

**Curriculum Committee Minutes
September 22, 2003**

Members Present: Richard Anderson-Connolly, Bill Barry, DeWayne Derryberry, Mott Greene, Cathy Hale, Christine Kline, Lynda Livingston, David Luper, Sarah Norris, Ken Rousslang, Karin Sable (Chair), Joyce Tamashiro, Brad Tomhave, Melissa Weinman Jagosh, Carrie Washburn, Lisa Wood

Visitors Present: Lori Ricigliano

Karin Sable called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of minutes: M/S/P minutes of September 15, 2003 meeting.

Announcements:

Barry reminded us about UW law professor Sean O'Connor's upcoming discussion of intellectual property rights ("Digital Media in the Classroom") Tuesday, September 23 at 4:00 p.m. in Wyatt 109.

Writing and Rhetoric subcommittee report:

Kline M/S/P approving English 134 for the WR core.

Kline presented the subcommittee's report on "The Architecture of Power" (English 134, proposed by Allison Tracy and Stephanie Johnson, submitted for the WR core). The subcommittee praised the course's strong emphasis on writing and its interesting theme.

Art review subcommittee report:

Greene M/S/P approval of the Art Department's 5-year curriculum review (as amended 9/12/03).

Greene reviewed the uncontroversial aspects of the art department's status quo review, noting, for example, the added assessment mechanisms in the studio art major and the study abroad opportunities for art history. He applauded the "robust contribution" that the department makes to the university through its contribution to the core. The committee then reapproved the department's *current* curriculum (current courses, current majors, current staffing levels).

However, Greene requested that the committee also endorse the following statement:

"Members of the subcommittee also want the minutes to show that:

(a) the subcommittee applauds and admires the depth of forward planning in the art department review document, and the art department's embrace of the review process as a way to think about what they could and would do with their curriculum in the near future if staffing permitted

(b) [the subcommittee has] reviewed the planned curriculum changes and additions art would make if they were to gain additional staffing, and agree with the department that these projected curricula could be staffed in the way they describe."

Luper robustly affirmed these comments.

Wood praised the art department's thoughtfulness about the future, and wondered if the curriculum committee might wish to encourage other departments to emulate art's process. She would charge each department to think more broadly about its curriculum, instead of simply evaluating what it can offer given current constraints.

While acknowledging the merit of such planning, Barry suggested that any such encouragement to the departments be phrased as an invitation, rather than as a formal requirement of the review process. (He worried that adding a question #11, for example, might be viewed by departments as an imposition instead of as an invitation.) At this very moment, independent inspection of the review document (“University of Puget Sound Department and Program Curriculum Review: A Self-study Guide”) revealed that it, in fact, contains the following such invitation:

Invitation

This review provides opportunity for reflection on the overall mission and curriculum of the department or program within the University and the discipline or field. The Curriculum Committee especially invites departmental and program comment on its developing pedagogy, including innovations in technology. The committee further invites comment on the department's or program's long-range plans for continued curriculum development and recommendations for accomplishing those plans, which may include discussion of the human, physical, and financial resources needed to support the department's or program's educational program.

(end insert)

After this revelation, the committee began to ponder:

Should this invitation be moved up in the review document, into the formal questions section? Should this invitation be e-mailed to all departments currently undergoing review?

The pros of emphasizing/broadcasting the invitation (i.e., the curriculum committee is compassionate):

Greene spoke of a department caught between two curricula, and of all departments' facing increased, not decreased, demands to serve the core. He then described an ignoring-pleas-for-staff doomsday scenario: professors who are so overburdened that they have to “pull back”; professors who are so unhappy that they see no problem with students' being unhappy, too.

Barry emphatically reiterated his point from last week: the curriculum committee is the appropriate “formal organ” for faculty's initial airing of concerns about staffing. He affirmed the administration's responsiveness to critical staffing pressures, saying that having required classes continuously staffed by adjuncts is not where the administration intends to “settle or rest.” (For example, seeing a string of adjuncts eventually prompts the administration to open an instructor's position.)

The cons of emphasizing the invitation (i.e., the curriculum committee does not want to overburden faculty, and may be impotent anyway):

There was general fretting about the workloads of both the curriculum committee (which may have to read three reviews per department) and of the reviewers (who already have 10 questions they have to answer).

Barry noted that all staffing decisions have to be evaluated at the macro level, within the “full context of all other demands.” Thus, any opinions expressed by the curriculum committee about staffing should be adequately “contextualized.”¹

Anderson-Connolly wondered if a full-blown review of university staffing was a formal charge to the curriculum committee from the senate. No!

Hale suggested that we have “no clout” with the administration on staffing issues, and that to conspicuously extend the invitation to departments may raise their expectations for future support.

¹ The secretary thanks Professor Barry for being so eminently quotable.

Kline characterized the review process as a formal opportunity to consider what makes an existing program viable. She warned against “front-loading” such assessments by framing the evaluation of a program in terms of its possible augmentation, and encouraged departments to recall their mandate of service to the university as a whole.

Anderson-Connolly suggested that enrollment increases may not be systematic. Perhaps a “radical redesign” of the review process is therefore not warranted, unless we know that a department is under severe stress.

Rousslang wondered if emphasizing this invitation may lead departments to believe that they have to justify their current staffing levels, sowing fear and discontent. (Sable noted that they already have to justify courses with low enrollment.)

The committee’s decision:

The committee agreed that it would be valuable to remind departments (unthreateningly) that an invitation to plan broadly exists. Toward that end, the committee has set up a subcommittee to review the review document. The chair of the review review subcommittee is an enthusiastic Wood.

Foreign language graduation requirement update

A new subcommittee has been formed to consider the handling of retakes of proficiency exams. The esteemed members are Lupher, Rousslang, and a surprised and delighted Wood (chair).

At 8:50 a.m., the membership heaved a collective sigh, and **the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda S. Livingston