

**Curriculum Committee Minutes
September 23, 1997**

Present: Barnett, Bruce, R. Fields, Fikes, Goleeke, Hooper, Kline (Chair), Lupher, Mehlhaff, Bartanen, Washburn, Morgan
Absent: Proehl
Guests: Cathy Hale, Roberta Wilson

Kline opened the meeting at 4:06 p.m. and introduced invited guests Hale and Wilson as members of RASCAL (Re-Accreditation Steering Committee, Arts Liberal).

Minutes. **Fields M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 17 September 1997.**

Academic Calendar. Washburn reminded the committee of its authority in setting the academic calendar and conveyed the need to validate adjustments in the 1997-98 academic calendar to accommodate necessary changes in dates involving payments due from students.

ACTION: Fikes M/S/P to recommend to the Faculty Senate that the changes requested by the Controller's Office for refund dates in the current calendar be accepted.

Subcommittees. Fields thoughtfully provided schedule grids for committee members to give to "subchairs" for use in planning subcommittee meetings.

COMMUNICATION I. Bruce reported the subcommittee's unanimous recommendation of the freshman writing seminar proposed by William McGrath of the University Rochester, who will be a Visiting Professor at Puget Sound in spring 1998.

ACTION: Bruce M/S/P approval of Humanities 117 - Freshman Seminar in Writing: Culture of Ancient Greece for the Communication I core on a one-time-only basis for spring 1998.

COMPARATIVE VALUES. Hooper reported the subcommittee's unanimous recommendation of the History course proposed by Professor McGrath.

ACTION: Hooper M/S/P approval of History 335 - Vienna and Paris: Foundations of Twentieth-Century Culture for the Comparative Values core on a one-time-only basis for spring 1998.

Core Curriculum assessment. Kline distributed the "Charge to Curriculum Committee" from the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of 15 September 1997; the charge includes as item 1 "Assist in University Accreditation (Educational Outcomes)." Kline summarized the committee's task in this regard: To develop a system of assessment of the core curriculum in line with what students are doing in the core.

RASCAL member Wilson pointed to the shift in accreditation procedures from peer review to "data-driven" review that can inform future policy decisions. Because the Curriculum Committee has oversight of the core curriculum, the committee should determine how to assess the core.

RASCAL member Hale reported on the visit to campus on 18 September 1997 of Larry Stevens, a representative of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC). Stevens advised that the University must provide not just procedures of ongoing assessment, but also evidence that the outcome of continuing assessment will go to policy makers; Hale characterized such evidence as "numbers, statistics, and charts." Stevens also suggested that the University's reaccreditation report should anticipate the approval of the NASC team of evaluators and should

be straightforward; any problems and concerns should be in the report. Hale added that "student input and faculty input are crucial throughout the report"; as well, the tone and quality of writing in the overall report should be consistent.

Hale stated that the NASC site evaluation is to take place 8-10 March 1999. Evaluators will talk with scores of students and faculty members. RASCAL has asked for preliminary reports from departments by the beginning of the spring 1998 semester and would like some "pilot" assessment projects in place such that their results could become part of the University's overall report scheduled for completion in early fall 1998.

Members of the committee varyingly expressed concern about the committee's responsibility for the task of assessing the core, the committee's ability to meet the task in view of our routine workload, and the nature of the committee's review of the core for the purpose of reaccreditation.

In discussion, the following points emerged: (1) Wilson: Whatever the outcome of the faculty's current debate of the core, the University will still have a core curriculum and will require an assessment tool. (2) Bartanen: Standard 2 of the accreditation guidelines, particularly pages 2 and 3, can generate some ideas about "student outcomes. (3) Fikes and Mehlhaff: The charge from the Faculty Senate ("Assist in University Accreditation [Educational Outcomes]") is not specific. (4) Mehlhaff: What about the Ad Hoc Core Curriculum Committee? (Bartanen said that evidence collected by the Ad Hoc Committee through hearings and surveys will be helpful to this committee's task; Hale said that the expectation of ongoing assessment would make the Ad Hoc Committee itself inappropriate for the task of core review for reaccreditation.)

Discussion seemed to lead to the conclusion that the committee cannot avoid the task of assessing the core curriculum for the reaccreditation review and cannot postpone scheduled reviews of departments and programs in order to meet the reaccreditation task.

Kline will ask the Faculty Senate for specification of the charge (Mehlhaff suggested asking the Senate to state the charge as "design and implement assessment tools for the core"); Fikes requested that we also get the Senate "to confirm that we do not have to go and collect the data" but instead are to devise a plan of assessment.

Earlier in the meeting Kline suggested beginning the committee's further discussion of this matter with the "Proposal for Process to Assess Core Curriculum" prepared by Washburn.

As the meeting came to an end at 5:04 p.m., Kline thanked Hale and Wilson for their participation in our meeting on behalf of RASCAL.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
24 September 1997