

**Curriculum Committee Minutes
October 21, 1997**

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

At 4:09 p.m. Kline opened the meeting by greeting us all.

Minutes. **Fields M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 14 October 1997.**

Committee membership. Kline announcement that Jim Clifford has resigned from the committee in order to focus on teaching; he will retire at the end of the year. Grace Kirchner, Chair of the Faculty, will appoint a replacement member of the committee.

Subcommittees:

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (new subcommittee). Kline announced receipt of a proposal for a particular curricular change in the Physical Education major and appointed a new subcommittee to review the proposal: Mehlhaff (Chair), Fields, Kline.

BUSINESS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. Kline announced receipt of the BPA review package, and subcommittee members received copies of the documents. As BPA subcommittee Chair, Mehlhaff expressed concern about the subcommittee's work in the absence of Clifford; Kline announced that she will serve on the subcommittee until the replacement member joins the committee and subcommittee.

FINE ARTS. Washburn announced receipt of a course proposal for a study-abroad program; the course has a three-year run as a Fine Arts core course and requires reaffirmation.

Core Curriculum assessment. Kline announced that the committee's work in this regard is to occur during meetings so as not to compete with meetings of subcommittees. Kline announced that with Washburn and Bartanen she has determined three work groups. Membership of the groups, as announced later in the meeting, is as follows:

Science in Context: Mehlhaff, Bartanen, Fikes, Bruce

Communication I: Kline, Ralls, Barnett, Lupher, Morgan

Fine Arts: Fields, Goleeke, Proehl, Hooper, Washburn

Each of these groups includes both members with experience in the core rubric and members with "distance" from the rubric.

Kline turned to Bartanen for comment: (1) Recalling John Finney's advice at the previous meeting, Bartanen reminded that our task in assessing the core curriculum is to develop a process that will give us information that we can use in decision making; levels of decision are varied and not always at the level of overall policy. (2) Also recalling Finney's remarks, Bartanen stated that probably what we want most to know is students' expectations and outcomes; we must decide "what is it that we really want to know."

Bruce stated the assumption that we will "take as given" the core rubrics as they are written and not assume the job of judging the quality of a rubric itself. Bartanen and others affirmed that at this point such is the case.

Fikes asked if the central question is "Are student perceptions congruent with what we intend?" Bartanen and others replied that this is *one* question. Other committee members extended the

discussion: Proehl offered the thought that we can understand this question as “Is the core doing what we have in mind?” and expressed the view that the student’s *perception* of the “core-ness” of the core may *not* be what we need to know; a student may say she/he writes better, but some other measure must determine if the student *does* write better. Fields reported asking students to write their understanding of the Fine Arts core and offered to share the students’ responses.

As to what documents to use as the basis for inquiry, Barnett suggested the *Bulletin* pages on the core, rather than the guidelines in the “Curriculum Statement”; Washburn pointed out that the guidelines are for faculty making course proposals. Mehlhaff characterized the *Bulletin* pages as very simple. Bruce confirmed that in-house documents also will go to the outside reviewers, so we must accommodate them. Goleeke suggested using the encapsulations of core rubrics as they appear on pp. 2-3 of the “Curriculum Statement”; these encapsulations are the first paragraphs of the guidelines for rubrics. Washburn urged the committee in any event to seek data that is *useful*, something “substantial.”

Fikes opined that we might not have to *ask* students about their experience in, for example, the Fine Arts core but could have evidence that so many students visited so many museums. Kline suggested random sampling of tasks asked of students in courses; Bruce suggested using a portfolio of assignments in courses. Barnett expressed appreciation of these suggestions on grounds that we should not assume student questionnaires to be the only mechanism of obtaining data; too many questionnaires could overburden students.

Fikes suggested that we need to decide if we want to know students’ *outcomes* or students’ *perceptions of outcomes*. Fields suggested that the purpose of the review is “to prove that they [students] got something” from a course; we could pick up evidence at the end of term, perhaps in the form of students’ written work.

Lupher remarked that students do not know what the core is and suggested that we need some means of letting students know what a core course is to accomplish. Barnett agreed that we need to be self-conscious about the core, to convey the purposes.

The committee moved to adjourn at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
23 October 1997