

Natural Sciences and Mathematics Council
Minutes for final meeting of 2010-2011 council, May 3rd, 2011

Call to order at 3:33

Present:

Jon Bossenbroek, Rupali Chandar, Fan Dong, Randy Ellingson, Sally Harmych, David Krantz, Paul Hewitt substituting for Charlie Odenthal, John Plenefisch, Anthony Quinn, Don Ronning, Joe Schmidt, Friedhelm Schwarz, John-David Smith, Steve Sucheck, Sibylle Weck-Schwarz, Denis White, Don White

Absent:

Max Funk, Hans Gottgens

Approval of minutes with modification from the April 19th meeting.

Report on the Faculty Senate Meeting

It was reported that senate passed a resolution endorsing the changes to the University Core that would result in a reframing and streamlining of the required core curriculum. Lloyd Jacobs subsequently sent out a copy of this resolution to all faculty indicating the administration's support of the goals in the resolution. Currently there exist about 300 courses in the university core and the administration is pushing to remove roughly 2/3 of those courses from the core with a target of 75-100 courses. It is the role of the college to evaluate the inclusion of college courses for retention or inclusion within that new core curriculum. As part of that role, the Senate's Core Committee must develop criteria for courses over the summer months that meet the educational targets for the university to be included in the core. These targets include: Communication, Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning, Personal and Social Responsibility, Critical and Integrative Thinking, and Information Literacy. Ideally, each core course will meet multiple targets. The committee is asking for volunteers from the colleges who wish to be involved in setting the criteria. Interested faculty can contact the new Senate president Lawrence Anderson-Huang. These criteria will come back to the colleges for endorsement by the College Councils in the Fall.

Report from the elections committee

Sibylle Weck-Schwarz, Chair of the Elections Committee, indicated that the elections for both Graduate Council and the CCAP at-large seats are complete. The faculty elected William Taylor, Deborah Chadee and Timothy Mueser to Graduate Council. Due to a scheduling conflict, Deborah Chadee will be replaced by Gerard Thompson. The faculty elected Max Funk (2 years) and Don White (1 year) as the at-large CCAP members. Departments that have not already done so should choose their CCAP representative and give that information to the Dean's Office by September.

Report from the curriculum committee

Steve Sucheck, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, presented 2 proposals for changes to the B.A. and B.S. programs in CNSM. These proposals were based on in-house ideas and compared with programs in both peer and aspirational peer institutions with a college analogous to our CNSM.

The proposals differ primarily in their philosophy regarding depth versus breadth. Both proposals contain a “Big Ideas in Science” course(s) that would bridge scientific disciplines to excite students in the college and possibly assist undecided students in choosing their major. The multidisciplinary nature of this course(s) would likely require them to be team-taught.

The following motion was made:

The council moves for the formation of an ad hoc committee represented by each department and university-wide interests charged with the creation of a 2 semester series of 2-3 credit courses with the provisional name “Big Ideas in Science and Math” and that these courses should be integral components of the new curriculum.

The motion was seconded and after discussion approved unanimously.

It was also proposed by David Krantz that as the CNSM curriculum committee works on specifics of the CNSM requirements that we consider limiting the number of credit hours a department can require for earning a degree.

Council then took a poll to get a sense of council for the current direction of the curriculum change specifically regarding elimination of humanities, fine arts, social sciences and foreign language requirements beyond University core requirements from the B.S. curriculum. The results from the poll were 12 for elimination of those requirements, 1 opposed to the elimination, and 4 abstentions.

Adjournment at 4:49 p.m.