

Curriculum Committee Minutes November 4, 1998

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

At 5:05 p.m. Mehlhaff began the meeting.

Minutes. **Goleeke M/S/P to approve the minutes for the meeting of 28 October 1998.**

Announcements. Mehlhaff announced that the committee will not meet on 11 November 1998 because of the scheduled Faculty Meeting and then suggested cancellation of the meeting on 25 November, which is "probably a very unlikely meeting date" because it is the day before the Thanksgiving break; 9 December, as the last day of classes, is "probably not" a meeting day but we may need a meeting that day. Mehlhaff summarized that the committee has two more assured meetings, 18 November and 2 December, and might also have to meet on 9 December. Mehlhaff requested that relevant subcommittees try to complete departmental or core reviews by 2 December.

Mehlhaff also called attention to the report of curricular actions by the Associate Deans' Office and called for any objections; no objections came forth.

Subcommittees.

CORE CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT. Kline distributed a one-page document that is the revised draft "Core Assessment Plan" produced by the subcommittee. The plan calls for a selection of faculty to determine the schedule and mechanisms of assessment, to obtain whatever assessment data comes as a result of the application of the tools of assessment, and to report to the Curriculum Committee, which will review the materials in the "fallow year" (that is, the year set aside every five years intended to have no departmental reviews so the committee can review the entire core curriculum). The reports submitted to the committee should include relevant faculty goals in keeping with the faculty "Curriculum Statement," student accomplishments, and recommendations for improvements. The plan assumes the Curriculum Committee to be the audience for assessment information, not the creator or analyst of the mechanisms of assessment.

ACTION: Kline M/S/P to approve the draft core assessment plan as amended to include an additional sentence at the end of item #3a: "The Office of the Associate Deans will serve as a resource in convening the faculty groups" (Proehl M/S/P the amendment). Note: This motion passed with one "NO" vote and one ABSTENTION.

This motion assumes the final polishing of the words and punctuation of the draft "Core Assessment Plan" before submission to the Faculty Senate and RASCAL.

The two significant points of discussion were (1) when over the four years between fallow years the assessments actually should take place and (2) on what basis will an assessment committee from among the faculty teaching in each core area come into existence. The committee assumes the possibility that the assessments might occur in the fourth year of the four-year span, but that possibility is not inconsistent with appropriate assessment and reporting; moreover, it has the advantage at the moment of permitting time to accommodate changes in the core curriculum currently under faculty deliberation. The committee informally changed the words "A selection of faculty teaching in each core area" to "Representative faculty teaching in each core area" in order to clarify the expectation that faculty teaching in the area would designate an assessment committee for the area. Proehl's amendment (see the motion, above) clarifies that the Office of the Associate Deans will instigate and assist the process of convening the faculty groups.

Mehlhoff stated the expectation that the procedure is a cumulative process that will benefit from precedent and lead to ever improved tools of assessment. Washburn suggested that even something like a deliberate question on a final examination could determine "student outcomes" in a given core area; the job of assessment may not be as onerous as some might assume. Heavner asked if the results of the assessments could bring new questions to the "Senior Survey" conducted by the Office of Institutional Research; Bartanen replied in the affirmative. Kirkpatrick asked what would happen if an assessment tool applied in the fourth year of the four-year span "does not work," and colleagues informally suggested that such a situation would fit into the assessment process.

At 5:50 p.m. Stevens M/S/P that we adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
6 November 1998