

**Curriculum Committee Minutes
February 3, 1999**

Present: Barnett, Cannon, Grunberg, Hooper, Kirkpatrick, Kline, Livingston, Mehlhaff (Chair),
Proehl, Stevens, Warning, Heavner, Bartanen, Tomhave, Washburn
Absent: Goleeke, Pinzino, Sugimoto

At 5:07 p.m. Mehlhaff started the meeting.

Minutes. **Stevens M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 27 January 1999.**

Mehlhaff announced that the committee will not meet on 10 February 1999 because of the scheduled Faculty Meeting and commented that the cancellation of the meeting puts strain on the committee's ability to complete pending business by March. Washburn added that only two more meetings thus are available for any business that will affect the University *Bulletin* for 1999-2000.

Subcommittees.

ART. Hooper distributed copies of a brief statement of proposed curricular changes as part of the five-year review and reported that the subcommittee had had good interaction with the department.

ACTION: Hooper M/S/P approval of the five-year curricular review of the Department of Art.

Other business.

SIM (Special Interdisciplinary Major). Bartanen followed up on her announcement at the previous meeting that a faculty member had asked what action might be appropriate if a student wishes to propose a SIM but lacks the minimum GPA requirement of 3.0. Discussion began with Hooper's question of whether a waiver of the requirement in fact would be the jurisdiction of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) instead of the Curriculum Committee. Bartanen said that she already had consulted John Finney, who stated that the novelty of this issue in the work of the ASC would mean that the ASC would consult the Curriculum Committee in any event. The fundamental principle is that the Curriculum Committee has responsibility for the review and approval of a SIM proposal. Bartanen added that in response to her inquiry about procedures for exemption from the minimum 3.0 GPA requirement for Independent Study Finney said that such requests often have approval, but the ASC review of them is on a case-by-case basis; important to consider is the principle that put the GPA requirement in place, namely, the obligation to protect the integrity of the Independent Study option and, toward that end, to consider whether the student is capable of independent work. In response to Bartanen's further inquiry, Finney stated that a waiver on the basis of a documented learning disability would *not* occur because the University's accommodation of a student with a disability would enable the student to meet academic requirements (such as a minimum GPA).

Bartanen continued with the observation that *all* senior thesis projects on campus require a minimum GPA of 3.0. Barnett offered the view that the 3.0 requirement maintains the "exceptionality" of the SIM and added that the SIM opportunity should not be a way, as may be the case in this instance, to turn a program with only a minor (for example, Environmental Studies) into a major (Warning later seconded the latter point); case-by-case review, of course, seems in order. Washburn said that a SIM proposal involves both a student and a faculty member and actually is a great deal of work. Stevens stated the necessity of thus making clear that as a rule the Curriculum Committee retains the GPA requirement. Washburn added that a proposal involving a request for a waiver of the GPA requirement would have to make "a very good case."

The committee took no action in this matter.

"FALLOW YEAR" REVIEW OF THE CORE CURRICULUM. Washburn reminded of the "fallow year" that is to occur once in five years because no departmental or program reviews should be on the agenda, thus allowing the committee to review core courses in every rubric. Washburn asked what review materials the committee might want to request as part of the core review in order to determine (1) if courses still fit the guidelines and (2) whether the guidelines might need revision. Previous materials collected for core reviews were syllabi for all courses; but, in view of recent discussion about how to review the core for purposes of assessment, what materials might we need in addition to the syllabus for every course?

Stevens suggested that each faculty member teaching a core course should provide a one-page explanation of how the course meets the core rubric. Barnett opined that the syllabus should show compliance but after further discussion agreed with the suggestion posed by Stevens. Cannon, recalling previous experience in reviewing core courses, wondered why we should ask faculty members to state compliance with existing guidelines when each core-review subcommittee is likely to alter the guidelines. Bartanen said that the effort is to determine if each faculty member is still teaching a course that fits the core, but this effort is different from the question, as called for in the University's reaccreditation process, of whether a student is getting from the course what the course promises. Washburn said that materials submitted should indicate that a core course has not "migrated" from the core guidelines and wondered if materials beyond the syllabi should include paper assignments and exams.

The committee's general consensus in this matter is that we should *not* ask faculty members to submit such additional documentation as paper assignments and exams; if a subcommittee needs more material for the review of a specific course the subcommittee can request it from the faculty member. Bartanen concluded by saying that we will ask for the most recent syllabus for every course and that in some cases we will need a syllabus for each section of a course with multiple sections, for example, English 101, Biology 111, and Mathematics 121. If the faculty as a whole revise the core curriculum, the committee should be ready to adjust the core review-process accordingly.

At an appropriate moment as the clock neared 6:00 p.m. Stevens M/S/P that we adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
7 February 1999