

## **Curriculum Committee Minutes September 17, 1997**

**Present:** Barnett, Bruce, Clifford, R. Fields, Fikes, Goleeke, Hooper, Kline (Chair), Lupher, Mehlhaff, Proehl, Bartanen, Washburn, Morgan

Kline greeted the committee and thus began the meeting at 8:06 a.m.

*Meeting time.* **By M/S/P the committee changed the regular meeting time in Fall 1997 to Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m.**

*Minutes.* **Fields M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 10 September 1997 as altered to show the correct title of the Special Interdisciplinary Major.**

*Subcommittees.* Kline and Washburn distributed a grid indicating subcommittee appointments, as follows:

**Business and Public Administration:** Barnett, Clifford, Mehlhaff (Chair), Bartanen  
**Comparative Sociology:** Fikes, Hooper (Chair), Morgan, Bartanen  
**Communication and Theatre Arts:** Bruce, R. Fields (Chair), Mehlhaff, Bartanen  
**Foreign Languages and Literature:** Clifford, Goleeke (Chair), Lupher, Bartanen  
**Honors Program:** Fikes, Hooper, Proehl (Chair), Bartanen  
**Humanities Program:** Bruce (Chair), Goleeke, Morgan, Bartanen  
**Philosophy:** R. Fields, Lupher (Chair), Proehl, Bartanen

**Communication I Core:** Barnett, Bruce (Chair), Bartanen  
**Communication II Core:** Goleeke, Proehl (Chair), Bartanen  
**Mathematical Reasoning Core:** Mehlhaff (Chair), Morgan, Bartanen  
**Natural World Core:** Clifford (Chair), Mehlhaff, Bartanen  
**International Studies Core:** R. Fields, Fikes (Chair), Bartanen  
**Humanistic Perspective Core:** Hooper, Lupher (Chair), Bartanen  
**Historical Perspective Core:** R. Fields (Chair), Kline, Bartanen  
**Science in Context Core:** Clifford, Fikes (Chair), Bartanen  
**Fine Arts Core:** Goleeke (Chair), Proehl, Bartanen  
**Society Core:** Bruce, Morgan (Chair), Bartanen  
**Comparative Values Core:** Hooper (Chair), Lupher, Bartanen

**Special Interdisciplinary Major (SIM):** Barnett, Clifford (Chair), Bartanen

*Core Curriculum assessment.* For the remainder of the meeting the committee discussed the expected charge from the Faculty Senate to assess the Core for the University's reaccreditation report. Three main points of concern surfaced in discussion: (1) How and when will the committee receive the charge? (Mehlhaff and others) (2) How can the committee accomplish its normal work and also take on this additional burden? (Clifford and others) (3) By what process might the committee assess the Core as part of the reaccreditation review?

Bartanen characterized the reaccreditation Core assessment as an effort to demonstrate that the University has "an ongoing process" to assess the Core Curriculum and that we will use the results of assessment. The task would be to determine what we can do in addition to what we do already to assure the quality of the Core (approval of course proposals and periodic review of Core rubrics and courses by the Curriculum Committee, as well as debate about the Core by the full faculty). To suggest a methodology of inquiry, Bartanen referred to Peter T. Ewell, "Identifying Indicators of Curricular Quality," pp. 608-627 in Jerry G. Graff and James L. Ratcliffe, *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1997). Ewell identifies four types of curricula: (1) The "designed curriculum" as evidenced in course descriptions; (2) the

“expectational curriculum” apparent in class assignments; (3) the “delivered curriculum,” or what courses faculty actually teach; and (4) the “experienced curriculum,” what courses students actually take and what students actually do (pp. 612-613). Bartanen stated that category #4 is where we should direct our attention; the challenge to us is to find ways for faculty members to reflect on the Core and to determine the students’ experience.

Fikes summarized the task as describing review processes already in place and designing procedures for assessing whether students are doing what we expect them to do. Bartanen added that the accrediting agency wants an *ongoing* process of assessment; we can write up the assessment process we already have and then add specific measures for assessing what Ewell terms the “experienced curriculum.” As for the latter, we could design mechanisms this fall for “pilot” implementation in the spring.

Discussion included inquiry about the role of Core subcommittees (see the list, above) in the reaccreditation process; the question of whether the Associate Deans’ Office and the Director of Institutional Research, with a small committee of faculty, could conduct the reaccreditation Core review (Clifford); and comment about the revised expectations of reaccreditation agencies since the University’s last review (Washburn). On this last point, Washburn commented that new reaccreditation “rules” reflect Federal initiatives and new expectations of accountability to the Federal Government that colleges are delivering what they say they are; the new focus is on process and also on how we *use* the process, and we need to consider “output.” Bartanen opined that the University “will be reaccredited,” but we hope to be reaccredited without a string of qualifications that would require an interim report in five years. The emphasis is on an ongoing process, and an *ad hoc* committee to assess the Core for reaccreditation would not be the best way to assure an ongoing process.

Clifford asked if documents now in existence (for example, Curriculum Committee procedures and minutes) could provide “ample evidence of a process under way to assess the ongoing impact, the goodness” of the Core. Fikes distinguished between “the assessment [of the Core]” as our normal responsibility and “the assessment of the assessment [of the Core]” and asked if the latter is also our job.

Washburn introduced the document entitled “**Proposal for Process to Assess Core Curriculum,**” which outlines the following plan: Curriculum Committee review of all Core courses over the next two years, with the resulting data available to the committee for its routine review of the Core in the committee’s “fallow year” (no departmental reviews as a rule) and thereafter assessment of the Core once in every four years. This proposal generated some discussion, but the approaching end of the hour prompted a general agreement to take up the proposal at the next meeting, when we also must deal with two Core proposals for the Spring semester. Meanwhile, we will await the formal charge from the Faculty Senate to assess the Core for the reaccreditation report.

The meeting ended at 8:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett  
18 September 1997