

Minutes of the Curriculum Committee
October 14, 2009

Present: Gwen Barnes-Karol (chair), Mary Cisar, Vicki Harper, Jo Beld, Justin Merritt, Gregory Walter, Greg Muth, Jeanne Foels, Liz Lampman, Megan Kaszuba, David Booth, Elizabeth Leer, John Schade, Heather Klopchin, Phyllis Larson, Maria Kelly, Kathy Tuma

The chair introduced new student members of the committee, Jeanne Foels and Megan Kaszuba.

Subcommittee Reports:

Policy and Planning Subcommittee

1. The subcommittee announced it had reviewed and approved revisions to the Manual for International and Off-Campus Studies as offered by Eric Lund.
2. The subcommittee announced it had reviewed and offered recommendations to Eric Lund on a statement of Intended Learning Outcomes for students participating in programs administered by the Office of IOS. (Lund and the subcommittee found it useful to distinguish between ILOs for international and for domestic off-campus programs, and to acknowledge that not every off-campus program addresses intended outcomes related to multi-cultural learning—for example, some science programs use remote sites as field stations for research, not as cultural resources. Nevertheless, the ILOs do emphasize cultural learning, and the subcommittee endorsed this as an aspirational statement.)

Continuing Programs Subcommittee

1. The subcommittee announced that they and the newly appointed Director of Oral Communication will collaborate to oversee the awarding of ORC to courses.
2. The subcommittee announced new attention to global review of general education in writing (WRI). This is intended as a lengthy review that may result in recommendations regarding the implementation of the WRI curriculum, but probably not in any revision to the requirement itself. The subcommittee will focus on these issues: (1) Is there a healthy progression of opportunities for intensive practice at writing over the course of a four year curriculum? And (2) is there a helpful and workable interaction between general education in writing (WRI) and “writing in the major.”

Assessment Subcommittee

1. The subcommittee presented for discussion a draft recommendation to the dean of the college concerning next steps to take in assessing student progress towards departmental learning outcomes. Members mentioned that faculty might be fatigued with assessment efforts. The committee acknowledged this possibility, but affirmed a commitment to establishing an ongoing practice of publicly stating intended outcomes and gathering evidence of progress towards outcomes as a way of guiding future decisions and teaching strategies. The committee directed the subcommittee to

revise the recommendation to the dean so as to emphasize that sustaining a practice of assessment is central to the teaching mission of the college—it is “just what we do” as a matter of course.

2. Phyllis Larson was asked to keep the dean’s council informed of the committee’s deliberations on this question.
3. The committee chair was asked to include a statement about assessment in her report on behalf of the committee to the November faculty meeting.

New Proposals Subcommittee

1. The subcommittee approved to pilot off-campus programs, in South Africa and in New Zealand.

Other Business:

Mary Cisar reported on behalf of the Foreign Language Subcommittee that the subcommittee is reexamining the question whether proficiency in American Sign Language could satisfy the FOL requirement. Barnes-Karol noted that since the last time this question was raised the MLA has revised its view of ASL, and now considers ASL a natural rather than an invented language.

Respectfully submitted.

David Booth
October 23, 2009