

Approved September 16, 2009

College of Arts & Science
COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM

Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2009

Present: Linda Angst, Franya Berkman, Paulette Bierzychudek, Diane Crabtree, Julio de Paula, Celestino Limas, Tatiana Osipovich, Stephen Tufte, Rishona Zimring, Jayson Estassi, Alex Rihm, Tamara Ko, recorder

Absent: Jim Bunnelle, Stuart Kaplan

Dean de Paula convened the first Curriculum Committee meeting of 2009-2010 at 3:17pm.

I. Introductions

Welcoming the new and returning members of this year's Curriculum Committee. Continuing faculty members from last year are Professors Linda Angst, Franya Berkman, Tatiana Osipovich and Stephen Tufte. New faculty members are Professors Paulette Bierzychudek, Rishona Zimring, and Stuart Kaplan.

New student representatives for this semester are Mr. Jayson Estassi and Ms. Alex Rihm. Ex-officio members are Registrar Diane Crabtree, Dean Julio de Paula, Dean Celestino Limas (who will be represented by Associate Dean Jeff Feld-Gore in future meetings), and Director Jim Kopp (who will be represented by Mr. Jim Bunnelle).

II. Election of Committee Chair

Dean de Paula briefly outlined the duties of the committee chair, which include but are not limited to, convening the Committee meetings and overseeing the subcommittees as a whole. Per last year's precedent, the committee chair will also be asked to serve as a liaison on the General Education Task Force (GETF).¹

In terms of GETF responsibilities, Dean de Paula predicts a slightly different discussion process from the previous year. The Task Force will be charged with determining what the faculty want in terms of a general education program and what that education specifically pertains to at the College. Dean de Paula foresees the Task Force as being a conduit of information in gathering opinions and suggestions from the faculty and then utilizing that knowledge in a productive manner.

Due to some absences, the Committee decided to postpone the election of a committee chair until next week's meeting. Dean de Paula will chair the present meeting.

¹ Dean de Paula is open to suggestions and nominations by the Committee on who to serve as a liaison. The Committee representative does not necessarily need to be the chair. The most important goal to bear in mind is for the Committee to establish a direct and open link of communication with the GETF.

III. Subcommittee Assignments

Subcommittees are as follows: 1) Course Proposals; 2) Subcommittee on Petitions, Appeals and Student Designed Majors (SPAS); and 3) International Studies Coordinating Committee (ISCC).

The following appointments were made:

Professors Tufte and Berkman will continue on with the SPAS along with Professor Zimring. Professor Osipovich will continue on with the Course Proposals Subcommittee, with either Professor Bierzychudek or Professor Kaplan. Professor Angst will continue to serve on the ISCC.

The roles of student representatives on the Committee are as voting members who can also serve on subcommittees. Dean de Paula commented that it is always better to have as much student representation as possible but that ultimately, faculty members need to be the driving force on the subcommittees.

A concern was expressed in regards to student representation on the SPAS. Difficult conversations occur in those meetings and there may be confidentiality issues in regards to the academic standings and appeals of fellow peers. As clarification, Registrar Crabtree reported to the Committee that as standing Committee members, student representatives are designated as school officials under FERPA, and as such can have access to confidential student information that is necessary for them to do their job on the committee.

Ms. Rihm will serve as student representative on the Course Proposal Subcommittee. Dean de Paula offered the student position on GETF to Mr. Estassi who will report back with an affirmation or negation.

IV. Discussion of Agenda Items

Reviews of Minors

Dean de Paula reported to the Committee that the Classical Studies minor was internally reviewed two years ago. Both the Committee and Faculty Council receive review documents, the former to review curricular issues and the latter for resources. The Committee then affirmed the Classical Studies minor in the College's curriculum and the minor has continued to exist. Last year, the Committee internally reviewed the Dance Minor and while some additional feedback was requested from Professor Stephen Weeks, the Committee also affirmed that minor. In regards to the staffing perspective, both minors still have some small issues to work out but those are always present.

The Ethnic Studies minor is due for review this year and Dean de Paula recommended that the review be conducted internally as external reviews are typically reserved for departments. Internal reviews are conducted in the same manner as external reviews, and exact guidelines can be found in the Faculty Handbook. A deadline needs to be given to the chair/director of the minor for document submission with enough time for the Committee and Faculty Council to have a meaningful discussion. Oftentimes the chair/director is also asked to attend a committee meeting to more thoroughly explain the minor and/or review process.

There was a justified delay in submission of the Dance Minor review documents last year and so the Committee was not able to start discussions until late spring. Dean de Paula suggested that the Committee give a semester to the Ethnic Studies Director to generate review documents and to then review the Latin American Studies minor another academic year. This is due to the fact that some faculty members teach both in Ethnic Studies and LAS, and it may be burdensome for them to generate two different reviews in the same academic year.

As a condition of the Ethnic Studies minor approval, it was agreed that the minor would be reviewed in its fourth year. Dean de Paula's recent knowledge does not remember the LAS minor ever being reviewed but it is recommended that minors be on a ten year cycle of review.

It was suggested that the LAS minor be externally reviewed a different academic year and that both Directors Elliott Young and Juan Carlos Toledano generate the review documents together so that in the absence of one, the other director would be able to answer any questions. Dean de Paula received the suggestions as a friendly amendment and will also look into having a body analyze the merits of an external and internal review. There should be consistent guidelines for what is externally and internally reviewed. While an external review does have an added financial expense, it also has the benefit of a different and neutral perspective.

General Education

Dean de Paula received from the Faculty Retreat a sense of the need for the GETF to essentially start over from scratch in determining what it is the College expects from a general education program. Professors Zimring, Becko Copenhaver and Susan Glosser are eager to have a conversation about the Humanities requirement and Dean de Paula stressed the importance of having these conversations consistently throughout the year and kept focused on the general philosophy of the General Education Program.

However, Dean de Paula did ask for the Committee's honest opinion in whether or not there is enough momentum and faculty interest in discussing general education. Does the Committee get a sense of real motivation to do something different or are the fears of doing too much too soon creating a barrier to productive discussion and feedback?

Professor Zimring said it would be helpful if someone (in general and not specifically a Committee member) could explain how the general education requirements came to exist. The requirements were already in place when she came to the College and appear to be an incomplete version of a distribution model. While she strongly believes that the students are still receiving a good education at the College, she does not quite understand the program's core and would welcome the opportunity to have the current status quo explained more thoroughly.

Professor Osipovich also believes that there is momentum for the issue and tabling the discussion after investing so much time last year would be unwise. However, the added pressure of producing immediate results with a new president and eventually a new dean could be intimidating. Professor Zimring acknowledged the situation but added that it should be the faculty's role to help familiarize the new president and dean with the institution's identity. The voice of the faculty should be empowered in this process as change does not necessarily originate from the administration. Additionally, the importance of conversations should

necessitate some kind of a timeline but also cannot be rushed. Even cynicism towards the general education review process is momentum because it is still a response.

Professor Angst noted that asking faculty members what general education is could open a myriad of conversations and opinions. It would be most productive to have some kind of a deadline on the discussion process.

The general sense from the Committee fell along the lines that conversations about general education should continue to happen in a broad way but not necessarily restricted to a specific and strict timeline. Professor Bierzychudek noted that starting and ending the current academic year with a concrete proposal will surely take more time but that compiling a list of desired skills a liberally educated person can expect to acquire should honestly take no more than a month or two.

V. April 29, 2009 Minutes

It was noted by Registrar Crabtree that there were additional approvals which happened via email after the conclusion of the last meeting of 2008-2009. Of most note were the original “small change” proposals by the East Asian Studies Program which were in reality, creating four new courses.

Dean de Paula motioned that the newly convened Course Proposal Subcommittee revisit EAS proposals 08.111a/b and 08.112a/b and then redistribute to the Committee for vetting. This amendment will be reflected in the original April 29, 2009 minutes as a footnote and thus noted as such in these minutes.

Dean de Paula adjourned the meeting at 4:29pm.