University Board of Undergraduate Studies
March 2, 2016
Approved Minutes

Present: Behram Ghasemzadeh (Chair), John Su, Sandra Cleveland, Scott D’Urso, Susanne Foster, John Borg, Michael Slattery, Stephanie Quade, Joan Whipp, Farrokh Nourzad, Anne Pasero, Jill Guttormson

Guests: Lowell Barrington, Lars Olsen

I. Reflection given by Susanne Foster

II. Revised Attendance Policy
   A. UBUS was asked to review a revised attendance policy. Susanne Foster provided a recap of the issue. A group of key stakeholders reviewed the policy.
      1. They decided to separate the issues of attendance and make up work to make the overall policy cleaner than the previous version.
      2. There were no content changes - mostly clarification of the existing policy.
      3. The group tried to be flexible and comprehensive in the review.
      4. Individual faculty have a lot of control of their classes in regards to policy, but these processes must be documented.
   B. The committee voted unanimously to approve the revision.

III. Minutes - February 3rd meeting minutes approved with minor changes.

IV. Core Revision Proposals - presented by the Core Revision Facilitation Review Group (discussion led by Lowell Barrington, Lars Olsen, and John Su)
   A. Members of the CRFR Group presented a PowerPoint overview of the Charge and the 15 proposals submitted.
      1. The charge is to create a Transformational Core that is Mission-Centric, Integrative, and Workable.
      2. 15 proposals were offered from faculty groups (representing 90 people on campus) who have been working together since the start of the semester. These groups were representative across the campus.
         a) Proposal 1 - Tiered and Sequential
         b) Proposal 2 - Jesuit Charism
         c) Proposal 3 - Ignatian Seminars
         d) Proposal 4 - Two-Tiered Core
         e) Proposal 5 - Desires and Constraints
         f) Proposal 6 - Orbital Framework
         g) Proposal 7&8 - Dual Integration Core
         h) Proposal 9 - Three-Tiered Core
         i) Proposal 10 - Core Values
         j) Proposal 11 - College Seminar Model
         k) Proposal 12 - Integrative Flexible Core
         l) Proposal 13 - Concentric Circles
         m) Proposal 14 - Discover, Engage to Transform
         n) Proposal 15 - Connections Core
      3. Common Threads
a) Tiers / Vertical Integration  
b) Social Justice, Service, Action  
c) Horizontal Integration, Team Teaching  
d) Themes  
e) Seminars  
f) Capstone  
g) Ignatian Pedagogy

B. Proposals will be reviewed by three representative bodies: a) UBUS, b) CCRC, and c) Academic Senate.

C. Discussion

1. Ghasemzadeh inquired about which model is most common of our peer institutions. Barrington replied that a lot of models exist. There is a lot of variety and lots of different interpretations of core curriculum.

2. Ghasemzadeh also inquired to the level of flexibility for students. Barrington replied that that is more of an implementation stage question. Olson also noted that this is related to the definition of Core - What does this mean?

3. D’Urso noted that one proposal suggested that we label these classes as “CORE” to denote they are a university experience. Ownership is at the university level rather than by any department or college. Quade concurred with this sentiment and added that this takes us back to the issue of core learning outcomes versus institutional learning outcomes. We are trying to define to students and their parents the totality of the Marquette experience. She added that a part of this discussion needs to understand the out of class experiences that are designed to compliment their classroom experiences (ex. service learning). Olson agreed, noting that some of these experiences need to be intentional. Barrington noted that they group had heard these issues expressed at a number of listening session in the fall and that they are important. He noted that the Core needs to be valued and that it needs to be exciting for both students and faculty. Teaching a Core course should mean something. Barrington offered that now, Core course are taught that are also course that are a part of other curriculums across campus.

4. Slattery asked to contribute his thoughts before he left to teach. He was very struck by the idea that in their freshmen year, students identify questions that provided some sort of focus to what they were doing here. Any document like this has to be a living changing document. The students could value very different questions by their second or third year. It is something that they would know, their advisers would know, their instructors would know, and he thought that this sounds great. He could imagine that this could be combined with some sort of portfolio idea where over the years, students come to an answer for one of their questions and collect this into a folder.

D. Assessing the proposals - Are there some proposals that satisfy the charge and do you like them? Are there some with features you like and some that you don’t like?

1. Ghasemzadeh noted that one of the themes that jumped out at him was the tiered system (not sure we can get away from this). How can this be used to teach students at different tiers. Develop and create questions in the first tier,
generate knowledge that build upon the first tier, and then accomplish something in a third as a result. Becomes part of the students direction in life and what they would want to accomplish in their future. Examining this structure and the flexibility built into it, a lot of the proposal can fit into this kind of approach.

2. Whipp liked the tiered approach of this model but that it looks a lot like the old core. Quade noted that the model graphic doesn’t represent the reality of what it could be. Whipp said that one of the things that she noticed, that in Proposal 3, the three seminars, one credit each during freshmen, sophomore and junior years, seemed very practical. She said the vertical integration does not give a lot of choice. With the current core, you can take X, Y, & Z, but it doesn’t add up to much of anything. This idea from this proposal could be added to other models/proposals. This plus vertical integration within colleges, so that each college has to come up with their take on the core. Likes the paralleled tiers (university and colleges), but also likes the foundation stuff as well. Guttormson also liked Proposal 3 and noted that the current core is not unified. This gives the university the opportunity to intentionally connect on level with another and help students understand the mission and the value of the mission. You could include in these seminars what Ignation Pedagogy is, and give it context. D’Urso noted that he thought that this feature acted like a backbone that could run behind any one of these other proposals. Whipp noted that this was so simple that you could present to each college. She is already think about how it would work with her curriculum and how it would be tweaked around these themes. Each college would have to do something similar. Ghasemzadeh said he was trying to picture what this would look like in the College of Health Sciences and how freshmen would “connect with the community”. What would that mean for a student who is already taking 17 credits? Whipp suggested service learning. It was also noted that of those 17 some of those are current core classes. Ghasemzadeh still worried that the connecting with the community would be difficult when trying to complete their courses. D’Urso noted that that is based on the assumption that colleges and departments are not going to be making modifications to their majors once a new core is in place. If a core like this or any new core, is going to cause conversations in all of the colleges. Individual programs will have to adapt. Quade added that the core in its current state was just dropped in and no one really said lets design our curriculum around this. This core process is hopefully bringing the different parts of the campus onto the same page and is not the cart before the horse like we have now. There is nothing that is cohesive or unified about it. D’Urso noted that many programs have capstones today, but they are not like what is being described in some of the current proposals. Here they are more integrative, cross-disciplinary, team-taught approaches that are much different than what we have now. It will cause some rethinking of majors and college cores (for those that have them). Quade said that it gives everyone more opportunity to talk about how Ignatian pedagogy is a part of these classes and what that means. We may
have to start training people and doing things differently because we have made a commitment to this overall thing.

3. A question was asked whether or not these seminars would be based in one’s college like some capstones currently are. Would prefer that they not be based in the colleges and capstones should be treated that way as well. Helps students see things from a broader perspective than that of just their own college. Quade concurred. Ghasemzadeh returned to the idea that he doesn’t see this (seminars/service learning) as practical for biomed students because of their workloads and other requirements (MCAT). There are some who participate in community programs but that it is not part of their integrated function. It is voluntary. Done by students and faculty who devote their time. It is not in the courses we offer as a department. Olson noted that requiring service learning for all is a dicey proposition. If it were to be part of the core, it would have to be extremely well done. He also noted that engineering students also have a large course load (often graduating with 150 credits), but several classes have service learning components. Barrington noted that some of these events can be on campus that relate to some of these themes. They don’t have to attend all of the opportunities but those that work with their schedule. We heard this quite a bit in the listening sessions.

4. Whipp offered that in terms of credits for the core, across the various proposals, while some did not give numbers, she would advocate to do more with less, though she would still advocate for those foundational courses, so some credits would be needed, but not sure how many.

5. Foster pointed out that she saw from the PowerPoint that the two models that seemed to do most of the things that covered most of the themes were Proposals 2 & 10. Not sure if it means anything but was worth mentioning.

6. Olson noted that thus far, we have been focusing on a few proposals: 9, 2, 10, and 3.

7. D’Urso pointed out that what a lot of the models had were the foundational courses. He said that some groups had difficulty finding a place for them because they are not transformational, but they are essential skill sets that were identified in the faculty survey. We have to have them, but how do we connect them to the core? Barrington noted that they heard this a lot. Setting the context for the student was important in terms of the classes in the core and that we need to give them the skills to do that. These foundations have to come before they dive into deeper, richer part of the core experience. D’Urso stated that a number of proposals had an initial Jesuit introduction courses, and that he would argue that these are also foundational as they help the student understand “Why are you here?”; “What can the Jesuit approach bring to your education?” Olson noted that these courses can help and has worked in the College of Engineering. Cleveland noted that this is important in terms of why students select Marquette. Barrington noted that the Jesuit aspect of this was in the charge, and it is important in terms of being different than what schools like UW Madison offer. If we can’t show this, then we have a real problem. If we have a Jesuit foundation course, we better follow it up with a Jesuit experience, and not a typical distribute core like Madison.
D’Urso agreed and said that that is why the touch points along the way (Proposal 3 seminars) may be how that is done.

8. Olson asked if there are any other proposals that clear the bar in terms of the charge, or any other components that you would like to focus on. The idea of themes could allow for conversations across the university. Barrington noted that other universities have themes, some change each year, or vary by class. Act as a touch stone. D’Urso noted that the TedX like talks from alums could be used as a way of engaging alums in the core. Could also give students a glimpse of what the world beyond Marquette is going to look like. It could be built into those one credit seminars.

9. Ghasemzadeh also wanted to mention that when a student starts their education that they need to know that this is a new phase of their life. That they need to think and approach things differently. You may not know how, or may not have seen something before, but during your freshmen year, we can give you the tools and the ideas and topics that they can start thinking about. These are important issues (ex. environment, social justice, etc.) that you will need to deal with because of your education and you will need to have a solid idea of what to do once you are out in the world. Quade said this would help students connect with peers and faculty around important issues. We don't value this right now. Nourzad offered that a similar notion was behind a class (now in its third year in the College of Business) called “Day One”. Components include self awareness and goal setting. All students must take in their first year. Olson suggested that this could be done in an interdisciplinary way. Cleveland offered that we want our students to be globally connected and aware, and show them their responsibility in that regard. Nourzand pointed out that they have alumni come in as guest speakers.

10. Whipp asked the group about in their research, what was the most common way of addressing foundational courses, particularly among Jesuit institutions? Su noted that they may not be seen as foundation in terms of core classes. He said that it is not surprising to see some of the models that were presented because of the conversations and practices that are being developed elsewhere. He said that foundation classes could include first year experiences in addition to traditional courses. Barrington noted that in a lot of places foundation means “skills that you have to have”, while in others it is about starting the process of developing into who they are going to be.

E. Future Steps (John Su)

1. The group will collect the notes from this meeting and present to the Academic Senate at its April meeting.

2. All of these proposals are going on the Core Revision Website for everyone to see. They want students and faculty to look at them and weigh in.

3. He thanked the group and UBUS for the discussion today.

4. Barrington added that if anyone has any additional thoughts that they can send them to him or any member of the Core group.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:31p
Respectfully submitted by:

Scott C. D’Urso