

Core Curriculum Review Committee
Monday, November 1, 2004 2-4 PM AMU 254
Approved Minutes

Members Present: Drs. Eckman, Block, Hathaway, Ropella, Lueger, Griffin, Ksobiech, Moyer, Hay, Laatsch, Snow, Vater; Fr. Laurance, SJ; also present: Dr. Bloom.

Members Excused: Drs. Steinmetz, Krejci, Deahl, Quade; Mr. Lowrey, Ms. Russell.

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 P.M.

1. Dr. Laatsch offered the opening prayer.
2. Approval of the Minutes of 10.15.04. Dr. Laatsch asked that her name be included in the list of those excused from the meeting. Dr. Eckman moved to approve the minutes as amended; Dr. Ropella seconded. The minutes were approved by a vote of 7 in favor, 1 opposed, and no abstentions.
3. Dr. Snow asked if there was further discussion on ENGL 045, ENGL 055, and MATH 030. At the meeting of 10.15.04, the subcommittees had recommended approval of these courses and a motion and second had been made. Hearing no further discussion, Dr. Snow asked for a vote. Including proxies submitted by CCRC members who were not present at the point in the meeting, the vote was: 15 in favor of ENGL 045 and ENGL 055; 14 in favor of MATH 030; none opposed; one abstention regarding MATH 030. All three courses were approved for the Core.
4. Dr. Snow opened discussion about the formative evaluation of the Core. She noted that all CCRC members should have received a faculty questionnaire. In total, thirty-eight responses were received. Responses that had been received electronically by the October 29 deadline were available for review on the CCRC blackboard site. Responses received after the deadline would be loaded, and responses received in hard copy would be scanned and loaded. To ensure that CCRC members have timely access to all documents, hard copies of late responses and hard copy responses were distributed to CCRC members at the meeting. Compilations of responses were also available on the CCRC blackboard site. In addition, Dr. Snow noted that she had administered questionnaires to students in sections of EDUC 008 and HEAL 025, both Diverse Cultures courses, and THEO 100 and 126. Compilations of student responses were available on the CCRC blackboard site. 200 questionnaires had been administered to CHEM 001 students through their lab sections. Responses from these questionnaires will be added to the compilation of student responses. Dr. Snow then opened the floor for comment.

Dr. Ropella noted that she did not like the format of some of the questions on the faculty survey because the feedback may be difficult to interpret. Dr. Hay wondered if Dr. Snow was satisfied with the response rate, and pointed out that it was difficult to complete the survey in only a week's time, given other commitments. Dr. Vater remarked that the timing of the survey displayed an insensitivity to faculty. Dr. Lueger noted that there was some confusion about the origin of the survey, and asked where it came from. Dr. Snow responded that she had crafted the questions in consultation with Dr. Bloom. Dr. Bloom remarked that the idea was to cast as wide a net as possible, and give faculty the opportunity to provide input. She noted that it is possible to identify themes in the responses. She and Dr. Eckman requested that responses to survey questions be displayed together in a single document; that is, responses to question # 1 should be displayed together, and so forth, in order to allow for a more thorough and coherent reading of the information. Dr. Snow said that this would be done.

Dr. Snow noted that one theme emerging from the surveys is unhappiness with assessment. Dr. Lueger interjected that faculty are not unhappy with assessment, but with the process of assessment. Dr. Moyer described his experience with assessment; it was presented as a dictate from on high that was needed to appease North Central. Assessment was not presented as something that could help faculty teach more effectively. Dr. Snow also noted that several faculty registered unhappiness with knowledge area learning objectives. Dr. Hay and Fr. Laurance recounted experiences they had in the focus groups that crafted learning objectives. In both cases, their experience had been that there was an expectation that long and complex lists of learning objectives were to be designed. Dr. Ropella remarked that there is a difference between learning objectives and learning outcomes, and that faculty were spending inordinate amounts of time on assessment and were not being recognized for that investment in the tenure and promotion process. Dr. Hathaway noted confusion surrounding the Diverse Cultures knowledge area and the need to change the template. She remarked that the idea of the knowledge area was to expose students to the interplay of various cultures. Courses that focus only on one culture would not qualify for the Core. She noted that there is confusion on that point. Dr. Vater suggested that the knowledge area should be renamed to make that fact salient.

It was suggested that focus groups should be convened for each knowledge area. These groups should consist of Core teaching faculty and faculty whose submissions were not approved for the Core. Dr. Lueger asked what the goals and objectives for the focus groups should be. Dr. Vater suggested that the goals should be to let faculty air their gripes, and identify problematic areas and non-problematic areas. Dr. Snow commented that she had been thinking in terms of simplification and "big picture" issues. She wondered if faculty in the focus groups could be invited to identify one central learning objective that they wished to achieve in their core courses, and be asked to assess that

objective. If one central objective for each knowledge area could be identified, perhaps these could be linked with learning objectives for majors and programs. She referred CCRC members to the assessment page of the Seattle University website. Learning objectives for both graduate and undergraduate students are identified. There are nine learning objectives for undergraduates. Perhaps Marquette should try to think in similar terms – of identifying broad-based learning objectives in the Core that then pervade those of majors and programs and provide a basis for University-wide learning outcomes. She also suggested that CCRC members refer to the goals of the various knowledge areas. These are more succinctly stated than the learning objectives, and could be useful in thinking about ways of simplifying the Core. She noted that she did not think that learning objectives should be discarded or thrown out, but rather that we should seek to distill what is most important in those objectives, then focus on that in our teaching and assessment. Dr. Ksobiech reminded the Committee of a phrase from Dr. Lynn Miner, ‘relentless gradualism.’ The present process of formative evaluation is part of the ongoing adjustment of the Core.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy E. Snow, Ph.D.
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Director of Core Curriculum