

# Curriculum Committee

## Minutes of the April 7, 2017 Meeting

**Present:** Rob Beezer (Secretary), Kent Hooper, Martin Jackson, Alan Krause, Carson Nies, Brad Tomhave, Bryan Thines, Justin Tiehen, Benjamin Tromly, Nila Wiese (Chair, *pro tempore*).

In the absence of RICHMAN, and after the six members present decided there was no requirement for a quorum, WIESE called the meeting to order at 3:03 in the McCormick Room. The minutes of the March 31, 2017 meeting were approved with the addition of one visitor.

**Announcements** HOOPER, Professor of German Studies, thanked the committee for last week's approval of the changes to the German Studies major.

HOOPER asked (again) if year-end reports from the working groups were necessary, and if the reports of their activities in these minutes might not suffice. WIESE explained the desire of the Faculty Senate to see the committee's response to their charges and the workings of the committee. JACKSON suggested consulting the committee's liaison, Professor Robin Jacobson, and WIESE said she would do so.

**Working Group 1 Report** TIEHEN reported that they have received responses from the Biology Department as part of their curriculum review and will meet next week to work further on this review.

**Working Group 2 Report** TROMLY presented two courses for approval.

SSI1 148, *Journalism and Democracy*, as proposed by Julie Christoph (English) as a first-year seminar. **Action:** Approved.

SSI2 131, *Social Justice and Radical Politics*, as proposed by Eric Orlin (Classics) as a first-year seminar. **Action:** Approved.

**Working Group 3 Report** WIESE reported that faculty surveys of the Social Scientific Approaches core have been sent out, and a meeting with interested faculty will take place next week.

**Working Group 4 Report** HOOPER reported minor changes in two courses as part of a student's previously approved Special Interdisciplinary Major. One was due to a course no longer being offered, and the other was due to the student's desire for more structure by replacing an independent study with a regular course.

**Unit Limits on Majors and Minors** The committee's second charge from the Faculty Senate is:

While part of ongoing charges, the Faculty Senate would like to encourage attention to the question of limits on the number of units required for majors and minors. Specifically, "Create guidelines for unit limits for majors to fit existing practices, core curriculum, and educational goals."

In advance of the meeting, Working Group 3 circulated new language for the committee's "Guidance to Review Question #3", which concerns the number of units required for a major. Substantial changes to the first part clarified the meaning of courses constituting major requirements that are within the "major field" (nine units) versus courses in a "supporting field" (creating a total not to exceed sixteen units). These changes met with approval.

TIEHEN then argued that the question asked for a response from departments with majors exceeding the two numerical limits, while the remainder of the question then asked any department with even a single course in a supporting field to comment. The suggestion was that this commentary was more consistent with the theme of Question #2, and independent of the Curriculum Statement's limits on the number of units.

After some discussion, JACKSON took it one step further and brought up the final sentence, which asks for commentary on interdisciplinary majors, again independent of the number of required units. Indeed, it seems interdisciplinary majors are only subject to the sixteen overall unit limit.

The consensus was that Question #3 will now only address unit limits. Any department within these limits need not answer, and any department beyond them will need to "explain why any extra units are required" anew, even if approved as part of a previous review. Questions of a more substantial nature about "curricular goals" and "disciplinary balance" will migrate to Question #2.

WIESE, not a Professor of Art, nevertheless adjourned the meeting at 3:38 P.M. The next meeting will be on April 14 at 3 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert Beezer