

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES
6 December 2006 (Wednesday)
Misner Room

Present: Suzanne Barnett, Elisabeth Benard, Brad Dillman, Mary Rose Lamb, Grace Livingston, Paul Loeb, Bob Matthews, John McCuiston, Brad Richards, Elise Richman, Michelle Salter '07, Florence Sandler, Christine Smith, Stuart Smithers, Kurt Walls, Lisa Wood (Chair), Brad Tomhave, Carrie Washburn, Lori Ricigliano

Not present: Lynda Livingston (subcommittee service only this fall); David Scott, Alyce DeMarais

Call to order. Chair Wood called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

"Chair's prerogative." Wood used this phrase in proceeding with remarks by the chair. Although early in the pre-set agenda, the chair's remarks came later in this meeting but appear early in the minutes because of their concern with committee procedures.

- (1) Wood said that she would like the committee to revisit the issue of the **graduation requirement of three upper-division courses outside the first major** with special attention to demographics: Does the presence of students with no background in the subject area of a 300-level course present any problems? The requirement could, for example, mean an increase in students taking a 300-level course in Psychology who are unprepared for the course.
- (2) Leads of Working Groups: Please let Wood know the amounts of time that committee members are spending on subcommittee business. In this connection, Wood praised the work of the secretary and prompted a round of applause. (For her part, the secretary knows that her work is testimony to the hard work of other committee members whose efforts generate the committee's record in the form of minutes.)

Minutes. The committee M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 15 November 2006.

Committee meeting time: Washburn reported that in Spring 2007 the class schedules of committee members show that the only time in the week the full committee can meet will be Friday at 9:00 a.m. **Wood announced that the next meeting of the Curriculum Committee will be on Friday, 26 January 2007, 9:00 a.m., Misner Room.**

Working Groups (WG). Wood called on leads of WG for reports of activity under way.

- **WG ONE** (Chemistry / Humanistic Approaches): Dillman (lead) said that the **Chemistry** five-year review report is still in process but well along. At its conclusion the group will take up the five-year review of the **Humanistic Approaches** core.
- **WG TWO** (Latin American Studies / Fine Arts Approaches): Lamb (lead) deferred her report to a later point in the meeting (*the deferred report appears below as part of the discussion of DOUBLE COUNTING OF ACADEMIC UNITS*).**
- **WG THREE** (English / Geology / W&R and SCIS Seminars / Mathematics and Computer Science standard [non-contract] major proposals): Matthews presented the group's motion for the approval of the proposed standard majors and proposed modifications of the current contract majors in **Mathematics and Computer Science** (*see expansion, with MOTION, below*).*
- **WG FOUR** (History / Physics / Connections): Walls reported that the group has work in progress but nothing to report at this time.

- **WG FIVE** (Internship / SIM / Ad Hoc other core / 3-2 dual degree programs / activity v. academic credit): Smith (lead) reported that the group would meet in Exam Week to launch deliberation of the **Academic Internship Program** five-year review report. Smith added that she has met with George Tomlin with regard to the **3-2** program in Occupational Therapy.

***WG THREE.** Loeb (lead) identified Matthews as spokesperson for the group with reference to the proposed changes in majors offered in Mathematics and Computer Science.

ACTION Matthews M/S/P approval of the addition of two regular [non-contract] majors and modification of the contract majors in Mathematics and Computer Science.

In discussion Matthews said that in 1997 the department shifted to a contract major in each area, one in Mathematics and one in Computer Science, by which each student major would work with two or more members of the department in framing an individual-major contract. Informing this shift was the benefit of flexibility in scheduling so as, for example, to permit a student more easily to do study abroad. In spite of the expectation that a student would set up the contract at the beginning of the major program, department faculty observed a trend whereby students would set up the contract at the end of the major program, in effect asking for departmental approval of what they already had taken [without benefit of the intended individualized advising process].

To resolve the situation the department proposed (1) modification of the *contract major* to require its framing before the completion of the first upper-division course in the major. The contract as devised is able to be changed, but the department presumes on the basis of experience that any changes might involve only one or two courses. In response to Dillman's inquiry Matthews stated that any change requires approval by the student's original faculty committee. The department also proposed (2) an added *standard major* [non-contract] alongside the contract major in each area, Mathematics and Computer Science.

In response to Washburn's inquiry, Matthews (and Loeb) said that the standard major would be 8-10 units depending on at what level a student might start the major. The contract major requires at least 8 units and has a maximum of 16 units including any support courses from other departments.

Double counting of academic units. (Prompted by the committee's discussion previously of 3-2 programs that allow courses to count toward two different degrees, the matter of double counting now has become a broader issue, in part because of a proposed increase in the number of double-counted units allowed for the Latin American Studies minor. See the Working Group TWO report, below.**)

Tom have passed around copies of a list of some departments or programs that proscribe or place limits on counting a course in the core toward the major or minor or minor programs that restrict counting a course in a student's major toward the minor. He said that double counting also can be an issue in the case of a double major, not just major-minor. By the records of the Office of the Registrar, 473 of the 580 seniors in Fall 2006 are double counting in some way. The most frequently double-counted courses are Economics 170 - Contemporary Economics and Math 160 - Introduction to Applied Statistics.

Washburn said that she checked past minutes of the Faculty Meetings for discussion of the revised core curriculum and the added graduation requirements and found only one reference to double counting, and that was in a negative sense. She interpreted the record to indicate that the faculty "just *understood*" that the curricular revisions would mean an increase in students' double counting.

Wood asked if committee members have real concern about this. Barnett said that she has no concern, for the issue arises out of conditions of liberal arts college education; specialized pre-professional courses would have no (or few) overlaps in terms of major-minor or core-major, but liberal arts courses [which constitute this University's curriculum] may have multiple applications. Matthews added that the Mathematical Approaches core requirement is difficult to meet outside the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science [of 14 Mathematical Approaches courses listed in the current hard copy 2006-07 *Bulletin*, only 3 courses are outside this department]; student majors in the department thus routinely meet the core with a course that counts toward the major.

****WG TWO.** Lamb recalled the group's expression of concern at the meeting of 15 November 2006 with regard to the **Latin American Studies (LAS)** five-year review report: The group sees the LAS proposal to allow two of the five courses to meet the minor to be courses taken by a student in fulfillment of the student's major or another minor as an issue of double counting in need of wider discussion before the group reaches a recommendation about the LAS review report. Should a student be able to count the same course to meet two different academic requirements? How many majors and minors does a student need?

G. Livingston, a member of WG TWO, said that the LAS proposal about allowing more double counting raises a philosophical issue, namely, whether the ability of the faculty to deliver the LAS program is facilitated by double counting. By allowing double or triple counting we may hold back from hiring new faculty to "expand intellectual range." By double or triple counting we allow the "economics" of faculty hiring. In turn, the lack of sufficient faculty members depresses the possibility of new courses.

In general discussion Barnett again stated a lack of interest in making rules but an expectation that the process of *advising* should be able to diminish what some might regard as the problem of double counting. Matthews agreed that the advising process always should involve asking students to explore curricular options.

Walls said that at Willamette a student could double major only with difficulty because of rules to prevent the double counting of "related" courses. For example, a Theatre Management course would be regarded as related to an Art Studio major and could not count for both majors. The difficult job of identifying related courses was "the Registrar's call." Smith suggested that the focus might be on control of a minor.

In response to Barnett's inquiry, Salter said that students do double majors "for interest," not just to build a transcript.

Wood opined that a student might seek to double major as an "identity" issue: The achievement of a major means that one *really did* work in the field. Smithers commented that the deliberate shift by the Asian Studies Program away from being a major and minor [to being a new kind of "designation" academic program] promotes a student's major in a discipline but still allows a student to explore areas outside that major. Sandler added that a transcript [not just what one declares as a major or majors] is important, but students do not always see this importance.

Further discussion of a general nature led to the following:

ACTION Loeb M/S/P to do nothing about this issue [double counting of academic units].

Returning to the work of **WG TWO**, Lamb explained that the LAS argument for increasing the allowance of double counting from one course to two courses rests on comments by graduating LAS minors. Students have expressed the view that fulfilling the requirements of the minor is difficult *unless* double counting is allowed. The Working Group is awaiting response from LAS in the matter of double counting.

Washburn said that if we prevent the LAS move to the allowance of two courses to double count then we would be making a decision that has broad implications. The University has no current provision against multiple double counting.

Matthews added that the Curriculum Committee has authority to discuss the possibility of limiting double counting, but if we come to judgment we must send the matter to the whole faculty.

Adjournment. At 8:56 a.m. McCuiston M/S/P to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted
Suzanne W. Barnett
(submitted 9 January 2007)