

Minutes of Curriculum Committee Meeting, 2/9/2011

Members Present: Roger Allen, Terry Beck, Derek Buescher (chair), Alyce DeMarais, Tatiana Kaminsky, Alisa Kessel, Paul Loeb, Amanda Mifflin(acting secretary), Emelie Peine, Brad Reich, Jonathan Stockdale, Brad Tomhave, Randy Worland, Alec Wrolson, Steven Zopfi.

Call to order: Derek Buescher (8:05 am)

Approval of minutes from the 1-26-11 meeting is moved; unanimous consent to approve minutes.

Working Group Reports

Working group 1: nothing to report

Working group 2: nothing to report

Working group 3:

M/S/P (unanimous) to accept the Psychology Review.

M/S/P (unanimous) to accept the Religion Review. A suggestion was made by WG₃ for department to look further at section on assessment (i.e., follow-up of graduates).

Working group 4: nothing to report

Working group 5: Members indicate that the review of the math department is in progress. Occupational Therapy has requested to have their review moved from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 so that they could incorporate results of their reaccreditation self-review. Approved.

Discussion followed regarding **Teagle Scholars Site Visit** and **Independent Study and Thesis**.

Teagle Scholars Site Visit

Teagle Scholars will be visiting Puget Sound February 15-17 to assist with a review of the senior experience in each department/program and to review our institutional assessment data. The Teagle Scholars will meet with the Curriculum Committee on Wednesday, February 16. A request from the chair was made to obtain more information regarding the format of this meeting. Committee

members were encouraged to invite students to attend the scheduled dinner and student meetings.

Independent study and thesis

Alisa Kessel reported that she and Brad Tomhave have been working on drafting a contract for the independent thesis. Kessel requested to go over a few ideas before formalizing the contract.

Discussion followed of what a thesis should consist of (i.e., how do we distinguish it from seminar, capstone projects, etc.). Kessel presented three suggested requirements:

- Original research project
- Eligibility limited to matriculated seniors
- Required or suggested: Committee of readers, data/evidence collection, oral/public presentation

Kessel investigated the current requirements of departments/programs that currently have a thesis and found that 3 require public presentations, 2 require oral presentations, and 2 did not specify anything about presentation of work. Roger Allen posed the question of what exactly data collection encompasses. Kessel suggested that the language could be modified since data collection doesn't necessarily make sense in certain disciplines. Evidence collection, construed broadly, would make sense.

There was some concern about the language regarding written work, and whether it would look different for Art or Music theses. There was a suggestion that 4-5 different thesis "classes" may be needed, rather than one catch-all independent thesis course. Paul Loeb suggested that we keep the language recorded in the minutes from the last meeting (1-26-11): **"A thesis, on the other hand, is a rigorous academic endeavor that requires original, independent research, culminating in a substantial written analysis of data and/or literature (depending on the field)."**

Discussion followed about whether it was necessary to require an oral presentation component for the thesis. Some members suggested that the requirements include data *analysis*, not just data collection. There was also discussion about whether to use the language "required" or "often required." Some members concerned that the language "original research" may be misconstrued for those undertaking replication of studies or library research theses.

Kessel and Tomhave clarified that we are looking for baseline requirements at this point. There was some concern of whether the independent thesis requirements

would supersede current departmental thesis requirements (i.e., requirement of a presentation, committee, etc.). Some members agreed that being able to communicate research in written *and* verbal contexts is important for students. It was suggested that we might include an oral “defense” component that could be fulfilled in a variety of ways. Most departments/programs that have a thesis do require an oral presentation of some sort. It was suggested that we contact departments that would be served by this independent thesis course to see if requiring a presentation component would be undesirable.

There was some question of whether the committee was overstepping its boundaries by proposing the independent thesis course. Clarification was offered that the issue of creating an independent thesis course arose from the Committee’s charge to review Independent Study, where it was determined that a number of Independent Study courses were really thesis projects, and that some students may want to have it documented as such on their transcripts. The Committee requested more feedback from the departments/programs that this course would serve before proceeding further.

Move to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:00.