

## Minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of Wednesday, October 6, 2010

Members Present: Roger Allen, Terry Beck, Derek Buescher, Alyce DeMarais, Kent Hooper, Alisa Kessel, Paul Loeb, Bob Matthews, Amanda Mifflin, Brad Reich, Jonathan Stockdale, Brad, Tomhave, Randy Worland, Alec Wrolson, Steven Zopfi; Visitor: Jane Carlin

### Call to Order

Chair Bob Matthews called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

### Approval of Minutes

**M/S/P** Approval of the minutes of the September 22, 2010 meeting.

### Review of Independent Study Policy

**M/Discussion** To adopt the proposal to change the Independent Study Policy (Appendix I).

Derek to lead discussion: The goal is to reduce the number of Independent Studies, but also to get some oversight over those by instituting a policy that the curriculum committee would review all independent studies. We would try this out for a year. The hope is that there will be less need for independent studies (I.S.). Paul asks how many I.S. we expect. Alyce states that last year there were a total of 53 (including 0.25, 0.5, and 1 unit). Roger suggests that, under this policy the curriculum committee will have to meet during the breaks. Derek states that proposals would be due no less than two weeks prior to pre-registration and this is not necessarily an oversight of content, but forces the applicant to fill out the forms in a timely/substantive manner. Roger asks what the criteria for the review are. Alisa states that she does not support this policy because a framework for evaluation is not in place. "Are we assessing content, etc." If we do this work, we need to have an established set of criteria (which may not be possible.) As a committee we generally moved away from judging the recommendations of our colleagues. Paul states, it didn't used to be that way, we used to be hands on, but now that we are more hands off, this seems like micro-managing, I don't see it as our job. Brad T. states that the faculty is held to a higher standard and they cannot approve their own courses and independent studies don't necessarily get the same level of scrutiny. Paul is concerned that the timeline is too short to approve all of I.S. proposals. Derek states that we are looking at approximately 25 per semester and those numbers will most likely decrease.

Kent asks if there are certain departments that seem to offer a lot of I.S. on a regular basis. In German, I.S. offered to some seniors because they have exhausted all other options. Alyce states that she did not bring the distribution but it is available. Kent recognizes the trend that an I.S. tends to evolve over the semester and therefore may not meet the requirements proposed at the beginning of the semester. The faculty and student work together to shape the direction of the I.S. Derek explains that the reason this oversight came to the curriculum committee is because there are certain departments that are teaching a lot of I.S. and there is a concern that an undue pressure is placed on junior faculty to take on I.S.'s. Jonathan states that this procedure being proposed does not seem to satisfy the concerns, and he is in favor of more faculty autonomy and less committee oversight. There is a difference between I.S. and regular courses, as I.S. offers more one-on-one engagement between professor and student, which far outweighs what the

student receives in a classroom environment; he likes the system as it is. Paul replying to Brad's rationale: I.S. is just one person and should require less oversight than a regular course. Brad T. states that I.S. is still a course; our oversight forces the student to make the I.S. more of her/his responsibility than the professor's responsibility. Kent doesn't mind taking on the responsibility of I.S. Kent compares I.S. to transfer credits and states that he is much more comfortable accepting an I.S. then transfer credits from "Bumblebee Community College." Kent is empathetic with the idea that junior faculty may be forced to take on I.S. and suggests that perhaps professors could get paid for leading I.S. Alisa suggests that we could limit the number of I.S. per professor per semester (e.g. 2 per.) Kent recognizes that I.S. takes up a lot of time. Alisa suggests that a framework could require a set amount of time the student needs with faculty, number of pages written, etc. Alisa recognizes however, that an I.S. does change and shift focus over the semester.

Derek states that there have been instances where multiple students have taken the same I.S. from the same professor during the same semester. The ways I.S. proposals are filled out will have to change slightly with this oversight proposal, including a complete bibliography, a resume, a background of the student, a schedule, and an essay. The change of oversight will facilitate more depth in this process. Roger suggests that we could create minimum standards and a contract with the student. This still allows tremendous amount of flexibility. If we do this across the board then we may not have to look at each one. Jane likes the idea of keeping a log and making students accountable for their time. Steven asks who the students are accountable to. Roger states-the advisor then the department. Brad T. recognizes that there is some value to I.S. but some students manipulate the system (i.e., rushed and unorganized) and the onus of responsibility falls on the faculty member. There needs to be more planning, which will make the I.S. more rigorous. An impartial oversight committee can keep the student more accountable than a faculty member may be able to.

Paul asks Brad if he is willing to work with Derek about creating a feasible framework. Brad agrees. Brad states that this oversight process is not exercising judgment on the faculty member but rather exercising judgment on the student. Kent agrees that we need to hold the student accountable.

**Paul motions to reject this modification Alisa 2<sup>nd</sup>, M/S/Discussion.** Derek wants to hear rationale. Paul explains that I.S. is different than other courses and the proposed oversight procedure is too much micromanagement. Additionally, we don't have criteria and therefore this becomes too much work in a short period of time. Derek states that he would opt for rejecting voting this down and instead add some additional criteria. He believes that it is the responsibility of the curriculum committee to have oversight over things being taught to the students. He is sympathetic to adding more work to the faculty (including the curriculum committee) and hopes that this process will become more streamlined. Oversight will decrease unorganized I.S. Jonathan supports Paul's motion and suggests that timing issues can be addressed by the registrar's office. Jonathan doesn't think the committee needs to be this hands on. Jonathan tells a story of an I.S. that he took in college and recognized how important it was in his academic career. Professor autonomy is important and Paul is in favor of guidelines that are based on principles, not standard "sweat hours" requirements. **M/S/P to reject the proposed independent studies policy that inserts the curriculum committee into process. Motion passed 13:2 w/ Derek and Alyce dissenting.**

### Further discussion on I.S. standards

Alyce states that she hoped we could revise this as there are no standards currently in place. Alyce thinks that we could at least look at proposals and check off on them. Randy asks whether bad proposals only come from low GPA students or do high GPA students submit bad proposals as well. Alisa states that she doesn't think that the curriculum committee would apply the standards as we tend to be laissez-faire and will most likely just stamp off on the proposals, so long as the faculty and student agree on the I.S. Kent iterates that the current proposal doesn't solve any of the problems brought up in this discussion. Bob recognizes that there is still some interest in continuing this conversation. Paul states that he is interested in seeing a formal written set of principals/standards from Derek and Brad. Derek states that he drafted this policy because we were asked to look at this by faculty and academic standards committee. The policy has not been updated since 1979 and it did seem that the guidelines were inconsistent with our current standards. For Derek, having some hoops is sufficient. Derek recognizes that having some standards in place may motivate the student to perform acceptably. We do need to look at what is being produced by the I.S. Alisa states that we need to go back to the drawing board. Alisa asks if we could look at I.S. proposals. Alisa suggests that a working group take on this inquiry. Roger motions that working group four explore the possibilities. **M/S/P. Motion passed.**

### Working Groups

Nothing to report

### Review of modification of curriculum statement

Alyce points out page II letter H. A reflection of a policy that has already been passed. Any comments on the language? As of Monday activity credits have changed and will be on the agenda next meeting. Derek asks when this will take effect. Alyce responds that this will take effect in the fall. Brad states that the Bulletin year will determine which policy applies to the student. We will take this up at our next meeting.

### Adjourn

**M/S/P to adjourn at 9:50**

Respectively submitted by Alec Wrolson

### Appendix I: Proposal to Change Independent Study Policy

This proposal has two parts. Part I is the language of the policy noted on the back of the independent study contract adopted by the Faculty Senate March 5, 1979. Part II is an update to the language in the Bulletin copy, Academic Policies, pgs 312-313. Of note, the language of the policy adopted in 1979 suggests that all independent studies would be one unit and not quarter or half units.

### **Part I**

## INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY (proposed language change)

Independent Study (including Independent Research, Reading/Conference, Directed Study, etc.) is intended to allow students to explore academic areas of special interest not provided by the existing curriculum. It is carried out under the guidance of a member of the faculty and must have the approval of the head of the department in which the course is taken **and the Curriculum Committee.**

Independent Study is available only to junior, senior and graduate students who have a GPA of at least 3.00. Students who do not meet these criteria may petition the Academic Standards Committee to undertake ***an*** independent study.

No more than four (4) units of Independent Study may count toward the baccalaureate degree or two (2) units in a graduate degree. No more than one Independent Study may be undertaken in a term.

For all Independent Study programs, a contract must be completed in detail, approved by the supervising instructor and the department chairperson/school director and submitted **to the Curriculum Committee no less than two weeks prior to the start of registration. The Curriculum Committee shall notify applicants of decisions no less than 3 business days prior to the start of registration. Approved applications for independent study must be submitted** to the Office of the Registrar at the time of registration. The following criteria will be used in the review of Independent Study proposals:

1. Competence and background of the student to deal with the subject proposed. For a unit of credit, the outline of proposed study should indicate an equivalent amount of work to the lecture and study time devoted to a regular class. This equates to a minimum of 135 hours.
2. Résumé of the unique character of the course activities, the educational value of the proposed study in the student's total program of study, the specific objectives, and the justification for taking an individual study program. When any student with limited or no previous experience in the subject area of the Dept./school of proposed study applies for independent study, or when a regular course is proposed to be taken as independent study, the student must secure approval by petition to the Academic Standards Committee.
3. Complete bibliographic reference and resources **that** will be part of the Independent Study. Interviews planned or other resources should be specific. While substitutions and additions may be made as the study progress, resource planning is an integral part of the contract.
4. Regular schedule for reporting progresses on the study, for reporting to the supervising instructor and for final completion of the project is to be included. Regular conferences with the supervising instructor are expected. Therefore, the student and instructor are expected to be on campus. It is possible to arrange to do the work off-campus, provided adequate reasons are given. Satisfactory arrangements will normally be made for faculty supervision of that work.
5. Selection of the grading option at the time of registration, which is subject to change only if all parties approve and the change is made within the specified time period for changing the grade option.

The numbers to be used are: for undergraduate students - Independent Study (IS) 495,496; for graduate students - Independent Study (IS) 695, 696. The 495, 496 numbers are available for all departments/schools wishing to use them. The 695, 696 numbers are available only in departments/schools in which Curriculum Committee has approved the graduate designation.

Each of these may be taken more than once, but no more than four (4) units are acceptable toward the baccalaureate degree or two (2) units toward the graduate degree.

Variable credit is an option but the amount must conform to units normally used in the curriculum.

Passed by Faculty Senate, March 5, 1979.

## **Part II**

Current Bulletin Copy (pgs. 312-313)

### *Independent Study*

Students wishing to do an independent study in academic areas not covered by existing courses in the curriculum may obtain a copy of the Independent Study Policy in the Office of the Registrar. If the conditions required for doing independent study are met, the student may complete and Independent Study Contract and submit it at the time of registration. To do independent study, a student must have junior or senior class standing and a cumulative grade average of at least 3.00. All independent study courses carry the numbers 495 or 496 for undergraduate and 695 or 696 for graduate degree candidates. No more than four independent study courses may count toward the bachelor's degree and no more than two toward a graduate degree. No more than one independent study may be taken in a single term.

### **Proposed Language**

Students wishing to do an independent study in academic areas not covered by existing courses in the curriculum may obtain a copy of the Independent Study Policy in the Office of the Registrar. If the conditions required for doing independent study are met, the student may complete and Independent Study Contract and submit it **to the Curriculum Committee for review no less than two weeks prior to the start of registration. The Curriculum Committee shall notify applicants of decisions no less than 3 business days prior to the start of registration. Approved applications for independent study must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar** at the time of registration. To do independent study, a student must have junior or senior class standing and a cumulative grade average of at least 3.00. All independent study courses carry the numbers 495 or 496 for undergraduate and 695 or 696 for graduate degree candidates. No more than four independent study courses may count toward the bachelor's degree and o

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