

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 25, 2012 - 4:00-5:02 PM
Collins Memorial Library #020

Attendees: Roger Allen, Terry Beck, Gwynne Brown, Jane Carlin, Julie Christoph, Lisa Ferrari, Sara Freeman, Alison Tracy Hale, Lisa Hutchinson, Lisa Johnson (Secretary), Tatiana Kaminsky (Chair), Alan Krause, Paul Loeb, Phoebe Smith, Mike Spivey, Jonathan Stockdale, Brad Tomhave, Barbara Warren, Linda Williams

Guests: Kate Cohn, Ellen Peters

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 4:01 p.m.

Kaminsky reported that the Humanistic Approaches core area review, which was completed but not approved last semester, will be brought forward for approval at a later meeting of the full committee.

M/S/P (19-0-0) to approve minutes for 9/11/12 meeting.

Peters, Director of Institutional Research (IR), reported that IR has collected information about Social Scientific Approaches and Connections core areas. The data were collected through the 2012 Senior Survey and subsequent focus groups. IR was interested in whether the rubrics accurately describe what we are doing. Also, IR is interested in assessing what we should be doing. IR developed questions for students to solicit specific examples and information. One thing that became apparent is that students were satisfying the upper division requirement with a second major or minor.

Core Results Hand Out (2 pages) was distributed to members of the Curriculum Committee (CC)

Cohn said that IR used rubrics as guides in developing questions. Cohn identified the expectations for the Social Scientific and Connections core areas. She discussed the results obtained from the surveys and focus groups.

Cohn asked: "How do we bring the lower third over to believing that their experiences in CN and SSC are worthwhile? Do students know that they have the skills that they have developed?"

Christoph noted that there appeared to be more Connections Core responses than existed in the past.

Freeman discussed the relationship between Connections courses taken and majors. Additional discussion ensued concerning how we balance students' opportunities to be the expert in their own discipline while entering into disciplines new to them.

Stockdale expressed concern about distinguishing between “very much” and “quite a bit” on the survey scale. Peters acknowledged that the distinction was an issue. Peters said that the work is not scientific. Kaminsky asked whether it was possible for a student to answer “none” to a particular question. Peters said that it could be added the next time.

Ferrari asked what the bottom 10% said in either Social Scientific Approaches or Connections core courses. Peters said that they probably did not agree to come to the focus groups. Cohn reported that some students in the focus groups were excited about their Puget Sound experience, and they wanted to talk about it. Those students were also willing to provide critical feedback, too.

Ferrari asked if there were any open ended questions. Peters said that they could add that.

Stockdale asked whether there were many students asserting that they were not challenged enough in those courses. Cohn reported that there were a minority of students in Connections and the Social Scientific Approaches core courses who felt that way, viz., that the level of challenge in the course or the way in which the faculty engaged students was not challenging.

Hale asked if we have information regarding which students take which Connections courses. Peters said they could find out. Hale said that students might be limiting themselves by taking courses from faculty in their own departments or disciplines.

Krause identified three issues that may factor into these results: 1) What does the course offer? 2) Does the faculty member package it as such? 3) Are students choosing these classes?

Williams asked if there is a way to get information from the people who do not go to focus groups. Peters said that the survey should do that. Peters said that it is a challenge to get depth of information from less engaged students. Incentives were provided for participation. IR does try to do this.

Spivey asked what the response rate was. Peters reported that it was 47%, which is an improvement from last year.

Hale suggested that students could be required to submit the survey at the same time that they retrieve their caps and gowns.

Peters asked the members of the Curriculum Committee (CC) to let Peters, Cohn, or IR know if they had any additional questions. Peters reported that IR will continue to survey throughout the year. IR would like to have feedback from CC, so it does not have to guess what we need.

Tomhave asked if there was evidence that people are taking minors to satisfy the upper division requirement.

Kaminsky asked for reports from the working groups (WG).

Allen reported that WG 1 has not yet met.

Stockdale reported that WG 2 will be meeting next week. They have been dividing syllabi amongst the group for review of Connections courses.

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Loeb reported that WG 3 will meet on Thursday.

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Hale reported that WG 4 recommends approval for a Sports and Society course for SSI 1 and 2 proposed by a new faculty member. WG 4 has another pair of SSI courses that they have questions about. Additionally, WG 4 has two new SSI courses that they need to look at.

Hale described the proposed Sports and Society class. **M/S/P (19-0-0)** to approve the course as SCIS and SSI2 as recommended by WG 4.

Hale expressed concerns about what is happening with SSI proposals coming through the CC. The CC is not set up with enough people or authority. Can we find additional support? This may be a future discussion.

Christoph reported that her WG has not met yet. But she has skimmed some of the proposals and she noted that some proposers may need mentoring before the courses are approved. Discussion ensued.

Stockdale suggested that we could restructure feedback so that persons are not writing letters to senior colleagues in their own department.

Kaminsky asked if there were common trends among or between SSI courses that are not yet fully addressing the rubric. Hale reported that she has been working on creating a template. The CC may wish to require the inclusion of a cover letter from proposer, which specifies how the course meets the requirements of the rubric. Christoph reported that a letter is already required. Discussion ensued. Kaminsky suggested that a message be sent to the faculty as a whole with guidelines about creating SSI courses, based on the common issues that have been arising. This message could be sent on behalf of the curriculum committee as a whole. Kaminsky stated that we will discuss this issue at the next meeting, when WG3 and WG4 have had a chance to look at more SSI course proposals.

Beck reported that WG 5 has just received their first syllabi.

Kaminsky reported that we need to approve the calendar.

M/S/P (19-0-0) to approve the calendar without discussion.

Kaminsky reported that we need to approve the document related to the Associate Deans' office, viz. *The Functions of the Associate Deans' Office in Curricular Matters*.

Christoph asked if we want the Associate Deans' Office to approve courses over the summer, given that we will be receiving course proposals over the summer to possibly teach in the fall. Ferrari said that could be a problem, though the final version of the course schedule is not ready until the new student orientation. However, for the first year seminars, we send out information on the website and on paper, and the students select their preferences. Those materials are out in April, so we need to know which courses will be offered before then. Normally we would not approve a seminar over the summer to teach next fall.

Christoph asked about provisional approval. Ferrari reported that her preference would be that any courses that came in over the summer would wait until fall term.

Christoph asked whether we need number 6 on the document.

Kaminsky pointed out that the language already exists in number 6 to indicate that there is a failsafe there for the CC to review courses in the fall.

Christoph asked to strike Writing and Rhetoric, because there will only be Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry. Tomhave said that we can use the general term "freshman seminars"

Ferrari said that if we add courses at the last minute, those courses tend to get poor enrollment.

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Spivey asked what if the CC decides not to approve the course that is already being taught. Tomhave said that the content would have to be revised for the next time it was taught. The status as a core course would terminate, or the instructor would work with the CC so that the course meets the requirements.

M/S/P (19-0-0) to accept the document with the following revision to point 6: "In exceptional circumstances, provisional approval of first year seminars over the summer. Such approvals are reviewed by the committee in the fall term."

Kaminsky – we need to wrap up HM approaches mentioned earlier and FN core rubric.

Kaminsky reported that last year, the CC added a few steps unnecessarily last year. We had said that after the WG met with faculty from core area, the group would make recommendations and that those recommendations would then be returned to the core area faculty for feedback. It would then and then it would go to the full curriculum committee for a vote. But, it really does not need to go back for to the faculty for feedback, because they have the opportunity to participate along the way. Today the committee will receive the Fine Arts Approaches core area review.

Beck was the lead for the review. Beck reported that the inclusion of literary arts is a big issue that faces this core area. Do we move the literary arts? The working group was convinced that the literary arts belong in this coare area. Discussion ensued. Part of the working group's report recommends changing the name of the core area to better represent the courses that are included.

Beck asked if the CC can just change name of core area. Tomhave and Ferrari noted that the Senate could change the CC actions.

Spivey asked what the conclusion was regarding literary arts. Beck reported that it is necessary to the FN core area. Discussion ensued. FN report will be attached to minutes

M/S/P (19-0-0) to accept the working group report on the Fine Arts Approaches core area.

Kaminsky reported that we would address the Humanistic Approaches core area review at our next meeting.

M/S/P to adjourn at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Johnson
Secretary, University Curriculum Committee