

Curriculum Committee Minutes
September 8, 2004

Members Present:

Richard Anderson-Connolly, Suzanne Barnett, Bill Barry, Carlo Bonura, Jim Jasinski, Mark Jenkins, Grace Livingston, Karim Ochosi, Lori Ricigliano, Ken Rousslang, Christine Smith, Joyce Tamashiro, Carrie Washburn

Rich Anderson-Connolly (Chair) convened the meeting at 8:58 am.

Anderson-Connolly called for approval of the September 3, 2004 minutes. The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Announcements

Washburn explained that she would be distributing copies of material necessary for the work of subcommittees through campus mail as necessary.

Subcommittee appointments

Subcommittee appointments (primarily based on preferences selected by committee members during the September 3rd meeting) were passed out and reviewed.

Subcommittee procedures

Anderson-Connolly led a discussion of subcommittee procedures. He explained that the chair of the curriculum committee is responsible for scheduling necessary meetings and acts as the main liaison between subcommittees, the curriculum committee and departments under review. Departments will submit the required materials for the review process. These materials will then be put before the subcommittee for discussion. If there are any concerns from the subcommittee, the department has the ability to react and revise their submitted materials.

Barnett asked if the subcommittees only meet virtually (over email). Anderson-Connolly replied that it depended on the circumstances of the subcommittee. Barry clarified that subcommittees normally meet when doing department reviews but normally handle courses over email. Discussions over considering ASL as a foreign language, for instance, involved physical meetings of subcommittees.

Jenkins inquired if the Connections subcommittee would require physical meetings. Both Barry and Anderson-Connolly affirmed that the Connections subcommittee would require meetings because it has the work of “operationalizing” what came out of the Connections “dinners” (discussions among faculty) last year. Jasinski asked if there were any documents that came out of those meetings. Barry summarized the discussions at the dinners that focused on the transition from the comparative core to connections, science and context, and questions over

disciplinary definitions in the formation of Connections.

Barry then commented that the committee has normally approved Connections proposals when there has been a rational justification of the interdisciplinary nature of the course. The committee has been flexible in terms of how Connections guidelines are fulfilled. Jasinski reaffirmed (by way of a question) that the rubric previously developed provides the guidelines by which the committee would judge courses.

Washburn reminded the committee that it will have 12 connections proposals.

Barnett asked the chair (Anderson-Connolly) how soon he would recommend the Connections subcommittee begin meeting? Washburn replied that it should begin meeting sometime next week.

With this question, Barry reminded the committee that all Connections proposals must be before the committee by November 1st because the 05/06 class schedule must include new Connections courses.

Anderson-Connolly asked the Connections subcommittee to report back on progress and discuss how subcommittee will operationalize Connections guidelines.

Washburn, reporting on the status of ongoing department reviews, said that no materials for reviews as yet were submitted and that October 15, 2004 was the deadline for department reviews. She stated that she would call chairs to check on any progress, but that some may not come until January.

Smith asked if department reviews included the review of courses. Jasinsky responded that it is possible that in department reviews courses could be discussed. Barry suggested that new courses are included in the reviews and that departments should submit all courses for review, but the committee does not go over each course. Washburn clarified that any changes that a department has gone through should be included in their review.

Barnett then raised concern over David Lupher's assignment as the chair of two subcommittees in light of his inability to make regular committee meetings. Both Barry and Anderson-Connolly reiterated Lupher's importance to the Curriculum committee in the role of subcommittee chair.

Seminar Assessment

Washburn reminded the committee that we await the report from the Faculty Senate regarding the committee's "charge." In the academic year 2004/5 one "major charge" will be to review first-year seminars.

Barnett raised the point that in previous review cycles there was a "fallow year" in which no reviews would take place.

Washburn recounted the recent actions of the previous committee in which the “fallow year” was removed with the introduction of the new core based on a new schedule (the committee will address department reviews every year).

Barnett, on the topic of assessment, suggested that reviews of core areas seemed to be a good assessment technique. Rousslang asked about what was meant by “assessment.”

Anderson-Connolly suggested that maybe small assessments from the first year seminars could be the groundwork for overall assessment of the seminars.

Barry explained that the guidelines for assessment included two steps: 1) gathering assessments and 2) a process for meeting and discussing the assessments. The aim is to determine whether students are achieving objectives of seminars and such information then is presented to the Curriculum committee.

Anderson-Connolly suggested that subcommittees could formalize something regarding assessment in their future meetings.

Other business

Anderson-Connolly recognized Barnett.

Barnett argued that the committee should have a better understanding of the criteria used by the Associate Dean in course approval as a form of “delegated action” outlined in action number 10 of the “Functions of the Associate Deans’ Office in Curricular Matters” document reaffirmed by the committee during its September 3, 2004 meeting. She suggested that Approaches courses be submitted for subcommittee review once or twice a year. The reasoning for this, Barnett said, was that if the Associate Dean only brings to the committee any proposal that the Associate Dean feels requires a wider “field” of judgment, then the committee will gradually lose the standard in order to accommodate what the dean has said with regard to evaluating proposals.

One member of the committee pointed out that the academic standards committee would check all reviews done by the Associate Dean.

Anderson-Connolly suggested to Barnett that the committee first discuss this issue and next week consider a motion in writing.

Jasinsky pointed to the curriculum action report—issued by-monthly—as a means of more sharing of information. One alternative proposed, although it would “generate more paper,” was to amend a copy of proposals to the report so that the entire committee would see more than just a summary “catalog copy.” In this way members of subcommittees would be able to stay on top of routine decisions.

Tamashiro asked how frequently would the dean refer a course to the committee.

Barry offered that within a given year many core areas would not have any questionable submissions. But Barry did present questions to the committee regarding approvals around 50% of the time when considering humanistic approaches. After the inquiries, normally once issues are explained (by the proposer) the courses are approved. Perhaps only once, Barry stated, has a subcommittee convened to review a course.

Barnett clarified her positions stating that part of the issues is information, but the Faculty's role in curriculum and "customs" of the community after a while follow the only person with experience in reviewing courses, which is the Associate Dean. Given the opportunity to deliberate, would a subcommittee approve something dean would approve. She proposed a review once a year to make sure that committees and dean would be on the "same wavelength."

Barry proposed another possibility involving writing up reports on issues surrounding the consideration of approaches course.

Jenkins asked if right now the Dean's reports were just a *pro forma* statement (the report from Associate Dean summarizing more difficult issues in approving courses). The committee, he suggested, wants to know formally what is going on related to approvals.

Washburn then asked if having info same as figuring out the process of approval? Summarizing Barnett, she said that approval of curriculum is vested in faculty, but then raised the issue of when the quest for efficiency leaves faculty out of loop.

Jasinsky reminded the committee that the "*topoi*" for approving courses evolved out of a faculty subcommittee. The criteria and rubric language could be reviewed regularly allowing the committee to maintain a supervisory role in the process.

Barnett was once again advised to make a motion in writing for the following meeting.

Barnett suggested that any report could include a sample proposal. She reiterated that for the committee the experience of reviewing is most important.

Barry said that the problem would be which examples to submit, and he offered to choose ones that are on the margins. Barnett, in fact, argued that the more ordinary proposals would be the most meaningful.

Rousslang suggested that some proposals are more regular than others and that some may involve a high level of expertise. Barry offered the example of a course on "human existence" as a course that would involve a tough review process.

8. Adjournment