Fridays from 9:00-10:00 a.m. There were no objections to the suggested times. Schuman said it might take a week or two to make the time switch. He asked Mooney to prepare a list of meeting times for the remainder of the quarter.

Schuman reminded CC members that they should already have copies of the General Education Program proposal for semesters, CC minutes from previous discussions on this topic, and the GEC response to CC concerns. He hoped that the outcome of the joint meeting would be a strongly endorsed, shared proposal. He asked Togeas, Chair of the GEC, for comments on the GEC response memo.

Togeas said the GEC had discussed all of the CC concerns and responded to them. The GEC did not recommend any substantial changes as a result of the CC concerns. The CC concerns were taken seriously; however, the GEC has already devoted 16 meetings to the formation of the General Education Requirements and largely reaffirmed what had been done.

I. The Common Experience.

Schuman suggested that we go through the proposal one requirement at a time, beginning with "I. The Common Experience (2 credits)." Hansen thought the requirement was diminished by a 2-credit, rather than a 4-credit, course. Frenier agreed; if the classroom space is the only problem, the offering could be split into two terms. Schuman said he

had heard strong sentiment earlier that all students need to be involved in the common experience immediately in the fall. Lee said the classroom space is not the only problem; faculty resources are also a serious concern. Frenier commented that, if the common experience is valued, then we should commit the necessary resources to it. It will be devalued if it is only offered for 2 credits--that was part of the problem with Inquiry. Lee said that, with our lean faculty resources, he is concerned that faculty may even object to the commitment of resources to a 2-credit common experience.

Schuman asked the group to defer the discussion on credits. Can we all agree that we should have a common experience? Whelan asked if the CC would return to the credit issue. Schuman said yes. There were no objections to having a common experience.

II.A. College Writing.

Farrell had an editorial comment about the College Writing requirement. It looks wrong for a distinguished institution to have "0-1 courses" required for College Writing when "one course" is required for performance and wellness, for example. Schuman thought that what was really meant was "one course or exemption." He thought Farrell's point was well taken. Students will have to take the course or prove that they have met the requirement in another way. Strand said the GEC had discussed an exemption for the wellness requirement. Togeas thought that students would want to count the courses required in the GER. Guyotte noted that the GEC felt justified in having so many requirements partly because they knew most students would find a way to exempt out of some of the requirements.

Lopez said the heading for "II. Skills for the Liberal Arts" indicates "one to five courses." That may have to be changed if other listings are changed. Klinger thought a footnote might be needed.

Schuman asked if people were comfortable with the College Writing requirement. There were no objections.

II.B. Foreign Language.

Farrell said he remembered the CC wondering why there was only one course required in English but two in foreign languages. Hansen wondered if sign language would be counted as a foreign language. Schuman said the CC had approved last quarter that the sign language courses would fulfill the foreign language requirement. Kissock commented that there may be cheaper ways to get to the goal with a course requirement rather than a credit requirement (most language courses are 5 credits and the sign language courses are 3 credits).

II.C. Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning.

Schuman noted that the CC concern about this requirement had to do with semantics. Togeas said the GEC has recommended a change in the title of the requirement from "Mathematical/Logical Reasoning" to "Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning." The change in title will not significantly impact the type of courses that would be approved for this category. The goals remain unchanged. Klinger commented that the word "symbolic" was used in a previous GER. The new title reflected the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum wording.

Whelan wondered if courses other than math will still be included under this requirement. The answer was yes. He wondered if students would be able to graduate without having had a math course. Skinner said that they would be able to graduate without math, but students currently can do that, too. Schuman clarified that students would be able to graduate without having had an instructor from the math discipline.

II.D. Artistic Performance.

Schuman noted that the GEC had added the word "artistic" to the title for this requirement. Togeas said the intent with this requirement is to continue what we are doing under ProsPer. Whelan asked if there would be exemptions. Togeas thought that exemptions would be tricky. Bauer said he had thought of two ways to do exemptions: 1) if the student had

lettered in dramatics in high school; and 2) if the student was a member of the Thespian Society. Schuman said there would be a third way--to do an audition. He didn't think the group should worry about how to implement the requirements at this point. We should let disciplines decide how to do exemptions.

Schuman asked if people were comfortable with this requirement. There were no objections.

III. Wellness.

Schuman said the wellness requirement would not include, for example, a course on how to play badminton. Hansen asked what it would include. Klinger said it would be a course in the science of health. Hansen wondered if it could be a biology requirement. Togeas said the requirement is narrower than that. Not all biology courses are part of health.

Schuman said the organization of our curriculum has a discipline called Wellness and Sport Science (WSS) which has a component covering wellness. There is an aspect from biology, but also from chemistry, psychology, etc. We are hiring a faculty member in wellness.

Togeas said the GEC imagined courses other than WSS fitting this requirement, like Drugs and Human Behavior, Human Sexuality, etc. Schuman thought a social psychologist might want to offer a course for this requirement.

Hansen wondered if there would be an exemption. Strand said the student would have to prove a scientific understanding in this area. Hansen said he ran cross country in high school which requires an understanding of diet, etc. Schuman did not think that would fulfill the requirement. The student would need to present proof of academic work at a collegiate level.

Whelan wondered if the wellness course was currently a 1-credit offering. Kissock said there are a couple of wellness courses, both 1-credit and 2-credit offerings. There will be various levels of credit for the courses meeting this requirement. Schuman said he would have a problem with a 1-credit course meeting this requirement. Whelan agreed. Strand wondered then about the 1-credit courses meeting the performance requirement. Klinger thought that 1-credit courses could be worthwhile. Schuman said he didn't want to get into implementation questions. It is important to say that the courses must be rigorous and scientific and the CC will hold courses to that standard. Whelan didn't see how the requirement could include the richness talked about in this meeting in a 1-credit course. Farrell said that 1-credit courses can be rigorous; there are courses like that in music and studio art now. Guyotte commented that, considering the scarcity of college resources, raising the credits might lower the priority.

Vickstrom was concerned about priorities. He thought the wellness requirement could be dropped in order to have both a physical and biological science course required.

Schuman said he had not heard anyone say there shouldn't be a wellness requirement. Whelan said he did not think we should have wellness or performance requirements. We should have two science courses instead. Farrell disagreed. He thought that was a biased opinion and would speak vigorously against it in Campus Assembly.

Schuman was not comfortable with the idea that we need to cut requirements elsewhere if we want to add a science course. After all, we could require that every course taken by students be part of general education. We should discuss the science requirement when we get to it. If the final package is too large, then we could discuss what needs to go. There are two arguments here: 1) that performance or wellness is not important to liberal learning; and 2) that both performance (or wellness) and science are important but we cannot have both. We aren't to the point of talking about argument #2 yet. Togeas said the GEC had enthusiastically supported the performance category.

Hansen said wellness does not fit the liberal education model. Schuman said Hansen would be able to vote against the proposal on that basis. Hansen said he would not want to vote against the entire proposal for that reason alone. Kissock said he would take a vigorous stance against that. College is a mind-body experience. It is easy to see the physical problems people have in our society. It would be limiting not to approach this topic at a collegiate level. The goals of a broad liberal arts education include wellness. UMM has had a commitment to wellness for several years.

Strand noted that wellness has been controversial in the past and it continues to be controversial. The GEC has voted to eliminate the requirement in the past. The current GEC is divided on the issue.

Klinger commented that lifestyle issues are one aspect of the many choices that people make. It is essential to have this token category.

Hansen did not see how this requirement would be different from a high school health class. He would rather make people walk five miles every day. This is not the way to go about a wellness requirement, but he doesn't know how you make people take care of themselves. Kissock said students take many subjects in high school that they will repeat at a higher level in college.

Whelan said he was disturbed by undertones in the discussion. He is not against performance or wellness. We do have to make choices, however. Schuman said that was a fair statement. He suggested that the committees continue to go through the requirements. At the end of the discussion, someone needs to make a motion and could offer an amendment. He would not expect to get everyone in the room to agree on everything in the proposal. When we get to the science requirement, Whelan can say this is not enough.

Farrell wondered who would be making the decision about the proposal. Schuman assumed, if the two committees could not agree together, then the CC would make the decision. The GEC is an adjunct committee of the CC. He would not want the Campus Assembly to be presented with two proposals. Guyotte said the GEC is interested in being involved. The GEC could continue to meet with the CC and have email votes for those who cannot attend. Schuman noted that we have already gone through half of the requirements without discord. Requirements I and II seem agreeable. There is a strong minority opinion that we don't need a wellness requirement. There would probably be a clear majority in the combined GEC/CC on this. He invited the GEC to return and continue the discussion next week. Togeas said he had sent email to Schuman about the need to present a unified proposal. Farrell agreed. He is ready to vote. The GEC has spent a lot of time working on the proposal. Kissock affirmed that. The proposed GER would take 1/3 of the degree. That is where we should be.

Frenier said that women students would benefit from a wellness requirement. The cultural, as well as scientific, aspects should be covered. She would like to see the requirement broadened.

NEXT MEETING:

Schuman indicated that there would be three CC meetings next week:

CC meeting for discussion of Common Experience proposal:
Tuesday, April 15, 3:00 p.m., Behmler Conference Room.

CC/GEC meeting on General Education Program proposal:
Wednesday, April 16, 3:00 p.m., Behmler Conference Room.

Group to be determined:
Friday, April 18, 9:00 a.m., place to be determined.

Meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m.
Submitted by Nancy Mooney

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