

Curriculum Committee Minutes
Friday, February 24, 2012

In attendance: Barbara Warren (Chair); Jane Carlin, Brad Dillman, Lisa Ferrari, Alison Tracy Hale, Amanda Mifflin, Brad Reich, Carolyn Weisz, Rand Worland, Steven Zopfi

The meeting was called to order following a brief wait for sufficient members to constitute a quorum.

Chair Warren announced that she had no remarks, but that one order of business would be to find out from Associate Dean Ferrari what the calendar date was for material for the fall bulletin, to clarify the Committee's internal approval deadlines for pending curricular matters.

Minutes:

M/S/P to approve minutes from the previous meeting.

Working group reports:

Working Group One recommended the approval of three courses based on their review: English 211 (Introduction to Creative Writing; to run every year beginning F '12), Comm 111 (Controversies of Online Social Media; to run every year beginning F '12), Comm 181 (Introduction to Online Communication; to run every other year beginning F '13).

M/S/P to accept the three courses.

Approval of a fourth course, Chem 115 (Principles of Chemistry) was also recommended, but a vote was deferred until it could be determined whether the course had already been approved in an earlier action.

Working Group Two reported that they have set a meeting time for their review of Geology and are waiting for other scheduled reviews to come in. Barbara Warren asked whether it was common for reviews to come in so late in the term. Dean Ferrari responded that while it was not typical, some departments requested and received extensions and others required gentle nudging to prioritize the review.

Working Group Three reported that they are "on the cusp" of the Physics review; they had asked for and have now received responses to several questions that came up, but had not yet met to discuss those responses.

Given the question of pending course approvals, Barbara Warren asked Dean Ferrari what the final deadline was for materials to be included in the Fall 2012 Bulletin. Dean Ferrari said she would ask Associate Dean Alyce Demarais, whose responsibilities include the Bulletin. Dean Ferrari added the real concern was having courses approved in time for pre-registration on April 4 of this year, and allowing a necessary 3-week lead-time for information to be added to Cascade and the schedule of rooms. Brad Reich asked whether the Curriculum Committee's internal deadline for approval should therefore be March 9? Or March 2? Dean Ferrari responded that the most urgent issue

was approval of Fall courses; that there were ways to work with a “rush” process on a few items, but not everything.

Working Group Four reported that they had reviewed the syllabi and surveys from the FN core review, and would be meeting with FN faculty this coming week. They are awaiting the next program review, which has not yet been submitted.

Working Group Five reported that they were scheduled to meet the following Friday (3/2) and were waiting for a response to their questions from the Math department.

Dean Ferrari asked about WG 5’s progress on the question of what constitutes an interdisciplinary emphasis, since that issue is vital to the MAT program’s plans to implement a social justice program beginning this fall. Ferrari stressed that this was an important change and a potentially vital recruitment tool. Carolyn Weisz asked about the urgency, and Dean Ferrari replied that time was short for implementing the program and, especially, producing recruitment materials for the MAT program. Weisz expressed concern that the working group was not scheduled to meet until *after* the next likely meeting of the full Curriculum Committee, and wondered if that would be too late. Dean Ferrari encouraged the Working Group to bring the matter to the full committee at the next possible meeting.

The general outcome of this and other discussions about Fall deadlines was that all urgent matters (i.e., approvals vital to Fall 2012) need to come to the full committee by March 2.

Discussion of Procedure for Committee Minutes:

Chair Warren then raised the question of submitting minutes. Given that scribal duties currently rotate, the draft minutes are sent to the AD’s office, which currently amends the minutes to reflect changes. Approved minutes are then sent to Jimmy McMichael to post. Warren’s question was whether the original secretary of the day’s minutes should submit the changes, or was it more efficient to have the AD’s office amend the minutes as needed.

Dean Ferrari stated that she found it somewhat problematic to have the Associate Deans’ office making changes to the minutes of a faculty committee. She outlined a possible process wherein the original secretary would send the minutes to the Dean’s office for dissemination; once any changes were requested, the original secretary would then make those changes before sending the revised minutes on to Jimmy McMichael.

Warren expressed concern that the Committee’s changing secretaries would be unlikely to amend the minutes in a timely manner.

Ferrari suggested it was relatively simple to remind the individuals to complete the review and revision of the minutes. She reiterated that she was uncomfortable with having the AD’s office write the minutes for a faculty committee because it seemed to her to violate the principle of faculty governance, especially since the committee answers not to the Dean’s office, but to the Faculty Senate.

Carlin asked whether it was a problem for Jimmy McMichael to deal with input from a variety of temporary committee secretaries, instead of receiving the minutes and revisions from a single source in the AD's office. Ferrari replied that it was not a problem; he routinely receives such emails from multiple sources.

Reich suggested that the process might be smoother with a single secretary, and that a standing secretary might then be exempted from the working groups/subcommittee responsibility.

Ferrari noted that such a decision was up to the committee.

Carlin noted that the decision could be changed year to year as the committee members prefer.

Warren asked whether any of the committee members present had been to *all* of the committee's meetings this term (aside from Warren, no one had).

Zopfi asked whether the committee had sufficient members to spare one as standing secretary. Reich asked whether another member could be added to the committee. Mifflin noted that her Working Group has only 3 members currently; Worland noted that his Working Group has 5 members, a discrepancy Ferrari attributed to the fact that WG 5 has a heavier workload for the duration of the semester, including the "gigantic" review of the HM core, while the bulk of WG 3's work is completed.

Worland asked whether the number of members in a WG substantially altered the workload; Ferrari noted that WG 4 had recently divided up the heavy job of FN syllabus review among members to balance and manage the workload.

Carlin wondered whether we could schedule the meetings and appoint a secretary for the rest of this year, while the next year's Curriculum Committee could determine whether they wanted a standing secretary.

Weisz raised the question of whether the committee could use Moodle to keep track of minutes and expressed support for the notion of a permanent secretary.

Warren acknowledged that temporary secretaries were capable of following through on the minutes and corrections, but observed that committee work was often a lower priority, which affected the timeliness of the minutes and revisions. She expressed her trust in the AD's office, and wondered whether the work of correcting the minutes made extra work for the AD staff. Ferrari replied that the work itself was not a problem, and that while she appreciates the trust put in the AD's office, she is concerned that such trust may not always characterize the relationship between the committee and the AD, at which point it would be difficult to alter the process. She suggested that the committee correct the system now, before there was a problem or concern.

Zopfi raised the possibility of electronic recording of meetings; Ferrari replied that while that is an ongoing question, we're not there yet. Based on her experience on other committees and working groups, Carlin suggested using the Soundnet system, which would allow the Committee to view the previous minutes and to make changes during

the meeting and would locate the minutes in a central place. Weisz expressed support for an electronic forum and asked why Soundnet might be better than Moodle, to which Carlin replied that Soundnet is dedicated to university working groups, whereas Moodle is primarily for course management. Weisz asked whether the AD's office could set up such a system for us. Ferrari said that Lisa Hutchinson has set up other Soundnet documents. Weisz asked whether committee members could post to the forum. Carlin replied yes, members could have editing rights. Ferrari asked whether the training was cumbersome, and noted that Lisa Hutchinson could receive and post the minutes. Zopfi noted that this would remove the issue of the AD's office making changes to the minutes.

M/S/P to test posting minutes on Soundnet, effective immediately.

Other business:

Committee members discussed briefly and informally some confusion about the committee's role in conversations regarding diversity within the university core. The committee had several conversations last year about the issue, but remains somewhat uncertain about the current scope of the conversation and our specific role in it. Members expressed the following concerns for future discussion: 1) the exact nature of the Faculty Senate's charge on this issue; 2) the parameters of the discussion (i.e., the implementation of diversity in all areas of the core vs. the alteration of the core to include a specific diversity course/requirement); 3) the appropriateness of the Curriculum Committee as the place for such a discussion, perhaps in conjunction with the Diversity Committee; 4) the reality of the Committee's existing workload and our ability to take on such an important task in addition to that workload. Members agreed to do some preliminary exploration into the current status of the topic and to return to it in the future.

M/S/P to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Tracy Hale
Secretary du Jour