

**Curriculum Committee Minutes  
April 2, 1998**

**Present:** Barnett, Cannon, R. Fields, Fikes, Goleeke, Lupher, Mehlhaff, Neshyba, Proehl, Bartanen, Washburn, Morgan

**Absent:** Bruce, Hooper, Kline (Chair), Ralls

Fikes, as Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

*Minutes.* **Fields M/S/P approval of the minutes, as presented, for the meeting of 26 March 1998.** Barnett acknowledged responsibility for the basis of the correction needed in these minutes with reference to the minutes for the meeting of 12 March 1998. Approvals of the curricular reviews of the Humanities Program and the Department of Religion as reported in the minutes for 26 March 1998 provide *ongoing course approvals* for the following courses previously approved for fall 1998 only:

**Humanities 120 - Freshman Seminar: Crisis and Culture (Communication I core)**

**Religion 108 - Desire and Discipline: The Question of the Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism (Humanistic Perspective core)**

**Religion 111 - Joan of Arc (Historical Perspective core)**

**Religion 112 - The Archeology of Religion (Society core)**

**Religion 204 - Religions of the Book (Historical Perspective core)**

**Religion 207 - A Passion for Justice: Contemporary Liberation Theologies and Ethics (Humanistic Perspective core)**

**Religion 335 - Classical Hinduism**

**Religion 455 - Women and Mysticism**

*Core course proposals.* Cannon reported being asked how late in this term the committee could receive core course proposals from newly hired faculty who will join the University in the fall. After brief discussion Fikes stated the following consensus: Cannon should inform the department chair that we would be able to act on proposals received on or before 23 April 1998.

*Subcommittees:*

**CORE ASSESSMENT.** Bartanen provided additional copies of the pre-draft of the "Pilot Assessment" plan and distributed the pre-draft of the "Core Assessment Timeline." After discussion the committee reached informal agreement to proceed with the plans as proposed; the refined versions of the documents can go to RASCAL for consideration as part of the University's reaccreditation project.

In discussion the committee considered the contents of the two documents. In response to Neshyba's inquiry about the meaning of "feedback cycle for decision-making" as part of a "recommendation of process of systematic assessment," Washburn explained that the committee has the regular opportunity to review the core curriculum in a "fallow year" (no scheduled departmental reviews) but may wish to use results of assessment on a more routine basis. Bartanen pointed out that the three pilot programs are for implementation later this spring and will require analysis by relevant subcommittees over the summer or very early in the fall semester. Fields opined that this timing will permit consideration of whether the assessment tools are appropriate; Proehl pointed out that the assessment tools can be helpful in monitoring the appropriateness of the core guidelines, which an assessment tool should reflect. Washburn affirmed that our task is to establish a "reasonable feasible process" for implementing assessment tools for "ongoing assessment of the core"; the committee cannot activate the assessment tools on a constant basis and still accomplish the regular work of the committee.

Neshyba asked about incorporating assessment mechanisms already in place, and Bartanen agreed that indeed we already do assessments in the form of (1) subcommittee reviews of course proposals to see if they meet core guidelines, (2) the plan to use the fallow year as an opportunity

to review syllabi for core courses, (3) ongoing faculty debate of the core, and (4) the senior-year and five-year graduate questionnaires to determine students' and graduates' perception of the degree to which the University lives up to our educational goals. What the newly developed tools aim to accomplish is assessment of what we have not yet addressed, the educational *outcomes* for students. Cannon pointed out that in a way we have measured outcomes as indicated by the committee's ability on several occasions to draw out reasons to alter core guidelines.

In response to Bartanen's inquiry the committee agreed that the subcommittee's refined assessment-tool plans could go forward to RASCAL.

Cannon M/S/P to adjourn at about 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett  
2 April 1998