

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 14, 2013 – 3:32-4:23 PM
Collins Memorial Library #020

Attendees: Terry Beck, Gwynne Brown, Lisa Hutchinson, Lisa Johnson (Secretary), Alison Tracy Hale, Martin Jackson, Tatiana Kaminsky (Chair), Alan Krause, Phoebe Smith, Mike Spivey, Jonathan Stockdale, Barbara Warren

Meeting called to order by Kaminsky at 3:32 p.m.

Remarks from the Chair:

No remarks

M/S/P (12-0-0) to approve minutes for 3/7/12 with minor changes.

Kaminsky asked for Working Group (WG) reports.

Hale reported for WG 3 and 4, which are now combined. WG 3 and 4 recommends two SSI courses for approval.

George Erving The Scientific and Romantic Revolutions SSI1

Paul Loeb SSI1 The Posthuman Future

M/S/P (12-0-0) to approve courses listed above.

WG 3 and 4 had discussed the designation of SSI courses as SSI courses, rather than courses with a specific program designation. This allows students to choose courses based on content rather than based upon discipline.

Jackson added whether the program affiliation is less clear to the student who takes a first year seminar with an SSI label, who wants to continue in a similar study. Hale mentioned that Julie Christoph and Priti Joshi had considered this issue extensively.

Jackson said that Honors SSI1 and 2 will be designated as SSI courses, but because there is a restricted audience, then it will also be labeled as Honors. In addition, the body of the text will include a prerequisite for admission to Honors program

The proposal to name all SSI course as SSI 1 or 2 came from a SS policy subcommittee that wrote a document that University Curriculum Committee approved. Now, we are just trying to discuss a rationale for doing this, because no rationale was included in the policy document.

Beck reported that WG 5 has been working on SIM.

Stockdale reported for WG 3, which wishes to approve the following course for Connections:

BIO 3xx, inquiry into the Intersection of Art, Science and Technology, by Siddharth Ramakrishnan

M/S/P (12-0-0) to approve course listed above.

WG2 wishes to move to approve report for Connections Core course review.

WG2 Connections review found many faculty members who loved Connections and many who do not feel that it should continue. WG 3 believes that the broader faculty should probably take a look at this. WG 3 did not feel that a WG was an appropriate place to discuss it. Nothing elegant occurred to the WG to resolve contradictions. WG 3 believes that maybe it's time to look at this as a faculty.

Warren asked if this is just the nature of the beast. She saw similar issues in the SSI review several years ago. Maybe there are always people that aren't happy.

Stockdale clarified that this is a structural contradiction. It's very difficult in some disciplines to teach at 300 or 400 level interdisciplinarily when students who have never engaged in some disciplines need to be brought up to speed. Some people say that Connections courses are the best courses that they teach. The WG report from five years ago is very similar to the current WG report on Connections. There was discussion about Connections courses, including a discussion about adding teaching recommendation (more team taught classes) providing the enrollment cap was reduced from the current 44. Also, the WG discussed qualifications of faculty teaching outside of discipline.

Beck asked how the Writing and Rhetoric and the Scholarly Inquiry courses were changed to SSI. Beck said he might be in favor of that happening with Connections courses.

Jackson said that one solution might be a Connections director, since we don't have a natural advocate for the university core or for specific areas in the core.

Kaminsky said that she could emphasize this discussion in the report for the Senate's attention.

Stockdale said that certain recommendations are in the WG report, viz:

1. We recommend that more Connections Core courses be offered.
2. We recommend that the enrollment cap of 44 for team-taught Connections courses be lowered to 32. This will encourage more faculty to participate in team-taught Connections Core courses. That in turn will help the Connections Core courses that are taught to be more explicitly interdisciplinary. It should also increase the number of Connections Core courses that are offered.

3. We recommend the exploration of additional ways to facilitate the collaborative teaching and development of Connections courses. How can faculty best be supported as they take the anxiety-provoking step of teaching outside of their disciplines in this core?
4. Given the vehemence of the criticisms we heard from some faculty, we recommend that a task-force be formed to undertake an in-depth review of the Connections Core, in a manner similar to the recent review of the first-year seminars. One issue the task force should consider is whether some Connections Core courses should be offered at the sophomore level. Currently there is no part of the core explicitly aimed at sophomores; changing this might help with retention.
5. We recommend that the university consider undertaking a review of the entire core, which has been in its current configuration for more than 10 years.

Beck asked about recommendation five. Since this is a Connections review, why did item five come into existence?

Spivey said that we have to deal with the entire core to address the issues that arise under Connections review, rather than simply Connections, since some of the critiques of the Connections core are the same as critiques of the core as a whole.

Jackson remembers a plan at some point in the past to do a core review. Maybe we can research when that discussion happened.

Beck mentioned that in the core curriculum review process, there is a built in review of the core as a whole. The next one will occur in 2014 – 2015.

Stockdale would recommend an approach taken such as the approach taken for the freshman seminars. Apply for a grant, bring in faculty heavily involved, and then address it more thoroughly.

We can strike number five. We can make a concluding statement instead.

M/S/P (12-0-0) to approve Connections report from WG2 with the modification of recommendation #5.

Kaminsky said that there is no other business.

Beck asked for clarification on the Senate charge regarding making a distinction between BA and BS degrees. Jackson said that accreditation agency asked to work on distinction between BA and BS but only from departments that offer both, not for the university as a whole.

Brown moved to adjourn 4:23 pm.

M/S/P to adjourn at 4:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Johnson
Secretary, University Curriculum Committee