

Curriculum Committee Minutes September 16, 1998

Present: Barnett, Cannon, Goleeke, Grunberg, Hooper, Kirkpatrick, Kline, Livingston, Mehlhaff (Chair), Pinzino, Proehl, Stevens, Sugimoto, Warning, Heavner, Bartanen, Tomhave, Washburn

Absent: Bruce

At 5:04 p.m. Mehlhaff called the meeting to order.

Minutes. **Goleeke M/S/P to approve the minutes for the meeting of 9 September 1998.**

Subcommittees. Washburn distributed copies of a summary grid showing when each committee member cannot meet; subcommittee chairs can use this information in planning subcommittee meetings.

Mehlhaff announced that subcommittee assignments for departmental quinquennial reviews are complete (see below) and that subcommittee assignments for core-area reviews should be available next week.

Art: Goleeke, Hooper (Chair), Pinzino, Warning, Bartanen

Biology: Bruce, Cannon (Chair), Sugimoto, Bartanen

Economics: Grunberg (Chair), Heavner, Livingston, Stevens, Bartanen

Education: Kirkpatrick, Proehl (Chair), Warning, Bartanen

Foreign Languages and Literature: Cannon, Goleeke (Chair), Pinzino, Tomhave, Bartanen

International Political Economy: Bruce (Chair), Hooper, Livingston, Bartanen

Music: Kline, Proehl, Stevens (Chair), Sugimoto, Bartanen

Physical Education: Grunberg, Kirkpatrick, Kline (Chair), Tomhave, Bartanen

Other subcommittee assignments now in place are as follows:

Core Curriculum Assessment: Cannon, Kline (Chair), Livingston, Proehl, Bartanen

Humanistic Perspective: Goleeke (Chair), Hooper, Pinzino, Bartanen

Special Interdisciplinary Major (SIM): Barnett, Kirkpatrick (Chair), Warning, Tomhave, Bartanen

Core curriculum assessment. For the remainder of the meeting the committee considered the core curriculum assessment project launched last year in connection with the University's reaccreditation self-study and again in the committee's charges from the Faculty Senate: "Analyze data from pilot assessments of Fine Arts, Science in Context, and Communication One core-areas and examine feasibility of ongoing, systematic assessment of the Core Curriculum."

Bartanen reviewed the progress of this project and stated the objective as the creation of a process by which the core curriculum could be assessed on an ongoing basis; the immediate goal is to get to the point where we can make some judgments on the basis of pilot assessment projects. She distributed three documents: (1) Chapter 2 of the University's draft reaccreditation report, (2) a flow chart entitled "Curriculum Review Process" that will be part of the chapter, and (3) an outline table entitled "Self-Study of the Core Curriculum." Bartanen commented that in the work of assessment the University is well ahead because we have a core curriculum and because we have a curriculum-review process; referring to pp. 6-7 of chapter 2, she pointed out that the work the committee now does with regard to the core curriculum fits into a broader effort at educational assessment at the University.

Calling attention to the "Self-Study" document, Bartanen noted the categories as derived from the work of Peter Ewell. In terms of the "designed curriculum," the University's program is in good shape. In terms of the "expectational curriculum," which encompasses the core, the Curriculum Committee can assess conditions and make adjustments. In terms of the "delivered curriculum," the

University's program seems in good shape. With reference to the last category, the "experienced curriculum," Bartanen said this is the area in which we can do more: Are students *experiencing* the curriculum we have designed, expected, and delivered? This area of inquiry has attracted the greatest concern in the whole assessment movement, and it is the context for the Curriculum Committee's assessment project in response to the question "How do we know that the Core works in each of its rubrics in terms of student learning outcomes?" The committee's task is to answer the question "What is the process by which to assess the success of the Core Curriculum?" ("Self-Study of the Core Curriculum," p. 2).

Bartanen reported on data from Julie Neff-Lippman's assessment study of Writing Across the Curriculum; analysis of the data shows that students do write better as they proceed through the University.

Kline, who is the one member of last year's Core Curriculum Assessment subcommittee still on the committee, commented on the meaning of assessment as distinguished from the "grading" of students' achievement. The effort of assessment is program focused and also is about the relation of teaching and the curricular experience of our students. Assessment involves evidence that is useful in a process of making changes better to fulfill educational objectives.

Kline distributed two handouts, one entitled "Core Assessment Timeline," including "Phase Two" in fall 1998 and the expectation of a recommendation from the committee on or before 1 November 1998; and the other entitled "Pilot Assessment of the Core, Spring 1998," briefly indicating the efforts in the pilot projects in Communication I, Fine Arts, and Science in Context. Data from these limited studies is ready for consideration and analysis toward a document providing our "recommendation for an ongoing plan" by 1 November.

Mehlhoff suggested a methodology for accomplishing the task in Phase Two: Establish three focus groups, each to analyze the data in one of the pilot core projects and report to the committee. This work could take place through workshops during one or two committee meetings.

In discussion committee members inquired about the kinds of data accumulated in the pilot projects (Kirkpatrick), expressed concern about added layers of bureaucracy in instituting an ongoing process of assessment (Hooper, Goleeke), and asked about what kinds of action might take place on the basis of information revealed by the pilot projects (Grunberg). In response to Grunberg's question about what would happen if we find out our students are *not* learning what we expect them to learn, Bartanen said that the committee then would talk about this situation and consider what steps to take. Mehlhoff reminded that our current effort is to develop the tools of assessment, not to assess the core itself; earlier, Kline stated the goal as providing an ongoing systematic process of assessing the "experienced curriculum," and Bartanen commented that the committee's job in the future may not be to *do* the assessment but to consider the information provided by assessment in making policy decisions.

ACTION: Barnett M/S/P that we adopt the methodology outlined by the Chair. (See the highlighted paragraph above.)

Stevens moved that we adjourn, and the committee adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
16 September 1998