I. Members present: Noel Adams, Joyce Wolburg, Kathleen Ford, M. Behnam Ghasemzadeh, Gary Meyer, Kristy Nielson, Stephanie Quade, James Richie, Christine Shaw (Chair), Peter Toumanoff, Joan Whipp, Chae Yi, Christ Krueger

Absent: Sandra Cleveland, Matthew Hurley

Guests: Mike Monahan, Sharon Ronco

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Christine Shaw. Kathleen Ford provided a reflection.

II. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of January 18, 2012 were approved without corrections by consensus

III. Announcements: Gary Meyer

A. The Search for the University Common Core chair position is nearing completion and an announcement should be forthcoming. The new chair will assume the position on June 1.

B. There has been a suggestion that the Core Director be an ex officio/nonvoting member of the Board of Undergraduate Studies, a change that would require UBUS and Senate approval.

Motion: Christine Krueger moved and Chris Shaw seconded that UBUS approve this change in the statutes. Approval was unanimous. Gary will send out a proposed statute revision soon so that this proposal can go to the Senate.

IV. Old Business: Discussion of Charges from Academic Senate re: University Core of Common Studies

A. What do we know about student learning related to the core?
   - Knowledge related to student learning in the areas of the core is limited because measurement of the outcomes has been based primarily on indirect assessment measures. (Sophomore, Senior, and alumni self-report surveys for the past 3-5 years). A pilot assessment program using direct measures has been attempted in the past but student involvement was voluntary and numbers completing the entire assessment were low. A process using direct measures also requires financial and other resources which are not budgeted to the Core Director.
   - The National Survey of Student Engagement data also provides additional indirect evidence since there are items that indirectly speak to some elements of the core. (e.g. global learning.)
   - Until there is financial support for direct measures of the core learning outcomes, we will know little about student learning related to the core

B. Are the nine knowledge areas still appropriate?
   - Originally, determining the nine core knowledge areas was an arduous process. The members of UBUS respect the breadth and depth of the core areas and believe they are appropriate. Since we do not have clear data on the Core outcomes, we do not feel that a revisit of the nine core areas is warranted at this time.

C. Does the structure of the core facilitate learning?
   - The structure of the core does not include a means of integrating the learning and knowledge gained in one knowledge area with that of another. UBUS members believe that integration across the core is vital and a process to do this should be considered. It may be possible to develop conceptual themes that can be explored from different perspectives in courses in the various core areas thus enhancing the integration of learning.
   - Also, there is no prescribed sequence in which courses must be taken nor is there a culminating experience in which the student can integrate the knowledge/learning attained from the Core Curriculum. Mandating of a core course sequence would be a challenge since the different colleges and various majors find it necessary to place core courses in the curriculum and still accommodate discipline specific requirements. The lack of a more structured sequence in the core, leads to issues related to measuring the core outcomes.
Some students take the core courses early in their programs whereas others do not take them until later. Other than the last semester of the student’s course work, there is no time that measures can be applied with confidence that the core courses have been taken.

- There is little if any communication or consistency among faculty teaching core courses within a knowledge area or across knowledge areas. Enhancing this communication may enhance integration. Faculty who teach in the core need orientation and faculty development regarding the core. The problems of communication and consistency are compounded by the fact that many core courses are taught by adjunct faculty many of whom are part-time.
- If the Core is to be valued by students, academic advisors need to have a good understanding of the purposes of the Core and assist the student to realize how the Core enhances their growth.
- The Core is unique in that it is not positioned in Arts and Sciences but reports to the Provost. It is unique among Jesuit universities in that there is no budget for the core. The Core Director needs staff and a dependable budget. In addition to internal funding, there may also be a need for extra mural funding for the core. It should also be noted that many core courses are taught by adjuncts and the budget for adjuncts is unreliable and unpredictable. There is need for a consistent budget for core courses.

D. Summary thoughts

- There is no structure, no integration, no sequence, no dependable resource; and the assessment system is inadequate. There is an urgent need to consider a workable infrastructure for the core and resources to adequately oversee and assess the core and core learning at Marquette.
- Time is limited – In 2013-2014 we have our accreditation review – We need a year’s worth of data from meaningful assessment data so that we can adequately answer the questions that have been raised about the Core.
- We strongly recommend that the Core Director and the Core assessment committees move forward quickly to recommend a plan to move forward on these issues.

Based on this discussion, G. Meyer and C. Shaw will draft a response to the 3 questions and circulate on e-mail for response and revisions.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joan Whipp