

Curriculum Committee Minutes
October 7, 1998

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

At 5:05 p.m. Mehlhaff called the meeting to order.

Minutes. **Kline M/S/P to approve the minutes for the meeting of 30 September 1998 with the correction of sentence two in the section on “core curriculum assessment” to read as follows: “The core-assessment subcommittee will then meet and present a proposal for the committee to make as a recommendation to the RASCAL committee and the Faculty Senate.”**

Subcommittees

COMPARATIVE VALUES. Bartanen announced to the subcommittee and the full committee that the proposer has withdrawn from core status the proposed course for Spring 1999 that subcommittee members have received for review.

Core curriculum assessment. Following Mehlhaff’s direction, the three core-area groups met in corners of the room for “10 minutes” to continue work on the three pilot assessment tools and data. At 5:42 p.m. the committee reconvened.

For the **Science in Context (SCXT)** group Cannon reported that the first tool in the pilot assessment was a questionnaire distributed to students in SCXT courses. Rather than a separately created instrument, the questionnaire was one designed and used previously by faculty in the SCXT core program, and this origin raises some question about the value of the tool in assessing the core because the tool seems geared more to how students liked a course than to the objectives of the core rubric. Using a questionnaire in the context of a course is problematic because the questionnaire might be perceived as another faculty-evaluation mechanism; using a questionnaire at a “higher level” could provide evidence of outcomes not attached to a particular course. The second tool in the pilot assessment was a set of abstracts for the large paper written in a course; the group did not entirely agree on the value of the abstracts but agreed that they do suggest a degree of delivery on the core objectives. Perhaps a better assessment device would shield the particular course.

For the **Fine Arts (FA)** group Proehl reported that the pilot assessment tool was a set of four Likert-scale questions and some short-answer questions to pursue whether students are getting what the core objectives seek, including an experiential component. While the answers to the particular short-answer questions are of interest, they may not reveal what we wish to know; so the group perhaps can re-craft the questions. Proehl added that he had learned a lot by developing the questions, by “going back to the rubric itself and parsing it.”

For the **Communication I (Comm I)** group Kline conveyed the judgment that the assessment tool cannot in any way evaluate a particular course, so the effort is to seek in May assessment by students who took Comm I courses in the previous fall semester; the essential issue is the determination of what a student learned in the process of writing that suits the objectives of the core rubric. The group suggests the need for a random sampling, perhaps a stratified random sampling, of the 325 or so freshmen who did Comm I the previous fall; this could mean seeking a sample group of 12 students, with “double-teaming” and other encouragement (including pizza) actually to come to a conversation. The pilot tool from last May shows that students especially came to appreciate the process of revision in their writing and to develop the ability to support a point to be made.

Discussion of core-assessment projects will continue in future meetings.

At 6:02 p.m. Stevens M/S/P that we adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett
7 October 1998