Minutes of Core Review Committee
April 12, 2007

The Core Review Committee met April 12, 2007 in Kirby 108. In attendance were Brian Whitman, Philip Simon, Andrew Miller, Ernie Trujillo, Gina Morrison, Marianne Rexer, Ellen Flint, Susan Hritzak, Mary Kropiewnicki, and Diane Wenger along with invited guests Linda Paul, Larry Kuhar, Bob Tuttle, and Joe Dawson. The meeting was called to order at 11:08 a.m.

Minutes: There were no minutes of the previous meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was to receive feedback from the invited guests concerning the proposed multicultural & global awareness component of the core. Professor Whitman distributed written responses from Professors John Hepp, Tom Baldino, and Janet Starner, who could not attend the meeting; he then asked the guests to discuss whether the four proposed goals are covered in the current core courses in their areas.

Philosophy: Professor Paul: Goals 1 and 3 are covered in PHL 101, and 2 and 4 are touched on to a lesser extent. Some items are now assessed, but all could be assessed in the future.

English: Professor Kuhar: in ENG 120 some goals are not integrated at present, especially among adjuncts, though full time faculty have defined similar goals. There is somewhat of a problem mandating goals to adjuncts, but it is “achievable,” and “important to do.” Outcomes have been engaged in the program, but not specifically at the ENG 120 level. In ENG 101, there is lots of writing and a portfolio requirement; Goals 1 and 4 are met; 2 and 3 could be embedded and assessed. Again, there is an issue with a number of adjuncts teaching ENG 101. (Professor Whitman noted that use of adjuncts presents an issue for all areas—and the question is how to be sure they are delivering the desired core experience.)

Social Sciences: Professor Tuttle: PSY 101 should be listed under Area III requirements in the matrix. (This was an oversight that will be corrected.) He went on to say that in ANT 101 and SOC 101 all four goals are covered; though they are not yet formally assessed, this can be done. In EC 102, area 3 is covered and maybe area 4; he will check with Dr. Seeley. In PSY 101, Goal 1, and to a lesser extent 2 and 3 are addressed, but not formally assessed. Many/most of the department’s upper level courses do meet these goals. (Professor Simon noted the importance of emphasizing this point in the Middle States report.)

Performing Arts: Professor Dawson addressed the unique situation of the performing arts. Some 101s are not discursive; students are engaged in making an artistic product—they are doing it, but are not talking about it and may not realize they are achieving the goals. MUS 101 does it more than dance and art classes, but it varies from instructor to instructor. (Professor Morrison: we placed the performing arts under “critical analysis & reasoning,” but it may belong somewhere else in the matrix.)

Professor Kropiewnicki reminded the CRC that one of the big gaps for our Middle States review is that we do not have institutional student learning outcomes. They tie into competencies, and would be written to say what we want as outcomes. There has been some discussion of this (among Professor Kropiewnicki, Paul Adams and Darin Fields), but they are waiting for the new Provost. (Identifying outcomes will not be a task for the CRC; it will be done by another campus group.)
First Year Foundations: Professor Flint: each FYF instructor addresses the four goals to a different degree, since the purpose of the program is to allow instructors to teach to personal areas of interest. A review of FYF 101 objectives is underway. She expressed concern about applying the components in a cookie cutter fashion since this approach would destroy the beauty of FYF. Professor Simon noted the difficulty of assessing how each professor is achieving the goals. Professor Morrison recalled that, during meeting of the Multicultural Task Force, students insisted they wanted to see multicultural issues incorporated into First Year Foundation courses. Professor Rexer commented that we may be incorporating these components, but the problem is that students may not be “getting them.”

Commitment to Core/Middle States: Professor Kuhar observed that a recent administrative discussion about whether or not to fill a three-quarter time position in Philosophy (where courses are an important component of the core) suggests that the administration is not behind the core. As the school’s pre-professional programs grow, we need to put more emphasis on Area I—Humanities. (How can we have a law school without philosophy?) Professor Paul concurred; she noted that as people left or retired in Philosophy, they were not replaced; the administration took the opportunity to downsize.

Professor Whitman said that Middle States is an opportunity to bring concerns about adjunct teaching in the core to people’s attention. Professor Rexer recalled that the past Middle States review made a difference, but they spent a year gathering information before writing; we need to gather data now to make these important points. Professor Kropiechnicki agreed that the Middle States review can be a meaningful process and a chance to change the institution. Professor Flint noted that such issues can be addressed in Student Learning Outcomes.

Professor Whitman noted that we will be waiting to hear more feedback on the four multicultural components; there is a question of whether we need to mandate these in all the identified courses. Furthermore, as suggested by Professor Baldino’s memo, we need to add knowledge of geography to the goals. (Professor Miller pointed out that PS 151 Governments of the World fills this gap.) Eventually we will need a formal motion to bring this to the faculty; the concept is there, but we need specifics about how to implement the multicultural component.

Professor Flint asked if we should include Area II (e.g., environmental engineering is global). Professor Whitman responded that we can’t make all classes do this; Professor Rexer summed it up by saying that “by requiring it everywhere, we’ll get it nowhere.” Professor Flint noted that we can prepare a matrix whereby instructors might check off what they are doing in each area so it can be assessed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held April 24, and will be devoted to consideration of the latest WAC proposals.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wenger