

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

28 February 1996 (Wednesday)

Misner Room

Present: Adams, Barnett, Bartanen, Cousens, R. Fields, Jackson, Kerrick, Kline, Magnus, Matthews, Merz (Chair), Neshyba, Orloff, Paris, Tomlin, Washburn

Absent: Clifford, Morgan, Valentine

Visitor: Finney

With thanks to Tomlin for chairing last week's meeting, Merz began the meeting at 8:03 a.m.

Minutes. The committee M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 21 February 1996.

Announcements. Washburn distributed a new chart of subcommittees and, with Merz, called attention to the "done" status with reference to the tasks of seventeen of the twenty-two subcommittees listed on the chart and the "IP" (partially done) status indicated for the work of two subcommittees.

Merz announced the appointment of an additional subcommittee:

Science in Context subcommittee: Adams, Kerrick, Orloff (chair), Bartanen.

Merz explained that a SCXT course proposal prompted the formation of this subcommittee.

Subcommittee report

3-2 ENGINEERING. Tomlin reported the subcommittee's consideration of this program, which is separate from the Department of Physics, the review of which will take place next year. The program allows a student to do liberal arts at Puget Sound and then to move on to another school for the degree in engineering. Tomlin stated that the review materials "look fine," as does the rationale for the program; the program is working well, with about 150 students per year expressing interest in it. In response to Neshyba's inquiry, Tomlin said that perhaps 100 students to date have gone on to do the engineering degree elsewhere; some students in the program have difficulty completing the Puget Sound work in three years, and many end up choosing to major in related subjects and graduate from Puget Sound.

ACTION Tomlin M/S/P approval of the 3-2 engineering program [Dual Degree Program in Engineering].

(Washburn clarified that the official name of the program is the Dual Degree Program in Engineering and noted that in the *Bulletin* it appears as "Engineering, Dual Degree Program.")

Science in Context prerequisites

Jackson summarized the issue raised at last week's meeting by Van Enkevort (visitor): The requirement that a student must have *completed* both Natural World core courses before being able to take a SCXT course that will provide that student with SCXT core credit has resulted in a number of petitions to the Academic Standards Committee, of which Van Enkevort is a member. Petitions have revealed the SCXT prerequisites to be a problem; the SCXT case is different from that of the Comparative Values core, in which the "requirement" of upper division standing seems not to be enforced. Should we signal the Academic Standards Committee to treat the SCXT prerequisites with more flexibility? Consider, for example, the student who entered the University with Advanced Placement credit in the sciences and thus may have taken many science courses but only one Natural World core course at the point of wanting to take a SCXT course for core credit.

Orloff and Matthews spoke to difficulties their students/advisees have had in this regard and suggested the need for flexibility. Matthews recalled that in 1992 or so when this issue surfaced the Curriculum Committee affirmed that the SCXT prerequisite had to be enforced.

Finney stated that petitions regarding SCXT prerequisites are treated no differently from other petitions: The job of the Academic Standards Committee is to waive rules when extraordinary circumstances exist, and the Committee has so acted several times; but the Academic Standards Committee will not change the rules.

In response to Magnus's question about how often the SCXT prerequisites are a problem, Finney said not very often at all; he expressed surprise that the current semester, when the first class required to fulfill the SCXT core must finish doing so, has not yielded more SCXT problems. Mary Morgan routinely lets a student know by letter if the student is in a SCXT course without having met the prerequisites (which would mean that the course would not count for the SCXT core in that student's case). Finney said that in order to avoid a situation in which a student finds this out only after enrolling in the course the Curriculum Committee could instruct the Registrar's Office to enforce the prerequisites at the time of Registration.

Discussion yielded a range of ideas. Magnus: A teacher of a SCXT course needs to be able to assume that every student has had two NW core courses. Kerrick: We could redefine the prerequisite to be *science* courses, not necessarily NW core courses. Washburn: The faculty clearly intended in original legislation for the prerequisites to be two NW core courses, completed; but in the initial period of SCXT course offerings -- when the SCXT core was not yet a requirement for all students -- the Curriculum Committee permitted SCXT courses to be available as courses (not core courses) to students who had not met these prerequisites. Paris: The idea of science courses suggested by Kerrick is appealing; some SCXT courses have additional prerequisites (for example, SCXT 330 - The Idea of Evolution, which specifies that one of the two completed NW courses must be in either Biology or Geology). Neshyba: If a student who did not complete the two NW core courses before taking a SCXT course does well (grade of A, for instance), then perhaps the student should get core credit. Bartanen: If each SCXT course has particularized prerequisites, further problems likely will occur. Finney, in response to Jackson's inquiry about whether the guideline for the CV core -- "Senior standing recommended" -- has created a problem: At some point the original CV expectation of "must be a senior" became a "should," but in general students seem to take the CV core when we want them to do so. Magnus: Actually the prerequisite need is not so much for specific knowledge but for a general acquaintance with science. Adams: We seem to want a "science background," rather than the NW core courses as such. Matthews: Should we provide some statement of guidance for the Academic Standards Committee at this point, allowing more flexibility in dealing with this issue? Barnett: Making new legislation for a few students whose cases we know may not be the best procedure; in any case, changing the faculty legislation with reference to prerequisites for SCXT courses is a matter for the Faculty Senate and/or the full faculty. Finney: One possibility would be to retreat from the absolute requirement that both NW core courses must be *completed* before the SCXT course, allowing the second NW course to be *concurrent* with SCXT.

Merz conveyed her inclination to appoint a subcommittee to talk with instructors of SCXT courses and to bring forward a proposal regarding the prerequisites for SCXT courses. Jackson suggested that the subcommittee should begin its work with Jim Evans, who is directing SCXT.

Science in Context prerequisite subcommittee: Magnus, Matthews, Paris, Tomlin
(chair)

The committee adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne W. Barnett (28 Feb 96)