

Curriculum Committee Minutes September 30, 1997

Present: Barnett, Bruce, R. Fields, Fikes, Goleeke, Hooper, Kline (Chair), Mehlhaff, Proehl, Ralls, Bartanen, Washburn, Lentz (for Morgan)
Absent: Lupher
Visitor: Yuko Tanaka

Kline opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and acknowledged Carol Lentz, attending for Morgan. Kline introduced Yuko Tanaka, a student in CTA 202 who will observe the committee this semester in fulfillment of a class assignment. The committee welcomed RayAnn Ralls, ASUPS Senator and newly appointed student member of the committee.

Minutes. Fields M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 23 September 1997.

[Secretary's retro-clarification: The minutes for 23 September erroneously list Clifford as present.]

Academic Calendar. Washburn noted the committee's responsibility for setting the academic calendar and proposing the calendar to the Faculty Senate, which does not change the calendar but could send the proposal back to the committee for adjustment. Once the committee recommends the calendar and the Senate approves it, changing any date is difficult.

Referring to the committee's internal document entitled "Guidelines for Setting Academic Calendar," Washburn explained that the job of the committee is to set the guidelines, adopt the "basic calendar" for "four years out," and at this point in the fall semester to adopt "specific dates" for the calendar for the next academic year.

Some committee members raised questions about the guidelines, asking if they are subject to change. Affirming the possibility of changes in the guidelines, the committee postponed consideration of the specific calendar for 1998-99 until a subsequent meeting permits full discussion of the guidelines.

Core Curriculum assessment. Kline and Mehlhaff attended the Faculty Senate meeting of 29 September 1997, and Bartanen also was in attendance. The "Charge to Curriculum Committee" with reference to the assessment of the core curriculum for the reaccreditation study now is more specific and will appear in the Senate minutes. Kline's informal record of the altered wording is as follows: "Assist in University Accreditation (Educational Outcomes) by developing a process for the systematic assessment of the Core Curriculum."

Kline outlined a method for beginning to deal with this charge by considering Washburn's "Proposal for Process to Assess Core Curriculum" and then looking at the guidelines for one of the core rubrics and using the guidelines as a basis for developing a question. Washburn added that for each core rubric the committee could come up with a question that will enable students to "evaluate a course for its core-ness" to determine if the course is doing what it is intended to do. The Washburn proposal is to use such questions to evaluate all courses in the core over the next three semesters, to have the committee use the data in its next "fallow year" (no scheduled department reviews) review of the core, and thereafter to review all courses in the core once in every four years.

In discussion the following ideas emerged: (1) Washburn: The Office of Institutional Research can provide assistance in identifying courses to be assessed, can collect data, and can make the data available to the committee; but the committee would have to provide questions designed to elicit the information we seek. (2) Mehlhaff and others: The committee also should consider broader questions of general education, not just individual courses or rubrics. (3) We could invite John Finney (Associate Academic Dean and Registrar) to attend a meeting in order to explore how the committee might ask specific questions about the core as part of the University's inquiry

of graduates five years after graduation. (4) We could consider some novel additional mechanisms to assess the educational experience of graduates (Fikes).

Bartanen distributed copies of a document entitled "Possible Outline: Self-Study of the Core Curriculum," which summarizes what we already do, considers where we want to be, and notes how we might get there with reference to Peter Ewell's four types of curricula (see committee minutes for the meeting of 17 September 1997).

Kline then distributed copies of the guidelines for the Fine Arts core rubric and directed the committee toward the possibility of serving as a "buzz group" to use the guidelines to derive a question or questions designed to determine the degree to which a course might meet the stated goals, especially with reference to Ewell's "experienced curriculum" category.

This prospect allowed committee members to see the benefit of Kline's further proposal to set aside time in the next meeting for small groups to come up with possibilities for an assessment process. Fikes called the committee's attention to the evaluation form devised for the Science in Context core and graciously offered to provide copies.

With Mehlhaff's motion to adjourn, the meeting came to an end at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
2 October 1997