

Core Curriculum Review Committee
Monday, February 23, 2004
10:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.
AMU 254
Approved Minutes

Members Present: Drs. Deahl, Lough, Quade, Byleen, Lueger, Machan, Vater, Maranto, Courtright, Laatsch, Ksobiech, Ropella, Eckman, Fr. Laurance, SJ, Mr. Lowrey, Ms. Russell.

Members Excused: Drs. Hathaway, Grahn

Dr. Snow called the meeting to order at 10:04 A.M.
Ms. Russell read the opening prayer.

Approval of the minutes from Wednesday, November 19, 2003:
Dr. Eckman moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Deahl seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair's Report:

- (A) Dr. Snow noted that there has been one new submission for CCRC review in the Science and Nature knowledge area, BIOL 006, "Plants, Pathogens, and People." Submitted materials are available on the CCRC blackboard site.

- (B) Dr. Snow added that Marquette will be hosting the Jesuit Core Curriculum Conference in the spring of 2005 and that a committee will be assembled for the conference which will tentatively take place in March. Fr. Laurance questioned if the conference will take place over a weekend to which Dr. Snow replied that it would probably be over a Thursday and Friday as has been done in the past.

Agenda Items:

- (A) **Relation of the CCRC and the UAC**
Upon the arrival of Dr. Wenzel, the question was posed as to what is the role of the UAC in determining the approval of core courses. Dr. Wenzel stated that the main focus of the committee is advisory in nature and that the UAC is a committee dedicated to overseeing assessment of core courses. Dr. Wenzel proposed the question as to if there is any way to ensure that valid assessment plans are received and how this can be carried out.

Dr. Deahl suggested that the ideal solution would be an office of curriculum and assessment that could provide an institutionalized answer to the problem and may be more plausible after the next North Central visit. Dr. Courtright called for a clarification of who within the university is voicing this opinion and added that he does not think this sentiment is shared by the entire committee. Dr. Snow interjected that the UAC minutes are available on the

web and can be consulted for clarification as to who advocates the creation of a University office of assessment. Dr. Deahl clarified that this sentiment, although not primarily supported by the CCRC, has been a topic of conversation in other university committees such as the UAC. Dr. Wenzel stated that many universities do have administrative offices that oversee curriculum and assessment.

Dr. Courtright raised the question as to Douglass Day's role in the process to which Dr. Deahl replied that Douglass Day's role is as a resource within the context of the strategic plans of the colleges.

Dr. Courtright asked whether Marquette has an extended plan for the next five to ten years with defined end goals. Dr. Wenzel commented that future plans are not yet defined.

Dr. Lueger noted that 80 percent of received evaluations are in the College of Arts and Sciences and that the chairs of the departments dislike the current assessment process due to its time-consuming nature and the fact that there is a lot of paperwork involved. Dr. Lueger also questioned how the UAC committee is formed and noted that there should be faculty representation present on the committee. He also questioned if the role of the UAC is primarily advisory or if it is designed to dictate process. Dr. Lueger stated that most departments feel the UAC primarily dictates process and therefore creates friction between the UAC and university departments.

Dr. Wenzel replied that the UAC is not an evaluative committee and that it should be mindful of the workload required of departments to complete assessment. He questioned whether the goal of the UAC is to evaluate the core and stated that if so, standardization would be needed. He further stated that the UAC is formed by committee members with vested interest and experience in assessment and that assessment of core courses is only a part of the UAC's charge.

Dr. Machan stated that when objectives were created it was never stated that assessment of these objectives would occur. Dr. Machan clarified that the objectives were created in order to define an area and now are being used for assessment purposes. He also noted that the instruments of assessment used in his department make scoring of specific criteria very difficult. Dr. Byleen agreed and said a similar problem exists in the mathematics department.

Dr. Wenzel commented that certain courses require prerequisites so that students have achieved certain skills before proceeding to upper level courses and attainment of these skills is what is being assessed. Fr. Laurance asked then if only introductory classes should be assessed given Dr. Wenzel's argument.

Fr. Laurance stated that professors do their own ongoing assessment in the classroom via exams, which occurs independently of outside assessment.

Dr. Laatsch stated that it was understood that knowledge area objectives were always tied into assessment and that curriculum development on the whole is always tied into assessment and this is an evolving process. She stressed the need for assessment.

Dr. Lueger stated that there are three steps in assessment at a university. The first step is that assessment exists, the second is the decision of which information is most valuable and should be included and the last is determining the most efficient manner in which to assess. Dr. Lueger stated that the university should be conscious of moving beyond the first step.

Dr. Eckman commented that assessment terminology is misunderstood by many departments. She commented that any student work is considered data and that definitions may need to be devised to ensure all departments understand these concepts.

Dr. Machan stated that professors often assess data that cannot be broken down into an assessment checklist of specific points. He also noted that he disagrees with Dr. Laatsch and restated his opinion that departments were never advised that their objectives would be used for assessment.

Dr. Maranto commented that Dr. Virginia Anderson's seminar on assessment was valuable and that breaking down an assignment and giving feedback has been a useful tool for improving the work of her students.

Dr. Vater commented that selective re-grading is necessary and that three to four criteria per assessment instrument should be analyzed. Dr. Wenzel asked what reviews are made within a department.

Dr. Courtright raised the question of transfer courses and wondered if credit for core courses can be offered only through Marquette.

Dr. Snow commented that the specific agenda item before the CCRC is the UAC's desire to advise the CCRC on whether assessment plans for submitted courses are acceptable. If not, the CCRC should not qualify those courses for the core until appropriate changes to the assessment plans are made.

Dr. Machan asked what criteria define an acceptable assessment plan.

Dr. Eckman stated that learning objectives and means of achieving the objectives need to be present on every syllabus and that faculty should create their own course-specific objectives.

Fr. Laurance noted that in Theology courses guidelines for teaching are defined and that factors such as the use of common texts help resolve this issue. Dr. Machan clarified that there are department-specific guidelines for what should be taught and the manner in which to do so.

Dr. Snow noted that assessment, as a general trend in higher education, is here to stay. She questioned how the process could be made a more positive experience.

Dr. Maranto replied that many faculty members don't understand how teaching and assessment are related and that to address these issues faculty development is required in addition to some department-specific workshops. Dr. Eckman agreed and noted that this would be especially beneficial to departments with core courses. Dr. Maranto noted that this process would also lead to increased faculty interaction. Dr. Eckman commented that there are many people on campus with experience in assessment to serve as resources.

Dr. Snow asked if departments were applying for funding to make assessment possible. Fr. Laurance replied that his department will be applying for funding to compile assessment materials. He stressed that itemized assessment reports do not measure holistic goals such as the formation of values and questioned how a report can be devised that will account for larger objectives. Dr. Lough commented that there are similar problems in her department such as measurement of cultural issues associated with nursing and that there is not sufficient time to gather data of this sort. Dr. Courtright noted that assessment generally requires two to three days to weeks to complete depending on the size of the department.

Dr. Deahl again commented on the need for a central assessment office that could save departments time.

Dr. Machan stated that departments should be made to feel like the UAC is drawing upon the expertise of the faculty. Dr. Wenzel questioned how involvement of all faculty could be achieved given that the UAC operates on the work of volunteers. Ms. Russell questioned what steps could be taken to tap department resources. Dr. Machan replied that the department should decide what is valuable to assess and the manner in which it should be assessed. Ms. Russell noted that then the department would have to assume the burden of assessment to which Dr. Machan replied that departments already assume this responsibility.

Dr. Wenzel asked for a summation. The committee agreed that the CCRC would like a recommendation for action on submitted assessment plans by the UAC which will be followed with a final decision on course submissions by

the CCRC. Dr. Wenzel thanked members for their work and involvement in the assessment process.

(B) Term replacements

Dr. Snow noted that several members of the CCRC are appointed as replacements and that terms are ending. Dr. Snow suggested that the easiest way to solve the problem is to ask replacements to serve one more year and asked for the opinion of committee members.

Dr. Lueger wondered about the designated end of term for all members. Dr. Snow stated that the end of term was stated in the letter that appointed each member to the committee and that she will check when appointments began and will end and then will determine how to proceed.

Dr. Snow also inquired if any other members are eligible to rotate off the committee. Dr. Quade noted that she is. Dr. Lough also noted that she will be going on sabbatical although she was appointed to a three-year term.

Dr. Deahl noted that the committee decided upon three-year terms and that if unable to complete three years of service a replacement would be assigned so that terms are constant although members may be reappointed.

Dr. Machan stated that he had two concerns about replacement procedures. First, last year four individuals, nearly one-quarter of the committee, were reappointed, and reappointment is not replacement. If the committee and its procedures are to be transparent and valid to the University community, then the entire community needs to be invested in the process. Without in any way trying to undermine the individuals who were reappointed, he questioned the appropriateness of such a procedure, which has the effect of leaving some individuals on the CCRC for years. Second, these and other significant issues were handled via e-mail at a time when the school year had ended and some committee members were otherwise engaged. Dr. Machan questioned the appropriateness of this procedure, too, which again undermines the transparency of the CCRC's procedures. Such procedural irregularities once more point to the need for by-laws on the CCRC.

Dr. Snow noted that there is a by-laws subcommittee that is in the first stages of production and called for volunteers from members of departments not in Arts and Sciences so that all colleges are represented fairly. Dr. Ksobiech stated that he would volunteer.

Dr. Machan also observed that no subcommittee chairs are from Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Lueger updated the CCRC on the subcommittee's progress.

Dr. Eckman noted that the CCRC has evolved from its original state and that e-mail was viewed as a means to facilitate decision-making, not hinder it.

Dr. Maranto commented that sub-committee chairs are not in positions of authority but are responsible mainly for scheduling subcommittee meetings. Dr. Snow commented that who serves as a subcommittee chair is mainly determined by who volunteers.

Dr. Snow clarified that appointments to the CCRC and the UAC are done through consultation with the Dean.

Dr. Ksobiech commented on whether the committee should be comprised of faculty only or should it include administrators, administrative faculty, etc. Dr. Maranto expressed the value of having administrators on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 A.M.

Respectfully submitted
Jennifer Talley-Rogers
Assistant to Dr. Snow