

Curriculum Committee Minutes
April 1, 1997

Present: George Tomlin, Carrie Washburn, Steve Neshyba, Geoff Proehl, David Lupher, Curtis Mehlhaff, Mary Morgan, Tom Fikes, Ron Fields, Christine Kline

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 by George Tomlin. The minutes of March 25 were approved.

Announcements: George Tomlin read a letter from Art Department Chair, Ili Nagy, requesting a delay in the department curriculum review scheduled for 1997-1998. She stated that the department would like to await the outcome of the Asian Art History hiring so that the new faculty member could contribute to the review. She asked if the document could be submitted in May of 1998.

Committee members discussed the implications of the delay particularly in regard to the distribution of reviews scheduled for the coming years. Curt asked if it could possibly be done earlier in the year, in effect, "stretching" the current deadline. Geoff felt that the task would then be too daunting for a new faculty member. Kris noted that the Foreign Language and Philosophy reviews had been moved to 1997-1998. George stated that the demands of the accreditation task in 1997-1998 academic year would to some degree equalize any imbalance brought on by this delay. The committee voted unanimously to grant the delay.

Steve Neshyba reported the results of the curriculum review of the Physics Subcommittee. He stated that the subcommittee found the curriculum document to be a strong one which merited approval, but believed that a question regarding writing required the consideration of the Curriculum Committee as it entailed the policy about writing requirements in the major. In essence, the subcommittee asked if, as evidenced in the Physics Department review, writing requirements were carried solely by electives in the upper level courses, would such practice constitute an integrated pattern as set forth in the curriculum statement?

Curt raised a concern about the need for continued rigorous attention to writing in the majors. Chris agreed that writing should remain a central concern as it both sponsored and demonstrated expertise in a field. Tom said that laboratory reports could conceivably meet a requirement for sound scientific writing as they could range from mere recording to a publishable scientific manuscript; thus, depending on the nature of the lab report, the writing requirements could conceivably be met in early course work. Curt stated that the way the policy was stated, the department's description could satisfy that requirement. George noted that in previous years the writing requirement in a department needed to be "inescapable," to meet the policy requirement.

Concern was expressed about the degree of attention that had been given by the department to the writing requirement. Committee members agreed to accept the review but request, for the record, that the department address the question of writing as members continue to address matters of curriculum and that the department include such considerations and actions as part of its next review. Steve will write draft a statement which will be included in the motion for review acceptance to be offered at the April 8 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Kline