

# Curriculum Committee

## Minutes of the October 16, 2015 Meeting

**Present:** Richard Anderson-Connolly (Chair), Robert Beezer (Secretary), Lori Blake (ex-officio, Registrar's Office), Peggy Burge, Luc Boisvert, David Chiu, James Evans, Lisa Ferrari, Nick Kontogeorgopoulos, Janet Marcavage, Gabe Newman, Alec Pankow.

**Visitors:** Renee Houston.

The meeting was called to order by ANDERSON-CONNOLLY at 1:00 PM in the McCormick Room.

The minutes of the October 9, 2015 meeting were approved as drafted.

**Working Group 2 Report** BOISVERT brought forward a course for approval as a Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry.

SSI 2 186, *Presidential Rhetoric*, proposed by Professor John Koch (Communication Studies).

**Action:** Approved.

BOISVERT reported that the group had met Thursday for their review of the Natural Science Approaches core requirement. Their next step will be to survey the faculty who regularly teach in this area. There is information from students available via the Institutional Research Office.

**Working Group 3 Report** As RICHMAN was on her way to join the Southwest Semester program, FERRARI presented a course to meet the Humanistic Approaches core requirement.

COMM 171, *Introduction to American Public Address*, proposed by Professor John Koch (Communication Studies). **Action:** Approved.

As FERRARI had exhausted her proxy, there was no more to her report.

**Working Group 4 Report** KONTOGEOURGOPOULOS announced that his group had received a course proposal just this morning for the KNOW graduation requirement and would bring that forward soon.

**Cycle of Curricular Review** ANDERSON-CONNOLLY circulated a schedule of curriculum review areas (departments, programs, core areas) putting each on a seven-year cycle, extended from the current five-year cycle. MARCAVAGE commented that this was a great idea, a sentiment apparently shared by all of the experienced faculty in the room. ANDERSON-CONNOLLY moved that the committee approve the new schedule, which elicited no dissent. **Action:** Approved.

**Experiential Learning** ANDERSON-CONNOLLY reminded the group of our charge from the Faculty Senate.

Draft guidelines for evaluating short, study away, experiential learning and other “new format” course proposals.

This charge will be taken up by Working Group 1, but will also be the province of the full committee as necessary. ANDERSON-CONNOLLY then introduced Professor Renee Houston in her new role as Associate Dean of Community Engagement and Experiential Learning.

HOUSTON circulated a short list of some existing courses that could be taken as examples of experiential learning. She also circulated information on how credit hours are determined for traditional courses, internships and co-operatives. There was a long discussion on various aspects of the desire to “grow a culture that values a set of meaningful experiences and reflection tied to the curriculum.”

- There was much discussion about how to award course credit to students, and some discussion about awarding credit to faculty. HOUSTON noted that these types of courses and activities are very labor-intensive.
- KONTORGEOPOULOS asked about the situation for science laboratories, to which BOISVERT and EVANS reminded us that a science course is typically 1.0 units, with nothing additional for the laboratory. MARCAVAGE remarked that there is a similar situation with art classes.
- KONTORGEOPOULOS asked FERRARI about the distinction between activity credit and academic credit. The response included original creation of knowledge, connection with established departments or programs, and a resemblance to a subset of a course being necessary for academic credit, while activity courses have a “looser” structure. As a contrast, HOUSTON described the academic activities of the debate team, which earns activity credit.
- BOISVERT introduced the many ways science students do research: as independent coursework during the year, in UPS summer programs where they are paid, and at similar summer programs on other campuses.
- ANDERSON-CONNOLLY was interested in taking a step back and asking more fundamental questions about why we should make experiential learning a priority. What is the motivation? Why are some courses singled out for an experiential learning designation? What is the payoff? HOUSTON responded that there is literature about meaningful experiences outside the classroom connecting students with their coursework in transformative ways.
- ANDERSON-CONNOLLY sees three levels in experiential learning: (1) it can be transformative for the student, (2) it can cycle back into traditional learning, (3) it can be helpful with employment.
- FERRARI mentioned that we needed to decide boundaries, such as we already do in deciding what deserves academic credit and what does not.
- KONTORGEOPOULOS sees experiences as enhancements. But he had trouble organizing a course structure for a summer trip to Thailand for students from his spring course.

- HOUSTON expressed the thought that it might be too early to be drafting guidelines, without more experience with these types of courses.
- ANDERSON-CONNOLLY was sympathetic, though unwilling to say just when the right time would be. It would likely be an iterative process.
- EVANS expressed approval for the general idea, but cautioned that it would necessarily weaken the existing academic program and worried about making it a universal requirement. He is “appalled” by proposals he has heard for students writing reflections about work or athletics. HOUSTON replied that there is likely not capacity in the curriculum for this to be a universal requirement.
- As lead for Working Group 1, EVANS asked what information is already available. Dean Bartanen chaired the Experiential Learning Group last year and their thirty-five page report is public. It will be made more readily available to the committee at the SoundNet site. Professor Jeff Matthews (Business and Leadership) has conducted interviews and prepared a slide presentation for the Board of Trustees. HOUSTON will see if that can be made available.
- BOISVERT cautioned that these courses would require more resources and he hoped they would be provided.

**Announcements from the Chair** ANDERSON-CONNOLLY concluded the meeting with three announcements.

Our liaison with Faculty Senate, Jonathan Stockdale, has informed ANDERSON-CONNOLLY that the International Education Committee is also studying the experiential learning initiative. FERRARI volunteered that she also sits on that committee and could serve as liaison between them and us. ANDERSON-CONNOLLY accepted the offer.

Having just approved the new seven-year curricular review cycle, the committee has two more reviews to conduct. Mindful of the need to load-balance the working groups, ANDERSON-CONNOLLY has given Economics to Working Group 2, and Physical Education to Working Group 4.

In news about Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry adding a KNOW overlay, ANDERSON-CONNOLLY reported that the item will be on the agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting on October 26, 2015.

The motion to adjourn was made by MARCAVAGE, professor of Art, at 2:01 PM, initiating Fall Break for some of the assembled. The next meeting of the full committee will be October 30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert Beezer