

**Curriculum Committee Minutes
October 24, 2001**

Present: Abbott, Barry, Beck, Clark, Derryberry, Greene, Hannaford, Kerrick, Kline, Oldis, Pasco-Pranger, Sable, Sackman, Tomhave, Warning (chair), Washburn, Weinman-Jagosh.

Warning called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Minutes were approved for the 9/26/01 meeting of the Committee.

Internship Subcommittee report:

Tomhave reported that the Subcommittee has met and has sent a critique of the internship programs to Academic and Career Advising.

Latin American Studies Program Review Subcommittee report:

Barry reported on the curriculum review of the Latin American Studies Program. The Program offers a minor. In the Self-study document, the Program expressed concern with the degree of support it receives from the administration; particular concern was expressed about the elimination of certain Study Abroad programs that had supplemented the on campus offerings of the department, and about the lack of a release unit for serving as director of the Program. Barry has contacted Jannie Meisberger about the first concern, and will refer the Program to Terry Cooney about the second. The Program also expressed concern about its place in the new Core, and particularly about its gateway course, Latin American Studies 100. The course, which currently fulfills the International Studies Core requirement, seems to have no place in the new Core, and the Program is concerned that this may bring about lower enrollments in the course. Barry commented that the Program's work on assessment is not very strong, and is based primarily on informal interviews of its minors.

- **Barry M/S/P approval of the Latin American Studies Program review.**

English Department Review Subcommittee report:

Barry reported that Subcommittee continues to make progress in its review of the English Department. The final issue under discussion is the Department's request to extend its major to include ten departmental units.

Academic Calendar:

Washburn explained that the Committee is charged with setting the specific dates for the Academic Calendar, and that these dates are generated using a set of guidelines. She then suggested amendments to those guidelines to drop the six week "Term D" from the guidelines. Term D was a summer term used only by the School of Education and that School has asked that it be dropped.

- **Greene M/S/P amending the guidelines for setting the academic calendar as suggested by Washburn.**

Warning provoked a discussion of whether the Committee should suggest a change to its charges to allow it to simply approve the guidelines for setting the calendar rather than approving specific dates each year. After some discussion, and at Pasco-Pranger's suggestion, the Committee agreed to leave things as they stand.

Washburn presented the specific dates for the 2002-2003 academic calendar.

- **Kline M/S/P (one abstention) the approval of those dates.**

Washburn presented the basic calendar for the 2005-2006 academic calendar.

- **Sable M/S/P the approval of those dates.**

Draft Plan for Evaluation of Core Curriculum:

Barry presented a draft of a plan for assessing the effects of the changes in the Core Curriculum on our students' education; the draft was generated by himself and Randy Nelson, the Director of Institutional Research, at the request of the Board of Trustees. The draft plan lays out a baseline study of students' education under the current Core, and an analysis of student experiences and behaviors after the implementation of the new Core. The plan includes a list of six assessment topics and suggested four methods of assessment: transcript analysis; freshman, senior, and alumni surveys; focus groups; and Curriculum Committee review of individual Core areas. Barry asked the Committee for comments and suggestions and asked for volunteers for a committee to work on the plan.

Beck addressed topic B: "What will be the impact of the new foreign language requirement?" He suggested that this assessment topic might also address the impact that framing the requirement as a proficiency requirement (rather than as a course requirement) has on student attitudes and behaviors.

Greene observed that since the plan addressed the foreign language requirement, which is not a Core requirement, the plan should be thought of as an evaluation of the curriculum as a whole rather than of the Core curriculum. The Committee agreed that this was a more appropriate way of framing the plan since it also addresses how the new Core affects students' use of their electives.

Kline asked about a sentence in the introductory paragraph claiming that the University will "study changes in the curriculum as well as in students' skills and behaviors." She was curious as to how "students' skills" would be measured. Barry answered that that was still to be decided, and that the committee for which he was soliciting volunteers would play a role in making that decision.

Kerrick observed that the impact of moving from the Communications I requirement in the present Core to the First Year Seminars in the new Core might be one of the most significant changes in the new Core. He suggested adding an assessment topic on the effect of this change on students' proficiency in writing. Hannaford agreed that more questions about the effects of the First Year Seminars were needed: Will students ask better questions because of the First Year Seminars? Will they read better?

Greene observed the difficulty of setting a baseline when we already have a gap between our ideals for our students' education and their actual performance. He also pointed out that in many of the assessment areas it will be difficult to isolate the effects of the curriculum from the effects of the co-curriculum. Warning added that proposed changes in the orientation program are also likely to have effects on many of the assessment topics. Greene also pointed out that the new policy on registration for 100- and 200-level courses is also likely to lead to some "transitional happiness or unhappiness" that would effect assessment of student attitudes towards their educational experience. Barry said that some work on studying the effect of the co-curriculum was done in focus groups last year, but agreed that "controlling" for all sorts of variables will be difficult.

Oldis asked about the effect of the new Core and the new registration policy for lower-level classes on upperclassmen. Barry clarified that the new Core would not be available to anyone before freshman entering in Fall 2003; the registration policy is likely to have more effects on

upperclassmen, but some of those difficulties are being prepared for through the advising process. Abbott pointed out that the new registration policy may present problems for students who decide on a major late or decide to change majors; lower-level courses required for the major may not be available to these students. Barry agreed that this was a problem that would need addressing.

Call for course proposals:

Warning urged the Committee members to encourage faculty in their departments to begin submitting courses for the new Core. He also suggested that departments should be giving serious thought to the possible effects of the new Core on their programs.

At 8:48 Weinman-Jagosh M/S/P adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Pasco-Pranger