

Minutes for the Curriculum Committee Meeting Feb 28, 2005

Members present: Ken Rousslang, Sam Armocido (Student Representative), Lynda Livingston, Lisa Wood, Joyce Tamashiro, Lori Ricigliano, Suzanne Barnett, Michael Nanfito, Jim Jasinski, Brad Tomhave, Bill Barry, Carrie Washburn, Richard Anderson-Connolly (Chair), Carlo Bonura (Secretary)

Called to order 2:05

Minutes for the Committee's February 14, 2005 meeting were corrected and approved.

In reporting on a conversation with the chair of Religion about core and major overlap courses, Washburn informed the Committee that Religion majors under the current *Bulletin* are limited to two overlap courses, as previously specified by the department. The department's request to increase that number actually translates to having no statement in the *Bulletin* about the number of overlap courses permitted, because the Religion department only offers courses in two (new) core areas (The 2005-2006 *Bulletin* pertains to students graduating under the new core). For current students in Religion who are graduating under the old core, the Registrar will make changes in the degree tracking system to allow up to three overlap courses.

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Connections sub-committee:

Barnett **moved** approval by the Curriculum Committee of the following course for the Connections core rubric:

CONNECTIONS 355 - Early Modern French Theater, proposed by Diane Kelley (Foreign Languages and Literature)

This course explores the subject in "the historical and philosophical contexts of both the theater in early modern France and the cultural polemics that characterize current-day American society," within "the overarching theme of moral responsibility" (syllabus, p. 1). The subcommittee acknowledges the thoughtful (and gracious) reply that Professor Kelley provided in response to inquiries about the specific ways in which students would engage the interdisciplinary process expected in the Connections core. In particular, Professor Kelley clarified that each of the students' papers over the term will require treating "at least two different disciplines" (response memorandum from Diane Kelley, p. 1).

Barnett also stated that Kelley was "representative of the gracious response of faculty" to the inquiries of the sub-committee in this review process.

Bill Barry was asked to report on the numbers for Connections offerings in 2005-06 and whether any shortfall exists. Washburn replied that there were no problems with the numbers of Connections course to be offered in the up-coming year.

Deleted: Washburn informed the Committee that students under the current course bulletin are allowed to take three credit overlaps whereas in the language for the current core there will be no discussion of this issue at all.

Department reviews:

Lupher reported that Foreign Language has been contacted about the completion of their department review, but the number of job searches the department is currently involved in has delayed the process.

Continuation of the discussion of changes to the academic calendar:

Anderson-Connelly relayed the sentiments of an email from Houston Dougharty in which he expressed support for the reduction of reading period to two days.

Tamashiro passed out emails to the committee that resulted from an in class poll of her students.

Armocido described both the RSA officers meeting in which there was support for a block format to reading period but overall opposition to shortening the period and the Student Senate meeting which held the same positions on this issue.

Barnett reminded the Committee that the most important thing was to make decisions on the calendar based on educational issues not with the aim of control student's behavior.

This comment and the discussion that followed focused on student issues during reading period.

A new discussion took place relating to concerns over the distribution of student exams over the exam period. Some on the Committee asked if a day off in the final exam period would help all students equally (as those students for whom all exams occurred prior to the day off would not experience the benefit of such a mid-week break). The idea of having exams on Saturdays was raised and quickly rejected by the Committee.

Jasinski pointed to the different quality of work that students experience in the final exam week (with not all students taking final exams, but some having final essays or projects). Discussion continued on the question of different assignments students are responsible for during finals week.

Amricido asked about the importance of a single day to the academic calendar (namely, why the reading period could not simply be shortened by one day beginning on Thursday rather than Wednesday). Washburn and Tomhave both reiterated that a semester should be 70 days. Bonura relayed to the Committee the discussions in the sub-committee meetings that suggested 70 days was an ideal and that the University was not in anyway bound to a 70 day calendar (although Bonura stated his support for a 70 day calendar).

Upon calling the question, the Committee approved a single motion that endorsed the following options regarding changes to the academic calander:

- Start Tuesday after MLK; ending 1 week earlier**
- Finney plan except no classes on Labor Day**

--Saturday – Monday reading period; Exams T-F

Jasinski asked if there was any value in labeling the day off before Thanksgiving as “Thanksgiving travel day.” Washburn replied that there was value in such a label.

Reconsideration of the Committee’s earlier vote to approve a entry process for freshmen into transfer sections of freshmen seminars:

Barnett argued that issues have surfaced that may not have been part of the Committee’s earlier discussion, namely the problem of how transfer students feel alienated by the prospect of having to take the freshmen seminars. The motion passed violates the principle of a unique experience for freshmen and suggests that any student who needs a seminar can enroll any sections.

Barry and Anderson-Connelly expressed frustration with having to reconsider the Committee’s previous decision (at one point suggesting that the Senate merely change the rule passed by the Committee). Barry also argued that the Committee should not encourage the Senate in sending work back to the Committee because of its workload.

Anderson-Connolly stated that the Committee should make it explicit that only transfer students can register for transfer sections.

Washburn suggested that the faculty worked to develop a first year experience and since it is clear that there should be a first year experience any changes that the Committee makes may have to go back to the faculty to consider whether or not it is problematic.

In response to a question from Smith regarding why transfer students mattered so much to this discussion, Barnett explained that their experience is not the same. They live off campus and are expected to take part in intellectual life and have a sense of their “class,” but it can not be expected of them to do the same (campus-based) activities as freshmen.

Barry also explained that transfer students come in feeling that they should not have to take the course and that it requires convincing that may not have to take place with regular students.

The continuation of the reconsideration of the Committee’s vote was placed on the agenda for the next meeting.