

Core Curriculum Review Committee
Friday October 15, 2004 9:00 A.M.-11 A.M. Raynor 060A
Approved Minutes

Members Present: Drs. Eckman, Steinmetz, Block, Lueger, Griffin, Krejci, Quade, Ksobiech, Moyer, Hay, Deahl, Snow; Fr. Laurance, SJ; Mr. Lowrey; Ms. Russell.

Members Excused: Drs. Hathaway, Vater, Ropella, Laatsch

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 A.M.

1. Ms. Russell offered the opening prayer.
2. Approval of the Minutes of 5.10.04: Dr. Eckman moved to approve; Dr. Ksobiech seconded. The minutes were approved by a vote of 5 in favor, none opposed, and three abstentions.
3. Chair's Report:
 - (A) Dr. Snow welcomed new CCRC members to the committee: Drs. Ed Block (English Department); Carla Hay (History Department); Andrea Griffin (College of Business Administration); Janet Krejci (College of Nursing); Jack Moyer (Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science); and Mark Steinmetz (Chemistry Department).
 - (B) Dr. Snow reported on Core submissions as of September 1, 2004: ENGL 045 and 055 in Literature/Performing Arts; MATH 030 in Mathematical Reasoning.
 - (C) Dr. Snow updated the committee on planning for the Fourth Annual Jesuit Core Conference, which will be held at Marquette in the Raynor Library from March 17-18, 2005. The conference title is: "Educating for a World of Change, Conflict, and Promise." The keynote speaker will be Maureen A. Fay, O.P., Ph.D., President Emerita of the University of Detroit Mercy. "Save the Date" cards have been mailed. In response to an inquiry from Dr. Block, Dr. Snow offered to send to committee members a letter that has been sent to the Chief Academic Officers of all Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S. and selected institutions abroad describing the conference program and inviting participation. Dr. Block also inquired about the colleges and universities who would be sending participants. Dr. Snow enumerated those who had committed participants for the event, and invited the participation of CCRC members. She thanked the Core Conference Steering Committee (Drs. Laatsch, Vater, Pustejovsky, and Ms. Russell) for planning the event.
 - (D) Dr. Snow reported that she had met with the Task Force on Faculty Governance on October 6, 2004, and had completed a questionnaire for the Task Force prior to that meeting. She reported that she had recommended to

the Task Force that the CCRC be reduced in size, since the workload of the committee is far lighter than it was when the group was first formed. At present, there are 15 voting members and 3 non-voting members. Dr. Snow suggested that the committee be scaled back to a five member group: the chair, plus one faculty member with expertise in the humanities, one with expertise in the social sciences, one with expertise in natural science and mathematics, and one with expertise in Diverse Cultures. She expressed the view that this arrangement would allow for the expertise needed to review submissions to the Core and yet allow for adequate representation of the undergraduate colleges. Several CCRC members expressed concern that adequate representation would be lost. Dr. Snow suggested that this semester the CCRC should brainstorm an alternative proposal to be sent as a recommendation to the Task Force. She also reported that she had recommended to the Task Force that the CCRC be composed of faculty, instead of administrators, and that, to ensure that the Core remain a University Core, the position of Director should rotate among the undergraduate Colleges. She reminded the committee that this is her last year as Core Director; she will be going on sabbatical in 2005-06.

4. Agenda Items:

(A) Dr. Snow introduced Dr. Margaret Bloom, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs and Teaching. She welcomed Dr. Bloom to the CCRC and to Marquette University, and invited her to address the committee.

Dr. Bloom began by remarking on her experience with accreditation. She stated that her goal by the end of this semester is to have a good idea of what the issues are with respect to student learning. She continued that, during the spring of 2009, North Central will make a focused visit to Marquette to evaluate assessment of student learning. North Central did not feel that Marquette has made sufficient progress on assessment during the past ten years. Dr. Bloom expressed a deep commitment to student learning. The Core is an integral part of student learning. She complimented the committee on its work constructing the Core. That was one step, but now, further steps need to be taken. Wrapped around the Core, she stated, are majors, and wrapped around majors is other programming in the University. We need to think about the student learning outcomes we want to achieve at all of these levels. This will take us beyond the evaluation of specific courses. She commented that she believes that a crucial step has been missed – that of articulating a common vocabulary of assessment that can be used at multiple levels. Dr. Bloom offered that one of her favorite words is ‘parsimony.’ More efficient assessment of student learning in the knowledge areas of the Core could be obtained using three to five learning objectives.

Dr. Hay remarked that at “ground zero” level – the level of teaching – there’s a tremendous amount of confusion surrounding assessment. Many faculty wonder

why the tools traditionally used to measure student achievement – exams, term papers, etc., are no longer regarded as valid instruments.

Several CCRC members commented that confusion regarding the use of assessment data is also apparent. Some faculty fear it could go the same way as the SCOT evaluations, which were initially not to be included in tenure and promotion files. Now this flawed instrument is regularly used to make these decisions.

Dr. Krejci commented on some of the difficulties of doing course evaluations in the College of Nursing. Dr. Eckman shared reports of her students not taking the SCOT forms seriously, and also offered that interesting information is emerging from our experience with the Core. Diverse Cultures courses offered by the School of Education are being taken by students from the College of Business Administration. Dr. Eckman was glad to see this.

Dr. Bloom remarked that the SCOT form is flawed. The committee that is evaluating that form, she said, should soon be offering alternatives for consideration. Focus groups will be held. Dr. Bloom commented that summative and formative evaluation are often confused.

A task that the Provost is asking the CCRC to undertake this semester is formative evaluation of the Core. After the first full year of the Core, what do we know? Has the Core helped students to learn? Has it helped faculty to teach? She stated that she and Dr. Snow would be gathering data to present to the committee.

Fr. Laurance asked what revisions of the Core would amount to. Would it be a “boiling down” of the numerous learning objectives in some knowledge areas?

Dr. Snow stated her belief that this would probably be the kind of change needed to make the Core more manageable. The Core needs to become more “user-friendly.” This does not entail changing the knowledge areas, but can be done by revisiting some of the learning objectives, scaling them back in some knowledge areas, and reframing those that are not easy to assess. The process by means of which courses are evaluated for inclusion in the Core also needs to be scaled back.

Dr. Hay commented that the process is very burdensome and many faculty are dissuaded from submitting courses for that reason. Dr. Snow agreed that the process needs to be streamlined.

Dr. Snow thanked Dr. Bloom for her comments and mentioned that, with the committee’s consent, Dr. Bloom will be attending the CCRC meetings this semester. She advised committee members to check the assessment pages on the Seattle University website. She had found these helpful in getting a better sense

of how to articulate University-wide learning outcomes, since these pages include a list of student outcomes for both graduate and undergraduate students.

(B) Dr. Snow asked Group I for recommendations on ENGL 045 and ENGL 055. Dr. Eckman reported that she and Drs. Hathaway and Griffin had met and discussed these courses. ENGL 045, “Reading Film as Narrative,” is an interesting course that was submitted on the Performing Arts template in the Literature/Performing Arts knowledge area. The subcommittee unanimously recommends approval for the Core.

ENGL 055, “Topics in Literature and Culture,” submitted on the Literature template, is meant to be offered with various subheadings, i.e., “Literature and Social Justice,” “Literature and Ethics,” “Literature and Religion,” etc. A syllabus for “Literature and Social Justice” was included with this submission. The subcommittee found this course extremely interesting but wondered whether other versions of the course would meet the learning objectives in the knowledge area. Dr. Hathaway, a member of the subcommittee, had explained to other subcommittee members that other versions would meet the learning objectives, since these subheadings of the course would be offered in accordance with the Sophomore Literature Guidelines (a copy was submitted with the other materials). The subcommittee therefore recommends approval and will rely on assessment to show whether other versions satisfy the learning objectives. Some discussion ensued. The consensus of the committee is that alternative versions of ENGL 055 probably do also meet the learning objectives, since they are literature courses and it is difficult to see how they would not meet the literature learning objectives. Moreover, if there is some doubt, syllabi from these other versions can be requested and evaluated by the committee.

Dr. Snow requested a report on MATH 030, “Mathematical Problem Solving and Reasoning for Teachers,” from Group II. Dr. Ksobiech reported that this course was the produce of an interdisciplinary collaboration between the Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science and the School of Education. It had been funded by the Provost, and had been evaluated and remanded last semester. Toward the end of last semester, a group of interested faculty met with subcommittee members and the Core Director to discuss changes and resubmission. The subcommittee unanimously recommends approval of the revised and resubmitted version of MATH 030.

Dr. Snow added that the University Assessment Committee (UAC) is advisory to the CCRC with respect to Core submissions. She reported that the relevant UAC subcommittees had found the assessment plans of ENGL 045 and MATH 030 acceptable, but had raised some questions about that of ENGL 055. However, she had not gotten a completed report on ENGL 055 in time for the meeting.

She asked for a motion and a second on the recommendations of Group I to qualify ENGL 045 and 055 for the Core and of Group II to qualify MATH 030 for

the Core. Dr. Deahl moved; Dr. Moyer seconded. Dr. Snow asked for further discussion of these submissions. In accordance with the CCRC's two-meeting rule, a vote on the motion will be taken at the next meeting on November 1, 2004.

Dr. Snow asked if there was any further business. Hearing none, she thanked the committee for its work.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy E. Snow, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Director of Core Curriculum