

## CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

28 September 2007 (Friday)

Misner Room

**Present:** Carlo Bonura, Jane Brazell, Brad Dillman, Derek Buescher, Jordan Conley, Alyce DeMarais, Brad Dillman, Greg Elliott, Leon Grunberg, Fred Hamel, Kriszta Kotsis, Mary Rose Lamb (Chair), Lynda Livingston, Paul Loeb, Bob Matthews, John McCuistion, Brad Richards, Elise Richman, Stuart Smithers, Brad Tomhave, Barbara Warren, Carrie Washburn, Jenny Wrobel

**Call to order.** Chair Lamb called the meeting to order at 8:00.

**Remarks by the Chair:** Members not able to be at the last meeting introduced themselves. Two student members Jordan Conley and Jenny Wrobel were introduced, and Jane Brazell was introduced. She will provide administrative support to the Committee.

**Approval of Minutes of September 14, 2007:** The minutes were approved as written.

**Announcements:** Washburn announced that at the next meeting the Committee will be doing its annual review of the calendar setting guidelines and discussion of the academic calendar. We were encouraged to review these guidelines before the next meeting. The current guidelines are available in the introductory packet of Curriculum Committee material.

**Working Group Assignments:** Working group assignments were distributed, together with a grid indicating when colleagues could not meet. Washburn reminded the Committee that Dean DeMarais is on all working groups.

**Connections Core:** Chair Lamb started the discussion on the Connections Core, referring to a report by David Scott from the 2006 – 2007 Working Group responsible for the Connections Core (Curriculum Committee minutes of the April 20, 2007 meeting, provided in the initial Curriculum Committee packet). The primary issue before the Committee was how we could ensure consistency from year to year in reviewing courses proposed for the connections core. Would it be possible to come up with a series of guidelines for the Working Group responsible for reviewing proposed courses in this core area?

Chair Lamb opened the floor for discussion. In addition to the issue of consistent application of the Core Guidelines to the review of new courses, the issue of expertise in interdisciplinary courses was raised. Some of the major points:

DeMarais noted that the guidelines were established in the core legislation, but that some terms are open for interpretation. How specifically should the guidelines be interpreted? Loeb asked what problems with the review process had occurred, and what constitutes an interdisciplinary approach. Does one teacher suffice to provide expertise in a number of disciplines? Elliott made the point that some faculty were able to teach in more than one disciplinary area.

Smithers asked if we needed to narrow things down to a single approach. Richards noted that the way in which proposed courses were reviewed could depend on the current working group membership.

Lamb asked what distinguished a connections course, and asked if the Committee could develop consistent guidelines for the review of connections core courses. Washburn noted that connections courses do not have the same departmental review (by the department offering the course) that other core areas have. Kotsis suggested that connections should be reviewed in a different way, by getting comments from other departments. Livingston reported the concerns of the working group last year (Minutes, April 20, 2007). What conditions are sufficient to ensure an interdisciplinary flavor? What guidance could the Committee / Working Group give to someone developing a new course?

Loeb suggested that the core guidelines should be left somewhat ambiguous as they are written, and that the Faculty wanted flexibility and not overly specific guidelines. DeMarais suggested that the guidelines be broad enough to provide some flexibility – that we should not impose too many constraints. Wrobel expressed confidence in the work of the responsible working group.

Loeb suggested that evaluation of new courses might always vary with committee membership, but that these issues should be left up to the independent judgment of the appropriate working group.

The problem of expertise was again raised. Should we require that each area taught in an interdisciplinary course be taught at the same level of expertise? How should the issue of disciplinary expertise be addressed in the review of new courses? Should all appropriate departments be involved in the review?

Washburn reminded the committee that the connections core was seen as a replacement for the comparative values core and courses were not intended to require team-taught courses.

Smithers suggested that the working group with responsibility for the connections core consider these issues and return with a full report. Chair Lamb suggested that this would be an ongoing discussion in the full Committee over the year.

**Other business:** There was no other business.

Adjournment: There being no further business, McCuiston moved that we adjourn, and we did adjourn at 8:34.

Respectfully submitted  
Bob Matthews