

Curriculum Committee Minutes April 7, 1999

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

Absent: Goleeke, Sugimoto, Heavner, Tomhave

Mehlhaff began the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Minutes. **Warning M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 31 March 1999 as adjusted.** Corrected statements representing the discussion of “standards for interdisciplinary programs” appear below:

- “...Warning mentioned that the committee *could* deal with such proposals on an *ad hoc* basis.” (end of paragraph four)
- “Cannon expressed concern about the absence in some interdisciplinary programs of requirements for upper level course work....” (next-to-last paragraph)

Announcements.

1. Mehlhaff noted the appointment of Associate Academic Dean Kris Bartanen to the position of Vice President for Student Affairs, and the committee broke into an extended round of applause.

ACTION: **Cannon M/S/P a resolution expressing our congratulations to Associate Dean Bartanen and our relief that this change will not be effective until August.** This motion passed unanimously and by acclamation.

2. Mehlhaff announced that the rescheduling of the Faculty Meeting originally scheduled for 28 April means that the committee can meet on that day.

STANDARDS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS. Mehlhaff began the committee's resumed discussion of this agenda item by commenting that the committee need not take action beyond suggesting to Washburn and to Bartanen's successor as Associate Dean the possibility of revising the departmental-review self-study guide to include different questions for interdisciplinary programs. Stevens stated that some of the possible questions with reference to an interdisciplinary program also would apply to disciplinary majors; an example would be a question about whether the program includes a capstone course. Cannon expressed the need also for guidelines for review of new programs being proposed; such guidelines might include a “principle” about upper level work. Stevens reminded of Hooper's point last week to the effect that determining what course numbers mean is difficult.

Proehl stated that a general assumption may be that in a *discipline* the faculty can set an appropriate program for the major, but in an *interdisciplinary* program we may not be able to assume this probability. Stevens later agreed, noting that departments *do* organize curricular programs in a developmental pattern. Hooper said that an interdisciplinary program *within* a department--for example, the new programs in Foreign Languages and Literature--might have need for an advisory committee such as those in the Asian Studies Program and the Humanities Program. Kline followed with the observation that an interdisciplinary program also involves structure to lend coherence to the curriculum.

Discussion turned to the “Self-study Guide” for departmental reviews, and Washburn distributed copies of the current document showing changes introduced by Washburn and Bartanen as a follow-up of discussion at the last meeting. In response to Proehl's inquiry about whether the guide asks about course sequence, Bartanen said that Review Question #2 does ask about “structure” and “sequencing.” Stevens stated that while in last week's discussion he focused on

introductory and capstone courses, which added phrasing in Question #2 would specify, he now considers that some curricular programs, for example, Chemistry, might not have an “introductory” course but rather an established point of beginning. Kirkpatrick pointed out that in Biology the beginning course *is* introductory, specifically “an introduction to how to think about biology.”

Review Question #4 would change in the draft revised “Self-study Guide” to include two parts, #4A and #4B, for “departmental reviews” and for “interdisciplinary program reviews,” respectively. The added #4B in draft is as follows: “For interdisciplinary program reviews: What is the extent of interdepartmental cooperation in planning, teaching, and advising in the program? How is the program advisory committee selected?” Kirkpatrick asked about the review of proposed new interdisciplinary programs, and Mehlhaff and Cannon both said that the “Self-study Guide” could have application in a review of a proposed program.

Summary. Discussion yielded the following realizations:

- (1) A revision of the “Self-study Guide” is under way to accommodate questions particularly appropriate to interdisciplinary programs.
- (2) The committee is newly aware of two different categories of interdisciplinary programs, (a) an interdisciplinary program existing outside any department but most often incorporating courses from multiple departments and (b) an interdisciplinary program within a department.
- (3) An interdisciplinary program within a department also needs specific questions pertaining to interdisciplinary programs about, for example, an advisory committee.
- (4) The “Self-study Guide” is useful as a reference in reviews of new proposed programs.

At 5:58 p.m. Stevens M/S/P that we adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett