

## Curriculum Committee Minutes

February 25, 2015

**Committee members attending:** Richard Anderson-Connolly, Rob Beezer, Luc Boisvert, Nancy Bristow, Gwynne Brown, Jane Carlin, Jim Evans, Lisa Ferrari, Sara Freeman, Lisa Johnson, Nick Kontogeorgopoulos, Alan Krause, Julia Looper, Elise Richman, Brett Rogers, Allison Simmons, Brad Tomhave

**Also attending:** Lisa Hutchinson

**1) Call to Order** at 8:00 a.m.

**2) Remarks from the Chair**—Freeman commented that, depending on today's meeting, CC won't need to meet March 4.

**3) M/S/P** to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2015 meeting.

### **4) Working Group Reports**

**WG 1:** Bristow said that the WG met yesterday to discuss the transfer foreign language (FL) credit question. There was consideration of whether this was a matter for the Academic Standards Committee. The WG met with representatives from FL and reached what seems to be a workable solution: students would be allowed to bring in a single course for transfer credit, and then would complete the 102 course on campus. Tomhave will write this solution up and run it by FL faculty before sending it on to ASC; then a joint proposal (CC/ASC) will be sent to the Faculty Senate. This policy will affect a small number of students a year—maybe 10—but will save the FL faculty from having to deal with it every time this comes up. (ASC has declined to take up student petitions about this in the past.)

**WG2:** Kontogeorgopoulos reported that the WG met last week and will again tomorrow, to discuss the survey about the core curriculum. They are working with Ellen Peters in Institutional Research to develop the survey questions. Peters said that since students were not being surveyed a lot this year, it might be helpful to survey the students about the core as well. The data that is collected will be passed along next year to whatever committee takes up the question of whether to revise the core.

WG 2 has also started on African American Studies' major proposal.

Kontogeorgopoulos then brought back the seconded motion from February 18 to approve the linked ENVR major. In a lengthy discussion, the following topics were raised:

- It would be desirable for the CC to consider what a linked major (LM) should be: how many units, whether double-counting would be permitted, etc. It would be better to construct the category first and let ENVR be the first instance of it, rather than to approve

something in this new category without considering what the category should look like in the future.

- It would be better to have a serious conversation with all the stakeholders in interdisciplinary minors and emphases, to discuss the implications of a new LM category and reach a consensus. Otherwise we risk approving something that could break the system.
- We need to consider not only *what* a LM should be, but *why* something should be a LM, so that in the future CC knows why a proposed LM should be approved as such.
- Would ENVR be a forced double major or a super-minor?
- Does *any* major really work with a linked ENVR major? (For example, music + ENVR?)<sup>1</sup>
- The ENVR major proposers did not want to limit the possible primary majors, because environmental studies can be woven into a variety of fields in sometimes surprising ways. This is a matter for advising. The proposers didn't want to be proscriptive: "Only the following majors are relevant to environmental studies..."
- If a student's first major was one of the unit-heavy science or music majors, they could end up with 24 units' worth of coursework for their majors, which could potentially make it impossible for a student to complete all the core requirements in 32 units total (unless AP credits were brought in). If the ENVR major allowed double-counting, that would alleviate this problem somewhat.
- The fact that students cannot feasibly graduate in four years if they choose certain double majors does not mean that those majors should not be offered. Not everything is possible. This is a matter for advising.
- If it's impossible to link an ENVR major to a 17-unit music major, this shouldn't be held against ENVR. (Nor should it be held against music.)
- Several members expressed support for the ENVR major and appreciation for the amount of excellent work done by the proposers. Members expressed chagrin at holding up approval of the very fine proposal because there are larger structural issues pertaining to the LM category that need to be resolved first.
- It was recollected that the guests at the February 18 meeting noted that there were strong opinions on both sides regarding double-counting.
- Possible guidelines for LMs: no restrictions on double-counting, 8-unit maximum.
- Having LMs be 8 units and emphases be 7 seems an arbitrary distinction.
- The difference between a LM and an emphasis seems to have nothing to do with curriculum. It's more about perceptions and expectations.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes-taker Brown refrained from responding at the time, but humbly offers the following link, on one connection between music and environmental studies:

[http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2015/02/john\\_luther\\_adams\\_grammy\\_winner\\_for\\_become\\_ocean\\_discusses\\_politics\\_and.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2015/02/john_luther_adams_grammy_winner_for_become_ocean_discusses_politics_and.html)

- Counterpoint: a major has sequencing and a capstone element, while an emphasis doesn't. Also, an emphasis allows unlimited double-counting with the core. A LM could have a limit to how much double-counting would be allowed, but still allow some. Maybe ENVR's 3 electives could double count, or a maximum of 2 units in the major could double count, or up to half of the major's units should be allowed to double count.
- The problem with a LM policy stating that *electives* must be allowed to double count is that not every LM will have a clearly delineated category of electives.
- Currently the ENVR minor allows "general" electives to double count but not "policy" electives. This came about by mistake (none of the electives were supposed to be allowed to double count), but the error was never fixed. Advisors in STS counsel students who are minoring in ENVR to take advantage of this loophole.
- The ENVR proposal is actually 8+ units, since there is the experiential requirement which could be unit-free (e.g., an internship or study abroad) or could be a 1-unit course. If CC decrees that LMs are capped at 8 units, we need to be sure we're not letting our first approved LM be an 8+ unit anomaly.
- There is something to be said for an experiential component that isn't specifically tied to units. What matters is the experience, and that's what will count for future employers.
- Emphases are currently, officially (if not consistently in practice), 7-9 units.
- The ENVR proposal is for quite a technical, policy-focused major—maybe one that's too techy to be a primary major in a liberal arts setting. This is perhaps the best rationale for it being a LM.
- 8 units should be the limit for a LM. If a proposed LM wants to be 9 units, it can't be a LM.
- The policy language about special interdisciplinary majors (SIMs) states that these may be in an "emergent field"—something that was specifically mentioned by the ENVR major proposers. Also, the guidelines for SIMs state that a SIM is meant to allow a student to pursue their interests without double majoring.
- It would be fine for a student to take 9 units in a LM. They just can't be required to do so by the structure of the LM. The "hard line" 8-unit limit is on the program and its curriculum, not on the students.
- CC should not approve ENVR's proposal and then figure out what we want a LM to look like and ask ENVR to make changes to their major that we've approved.
- Kontogeorgopoulos said that he would draft some tentative guidelines (8-unit limit, a certain amount of double-counting allowed) and talk to the proposers about the issues raised in discussion. It is possible that ENVR would be willing to make changes requested by CC based on our long-range thinking about the new LM category, and that we could then approve the proposal.
- Part of the desirableness of talking to the ENVR proposers about all this is that they have spent the last five years considering this proposal for a LM!

- It would be desirable to vote separately on the ENVR proposal and on the parameters of a new LM category. It would also be desirable to vote separately on the different aspects of the LM: unit limit, double-counting, etc.

**Motion to approve ENVR major proposal re-tabled.**

**WG3:** Looper reported that the WG met last week and started looking at SOAN syllabi. They also started the Mathematical Approaches Core review. In 2011, the math department worked hard on new language for the core document which was never implemented. The WG is going to look into this.

**WG4:** Rogers said that the WG had an exciting and vigorous meeting last week. It is drafting a response to the Theatre Arts review. The revised BMB review has been received and will soon be taken up. The WG has also drafted a Curricular Impact Statement (CIS), which was included with today's meeting agenda and which everyone can now tuck away because the meeting is ending.

There will indeed be a meeting on March 4, as matters such as the CIS draft and the 9-unit major limit are still awaiting attention.

**8) M/S/P to adjourn at 8:50.**

Submitted by Gwynne Brown