

## Curriculum Committee Minutes

April 8, 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, Janet Marcavage, Tim Pogar, Elise Richman, Brett Rogers, Allison Simmons, Brad Tomhave.

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

**2) Remarks from the Chair:** Freeman said that there is lots to do!

**3) M/S/P to approve the minutes from the 3/25/15 CC meeting**

**4) Associate Deans Office Report on delegated actions**

Ferrari reported that since February 4, she has taken one or more actions on some 38 courses: 15 new courses added, 9 changes to title or short title, 5 changes to prerequisites, 6 changes to description, 2 new numbers, 2 removed courses.

Freeman noted that the written report hasn't gone out to the CC yet, but will be sent this afternoon. There were no questions from the CC.

**5) Working Group Reports**

**WG1: Bristow** moved to approve **GQS 201, Intro to Gender, Feminist and Queer Studies**, as fulfilling the **KNOW requirement**. She said that it is a great fit for the KNOW rubric, as was well represented in the submitted syllabus and cover letter. This is one of the few 200-level KNOW courses approved so far. **M/S/P to approve.**

Bristow said that the WG has completed its review of the Hispanic Studies Department, and moved that the review prepared by the WG be accepted by the CC. After a brief discussion and praise for the WG's collegial and detailed work, **M/S/P to accept the report on the Hispanic Studies Department review.**

The WG will complete the School of Business and Leadership review for the next meeting.

**WG2:** Kontogeorgopoulos reported that the **faculty survey about the core** will close on April 10, and urged everyone to complete it. Someone from WG2 will present a summary of the results to the CC. Kontogeorgopoulos will hand the data over to whatever body is formed next year, and Freeman should include the data in her report to the Faculty Senate at year's end, to help the Senate decide whether to create an ad hoc committee to explore the possibility of revising the core. Service on such an ad hoc committee would be a big job, and should be the entirety of its members' service assignment; clearly it is too much work for a single WG on CC, and really it goes beyond the scope of the CC itself.

Kontogeorgopoulos noted that Ellen Peters may add some of the questions about the core from this faculty survey to this year's student survey, which would give a future ad hoc committee additional

information to consider. Last year Ellen gathered together lots of info that includes assessment of outcomes. All of this is too much for a WG to analyze—a great deal of work has gone into the WG’s efforts just to establish whether there is widespread faculty support for revisions to the core—but will be useful for a future ad hoc committee if one is convened.

Freeman said that part of the Senate charge for the year is to reflect on committee workload! She feels confident that the end-of-year report will say a lot about the incredible weight of the CC’s workload, especially if we want to do our work well.

Kontogeorgopoulos said that the lack of clarity as to the WG’s task (“Review of the core as a whole”) led to a slow start, as much time had to be spent figuring out what would be a meaningful and realistic goal.

**WG3: Looper** reported that the WG will meet on April 13<sup>th</sup> with faculty who teach in the Math Approaches area. The WG has also been corresponding with faculty in SOAN about that review.

**WG4: Rogers** reported that the WG has met twice since the last full CC meeting.

**M/S/P to accept the WG’s report on the Theatre Arts Curriculum Review.** Rogers praised the review and urged others to look to it as an admirable model. Bristow said that the same applies to the Hispanic Studies review.

Rogers raised the issue of the **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology program review**, which the WG has met three times to discuss. Fundamentally, it is not clear to the WG what curricular function BMB performs, nor why they need to do a curriculum review. BMB was created 2006; this year’s CC review is BMB’s first. Biochemistry is run under the aegis of the Chemistry Department, while Molecular Biology is run under the aegis of Biology, which included Molecular Biology in its 5-year review in 2011. While members of the Biology and Chemistry Departments met six times to collaborate on the BMB review, there aren’t regular joint faculty meetings, and they don’t have a standing committee to meet on a regular basis. One argument that has been voiced in WG meetings is that, in a world where everyone has plenty of things to do, and given that BMB majors are governed by other departments, perhaps the CC does not need to review the BMB program. Another view is that the WG should bounce the review back and ask for a clearer accounting of the curricular function of the BMB program and why it doesn’t have the curricular things that would make it a coherent program.

In discussion, some CC members said that they felt BMB could be adequately covered in the Biology and Chemistry Departments’ reviews. Rogers wondered whether such a policy for BMB would set a precedent for other interdisciplinary programs’ review procedures. A member noted that BMB is multidisciplinary, not interdisciplinary.

A member offered an analogy: BMB is a box, and it contains two BS degrees: Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The difficulty is that the WG is asked to review the box, which is not exactly a program. There is no “Intro to BMB,” for instance. A member noted that this box contains two separate tracks, one through Chemistry and one through Biology. Another suggested that BMB is more of an

administrative entity, helpful for grant writing, as well as a useful label for attracting students, than a curricular one.

A member offered a bit of cultural history: organismal biologists are held in low esteem by those who do molecular biology; that is an underlying reason for wanting a split. Faculty in biology and chemistry said we should do something about molecular chemistry, but discovered they wanted to do it different ways.

The CC reached a consensus that since Question 4b for 5-year reviews specifically mentions in-house programs such as BMB, it will be included every 5 years in the Biology and Chemistry reviews, and thus does not need a separate curriculum review. Freeman will talk to CC's Senate liaison and make sure that the Senate is on board with this conclusion. Assuming they are, Rogers will write a letter to BMB giving them feedback and thanking them for their hard work on the last review they will ever have to write.

Rogers next brought up an **SSI1 and SSI2 proposal from Communication Studies**, for a course called "Contemporary Controversies" that, according to the cover letter, has been designed as a shell so that different faculty could teach the course as they liked. The course is not going to be taught by the faculty member proposing it, who provided only a rough framework for the course. Every other SSI proposal has come from an individual seeking to teach a course matching the SSI rubric to their own content. WG 4 isn't sure what to do. Approving this course would set a precedent for every department to create a shell SSI, which could ultimately put the CC out of the business of reviewing SSIs.

A member noted that this sounds rather like a 400-level "special topics" course. Rogers agreed, except that in this case there is also the SSI rubric in play. Ferrari said that she approves special topics courses, but courses fulfilling requirements such as SSI or KNOW come to the CC.

After discussion, consensus was reached that the proposal needs to be more specific about course content before it can be approved.

The CC will meet on April 22 and May 6.

**6) M/S/P to adjourn, 8:53**

Submitted by Gwynne Brown