

Curriculum Committee Minutes

November 5, 2014

Committee members attending: Rich Anderson-Connolly, Bill Beardsley, Rob Beezer, Luc Boisvert, Nancy Bristow, Gwynne Brown, Lisa Ferrari, Sara Freeman, Lisa Johnson, Nick Kontogeorgopoulos, Julia Looper, Janet Marcavage, Tim Pogar, Elise Richman, Brett Rogers, Allison Simmons, Brad Tomhave

Also attending: Lisa Hutchinson

Meeting was called to order at 8:02.

1) Remarks from the Chair

The next Curriculum Committee meeting will be next week, November 12, because after that we won't have any until December.

2) **M/S/P** to approve the minutes from the 10/24/14 CC meeting.

3) Working Group Reports

WG1: Bristow reported that the WG has been meeting very regularly and has six course proposals to move be accepted as KNOW courses. These are all pre-existing courses that have been revised to fulfill the KNOW guidelines.

EDU 419, American Schools Inside and Out (John Woodward). This is a model proposal; this course has been significantly reconceptualized to meet the KNOW guidelines, and both the memo and syllabus reflect the rubric well. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW.**

EDU 420, Classroom Learning and Teaching (Amy Ryken). Another superb proposal; if she gives permission, the cover memo should be on SoundNet as a model. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW.**

Discussion: should we post only memos, or keep syllabi and memos together so as not to give the impression that what one says about one's course is more important than what actually happens in the course? Would putting both things on SoundNet provide too much material and dilute the effectiveness of the model memo? Members agreed to return to WG reports and postpone this worthwhile discussion.

COMM/AFAM 370, Communication and Diversity (Dexter Gordon). Another beautifully clear and effective memo, and a good syllabus. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW.**

COMM 361, Organizing Difference (Renee Houston), another nice clear fulfillment of the guidelines. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW**

AFAM 375, The Harlem Renaissance (Hans Ostrom). Yet another winner. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW**

AFAM/REL 304, Capital and Captivity (Stuart Smithers). Exciting to see a range of departments represented, albeit mostly 300- and 400-level courses. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW**

Bristow reported that she and Looper (WG 3) met to discuss the KNOW proposals thus far. Generally the proposals clearly reflect the rubric, but there are two recurring places where clarification has been necessary: (1) Some memos or syllabi reflect how the course *content* speaks to the rubric, but not the *methods* of the course: proposers address the “what” but not the “how.” (2) The rubric’s call for KNOW courses to consider the “production of knowledge” is not always clearly answered; this may be implied in the syllabus, but it would be better if proposers addressed it directly.

Looper concurred, adding that the syllabi do not always show clearly where the various components of a KNOW course will occur.

Richman noted that the **Wednesday at 4 at the Center on KNOW proposals (November 19)** will feature her and Jim Evans as panelists, and they welcome input about issues like this that they should talk about in that forum.

Member wondered if the recurring problems with the KNOW proposals are due to unclear language in the rubric, in which case it is somewhat unfair to fault proposers. The distinction between, and relative importance of, “learning objectives” and “guidelines” is not clear, and the two sentences under “learning objectives” are hard to decipher.

Members suggested that the rubric could perhaps be formatted more clearly, with bullet points to break up the long sentences into discrete items, on the curriculum proposal form. That way, the “production of knowledge” item would be less likely to get skipped by proposers.

Members concurred that it’s not due to disciplinary differences that some faculty omit “production of knowledge” in their KNOW proposals.

Member stated that the guidelines were clear enough in his view, but that when posting model proposals on SoundNet we could highlight various strategies that proposers use to talk about their methods, and could organize the models according to their different approaches.

Freeman suggested that it would be desirable to couple the discussion of how best to share model memos and syllabi with the discussion of guidelines for length of proposals.

Bristow, finishing up reporting for WG1, said that the 2 SIMs are still in process; the WG has communicated questions to students and expects revisions soon. The Hispanic Studies review has begun.

WG2: Kontogeorgopoulos reported that the WG discussed the upper-division (UD) requirement. Departments have the right to decide whether their 200-level courses with 2 prerequisites should count for the UD requirement, and the WG affirms that they should have this right. There are 23 200-level courses with 2 prerequisites that count toward UD requirement, and only a couple (French 201 and Spanish 201) that don't, because many students come to Puget Sound already prepared for those.

Kontogeorgopoulos said that the Registrar's Office has asked for clarity about which 200-level courses with 2 prerequisites count and which don't, so **M/S to add the following language to course descriptions:**

“Satisfies the Upper Division Graduation Requirement” (for 200-level courses that do count)

“Does not satisfy the Upper Division Graduation Requirement” (for 200-level courses with 2 prerequisites that departments have elected not to allow to count)

Currently there is no such language. Further, it is not always obvious that a course has 2 prerequisites; sometimes only one is listed in the course description, but that prerequisite has its own prerequisite.

Member asked whether we will now ask that new 200-level courses with 2 prerequisites specify whether or not they satisfy the UD requirement, and Kontogeorgopoulos answered yes.

Member wondered whether the addition of such language only to applicable 200-level courses might confuse students about whether 300-level courses (whose descriptions don't specify) count toward the UD requirement. Consensus was that since 300- and 400-level courses universally count, and since students are a smart bunch, we would not sow confusion by adding specific language to 200-level courses.

Member noted that UD fulfillment is not a “course attribute” that can be used as a filter on PeopleSoft when searching for classes. This would be helpful.

The motion to approve the new bulletin language regarding the UD requirement for 200-level courses with 2 prerequisites passed.

Kontogeorgopoulos reported that he went to WG4's meeting last week to join the discussion about the Curriculum Impact Statement (CIS). This gave him ideas for moving forward on Environmental Policy and Decision Making (EPDM)'s proposal to offer a major.

Kontogeorgopoulos said the WG was continuing discussion of the whole-core review, and discussed ways of soliciting faculty opinions about the core's coherence and appropriateness. The WG will send faculty a survey in early spring, given that faculty are presently existing in a

big dark hole. The survey will be brief, asking questions about the size of the core, whether it fulfills the four stated goals of the core curriculum, and similar questions.

The WG will attend to the EPDM major proposal first.

WG3: Looper reported a similarly busy meeting schedule. The WG met to discuss KNOW proposals and has 3 to bring forward for approval; 3 others are still in process, pending further communication with proposers.

P&G 315, Law and Society (Bill Haltom), has a clear proposal and meets guidelines. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW.**

PHIL 390, Gender and Philosophy (Ariela Tubert) clearly meets criteria. **M/S/P to approve as KNOW.**

PSY 373, Perceiving Self and Other (Carolyn Weisz) fits the guidelines down to the title! **M/S/P to approve as KNOW.**

WG4: Rogers reported that Kontogeorgopoulos joined the WG for its good discussion of the CIS. (Rogers wondered, and received no satisfaction regarding, whether CIS was correctly “Curriculum” or “Curricular” Impact Statement.) The WG hopes to have a draft soon. They have been referring to the draft put together by Johnson, Beardsley, and Anderson-Connolly last year, which is helpful. The WG is considering the possible need for two things: (1) developing a procedure for proposers that is comparable to the cover memos that are used for syllabi, or the proposals students create for SIMs; (2) facilitating a process that would create transparency, clarity, and public discussion of possible new majors, programs, minors, or emphases. This would help the broader community to be invested in a new program.

Rogers also noted that the WG is moving forward on the 82 pages of delight that comprise the Theater Arts curriculum review, and there is a SSI2 proposal that the WG will attend to soon.

Freeman thanked the WGs for their hard work, particularly on the KNOW deluge.

4) Old Business: Timeline for Approving SSI Proposals

The goal is to make a calendar for future CC chairs so they know when things need to happen. There are two floods of proposals to deal with quickly, one in fall and one in spring (March).

Tom have said that given the Registrar's Office is working on next year's schedule right now, and that in the spring Advising is making contact with next year's first-year students about their seminars, it would be ideal to know in December what will be offered next year.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- It would be nice for the CC to have enough time between when proposals come in and when they *have* to be approved for communication and thoughtful deliberation to take place. If deadlines were earlier, this would give the process more room.
- Before 2008, the deadline for proposing spring semester courses was in mid-September, and faculty routinely missed it. The change to the current early-October deadline (and, for fall courses, March) was accompanied by the understanding that this was a firm deadline, and many more people have been meeting it. When faculty still need an extension, sometimes that's still possible (particularly if it's a proposal the Associated Deans Office can handle on its own).
- If we were to make the deadlines earlier again, we would have to maintain a relatively hard line about them being real deadlines.
- Perhaps the burden should be on faculty to plan ahead and adhere to an early deadline, not on the CC to set a later deadline and then act with lightning speed.
- Since the beginning of a semester is a difficult time for faculty to think about planning future courses, what if we moved deadlines *much* earlier, to the end of the previous semester (i.e., the deadline for proposing spring classes would be at the end of the prior spring)? On the down side, this would keep faculty from using the summer for planning spring classes. It would also penalize faculty who benefit from having a bit later deadline and who make every effort to meet that deadline.
- We might consider a two-tiered structure: an early deadline for most proposers, but a later one for those who are pressed into proposing because there's a need for more of a particular course (e.g., an SSI). This is already *de facto* the case, but we could formalize it, or at least create a clear protocol for ourselves on the CC about which cases merit extending a deadline.
- Having a single deadline is cleaner and more of a statement to proposers than an actual tiered system would be.
- Whenever the deadline is, reminding faculty about it early on would be helpful.
- If the CC is going to be able to plan and be thoughtful about proposals, deadlines need to be firm.
- Ferrari, Freeman, Rogers, and Hutchinson are going to convene to come up with a calendar for this year's CC and future ones.

5) Old Business: CC/Committee on Diversity Collaboration/Research

Freeman reported that there's nothing to report, but she is getting in touch with department chairs about looking at answers to Question 6 on their departmental curricular reviews.

6) Curriculum Impact Statement (CIS)

Rogers said that WG4 is trying to think of ways that the campus community could be part of public conversations about new majors and programs, because many people beyond the proposers and the CC are involved in and have knowledge of issues relevant to potential new programs, such as short- and long-term needs, staffing, course releases, space, service obligations, enrollment obligations, etc.

Some of the mechanisms that WG4 has discussed include posting proposals on SoundNet with an open comment period, holding a public forum for discussion of proposed new programs, bringing proposals to Faculty Meetings for discussion (but not for passage, as that is the CC's work).

The WG is trying to figure out what the process, and the timeline for the process, should be, from CIS to CC approval. Any ideas about this would be appreciated by the WG, because it's a big task.

Discussion ensued:

- The WG discussed having a process wherein proposers were required to inform and solicit feedback from those departments directly impacted by new programs.
- There have been instances in the past where a program was approved and then departments whose classes were part of the new program were surprised to discover their involvement in a new program after it was already approved.
- Current CIS has language that asks proposers to submit evidence that they have communicated with affected departments.
- The CIS draft from last spring asks for (1) a statement identifying which departments, programs, or schools are impacted by the proposed program, (2) a statement that all directors or chairs have been identified, and (3) statements from all directors or chairs (presumably sent via e-mail) that they support the new program.
- There are lingering questions: what exactly do proposers need to discuss with chairs? Where in the process does this communication happen? Is mere notification and consent, perhaps via e-mail, what's required, or is it face-to-face conversation that we want to see happen? Do people have to sign a form stating that they talked to each other?
- Perhaps the place for these conversations to happen is in the planning phase of a new program; what could come with the proposal is a more basic affirmation from affected programs that they have been notified and can support the new program with existing resources.

- Transparency and feedback are good things, but ultimately the CC will have to decide whether to recommend that a new program be approved, and pass that recommendation on to the full faculty, along with our rationale, and then they should be the ones to vote. That is where the authority lies.
- At other institutions, it's not the faculty that makes these decisions.
- In practice, the CC does what it does and is seldom reviewed by faculty, but according to the Code and Bylaws, the Senate could put a hold on anything they see in the minutes that we've done, just as the faculty has the right to do this with regard to actions taken by the Senate. Every faculty committee is acting on behalf of the full faculty, and in theory the faculty has the final say on every committee decision.
- It would be nice to have something to look at before we discuss this further at next week's meeting, and WG4 will endeavor to provide such a thing.

Freeman affirmed that the next meeting will be Wednesday, November 12, at 8 a.m. We will talk about CIS and return to the guidelines for cover memos.

M/S/P to adjourn, 9 a.m.

Submitted by Gwynne Brown