

Minutes for the November 10, 2004 Curriculum Committee Meeting:

Members present: Lori Riciglizano, Joyce Tamashiro, Suzanne Barnett, Jim Jasinski, Mark Jenkins, Bill Barry, Carrie Washburn, Rich Anderson-Connolly (Chair), Christine Smith, Ken Rousslang, Sam Armocido (student representative), Grace Livingston, Karim Ochosi, Carlo Bonura.

1. Call to order

2. Approval of Oct 20 minutes:

Rousslang reminded the secretary that SCXT refers to “Science in Context” rather than “Science and Context” as it had appeared in previous minutes.

3. Announcements

Washburn said that the Committee would receive the Department of Foreign Language and Literature’s curriculum review before Thanksgiving. Washburn also stated that four departments had reports outstanding and time was running out to complete these reports. The Committee must finish work on these reports by end of February. The month of March is when bulletin needs to be completed.

Jenkins asked about the status of Environment Studies. The Department originally said that it would submit its review before the end of the year, but no report has been submitted as of yet.

The Committee approved the academic calendar in its current form for the 2005-2006 academic year. Washburn suggested that the Curriculum Committee sub-committee for calendar reform should go ahead and activate as there may have been a discussion of the calendar during the November 1 Faculty Senate meeting.

Barnett said that previous work might have already looked at other universities holiday schedules. Suzanne Holland and John Finney are two possible sources for other information on part calendar research.

4. Study Abroad report

Barry explained a potential change in status to the study abroad program in Aberdeen, Scotland. Currently Puget Sound has an exchange agreement (in which tuition is reciprocal). University of Aberdeen wants to exit the agreement. The approved exchange commitment was classified as an affiliated program originally. The moved change would keep this the program as an affiliated program but drop the University’s exchange commitment.

Barry also explained that the motion just changes the formal relationship with Aberdeen but does not change the curriculum of program (the motion is mostly administrative).

Barry's second motion was to approve the Oaxaca program that PLU has organized at the Institute Cultural de Oaxaca as an affiliated program. There has been close work between faculty at Puget Sound and PLU in developing this program.

Jenkins asked why this particular study abroad opportunity was not simply a joint program. Barry said that questions of budget and unresolved liability questions still remained, but the hope was that in the future this program would become a joint program.

Barnett said that John Lear (History) is very enthusiastic about the program. PLU, Barnett stated, has money and if we were to commit ourselves it would be a long-term commitment. The concern was that at this point we must provide students, but soon we may have to provide a faculty member.

Barry asked hypothetically if we were willing to provide faculty support and what would the budget be for such a commitment? PLU wants to partner with us academically; if it were to become a joint program then it would have to return to the Committee for approval.

Washburn asked what kind of agreement the University would sign when we recognize it as an affiliated program. Barry stated that there were no promises of students and no agreements.

Both motions passed unanimously.

5. Connections Subcommittee report

The Connections Subcommittee moved approval of the following three courses for the Connections core rubric:

1. STS (Science, Technology, and Society) 341 - Modeling the Earth's Climate, proposed by Mott Greene (STS, Honors, History)
2. Connections 350 - Perspectives on Food and Culture, proposed by Julie Christoph (English) and Tamiko Nimura (English)
3. Connections 415 - Education and the Changing Workforce, proposed by John Woodward (Education)

It is possible that in the future that less courses will be transformation courses. It was explained that any proposal for Connections that emerge from interdisciplinary programs i. e. Humanities, IPE, STS will retain its course prefix, whereas courses from regular departments will take the connections prefix.

All motions passed unanimously.

6. Concluding discussion of Associate Dean summary of core approvals Fall 2005

Barry summarized his general outlook in decision-making regarding the approval of courses (in light of his report in last weeks meeting). He stated that he generally looked for courses to be “in the ballpark” in terms of fulfilling the Curriculum requirements and that conversations in follow up are helpful in ensuring the clarity of these decisions. He said that he looked for a treatment of existence and experience in courses satisfying humanistic approaches. Additionally, it was important to ensure that social science courses actually engage with social science theory.

Barnett argued that this process is useful to the Committee and that in this case nobody would have made different decisions.

7. Status of faculty teaching first year seminars

Washburn presented data on the relationship between instructors’ status and the teaching of first year seminar.

Jenkins drew the Committee’s attention to the fact that one in every four courses is taught by non-tenure line faculty. Barnett said that we should have some concern if visitors teaching something which is central to the University’s mission. It was not just an issue of instructors’ status but that they do not have the same role in the University community.

Anderson-Connolly asked if this was an issue of quality control and if so would we notice a difference in quality in those classes taught by adjunct faculty.

Jenkins responded that instructors teaching in their first year may not have had time to develop courses, and if there is supposed to be something special in the relation between students and teacher (especially over their four years in college) then the non-tenured status of an instructor is relevant. Jenkins reminded the Committee that 6% (10 courses) of courses is equivalent to 200 first-year students and is a significant impact. Some first-year students are getting their first experience of the University in courses not taught by tenure line faculty.

Washburn argued that whereas there are two kinds of first-year seminars (and both can be topical on nature) two departments bear the brunt of providing writing and rhetoric seminars. David Macey (formerly in English) developed Genre Studies so that it could be taught by a number of different instructors, some of which non-tenure line. Communication Studies also needed to have a way to insure that who ever came to teach in the department would be teaching a basic course of a certain quality.

Barry stated that Science in Context would move new faculty into disciplinary courses and older faculty to teach the first-year seminars. If the Committee would want to go forward with this matter (i.e. limit seminars to only tenure line faculty) it would have to go before the Senate.

Rousslang mentioned that in the course of sitting on the SCIS subcommittee he has witnessed new faculty generate new courses in terms of proposals for **SCIS** seminars.

Barnett inquired as to whether English faculty were in fact able to teach SCIS courses and Barry replied that they are but their primary obligation was to teach WR seminars.

Barnett argued that the problem is that these courses (which are distinguishing features of the institution) have students that do not necessarily know that these professors will not be around when they graduate and perhaps this is related to the University's difficulty in getting Alumni to "take ownership" after they have graduated.

Continuing the earlier discussion, Barry stated that logistically in terms of class size, transferees, and retention it is easier to make scheduling adjustments for SCIS courses rather than for WR courses.

In response Jenkins said that the Committee should be on top of this issue and an make appeal for WR courses outside the two primary departments.

9. Adjournment