Minutes of Core Review Committee  
October 24, 2006

The Core Review Committee met on October 24, 2006 in Kirby 108. In attendance: Brian Whitman, chair; Philip Simon, Andrew Miller, Marianne Rexer, Gina Morrison, Susan Hritzak, Diane Wenger, Ellen Flint, and Amy Patton.

I. Minutes: The minutes of Sept. 26, 2006 were approved.

II. Deans/Chairs Report: Dr. Whitman reported that the Board of Trustees has mandated a report of the desired goals and objectives for the revised core at their December meeting. Deans Fields and Bruns are seeking input from department Chairs on goals and objectives, and Dr. Whitman recently attended a meeting of this group. Once the Deans draw up this report, it should then come through the Core Review Committee (CRC). Dr. Miller agreed to attend the next meeting of this group, Oct. 26.

Barbara Loftus and Paul Adams are leading another group to set program goals and objectives; here the goal is to be sure we are prepared for the Middle States review. They are gathering information from departments to submit to the joint President’s Cabinet/Deans Council; this report will also come to the CRC. Marianne Rexer and Brian Whitman will attend the joint meetings of the President’s Cabinet/Deans’ Council representing the Core Review Committee.

Discussion: Dr. Flint asked who will prepare the report on goals/objectives of the revised core; Dr. Whitman explained it will be the Deans, using the feedback from the Chairs. Dr. Whitman has told them that the CRC’s first priority is WAC, but once the report is drafted we will review it. He explained that the purpose of reviewing the goals/objectives for the new core is to be sure it reflects the mission/vision/values statement and student outcomes. Professor Simon noted that the issue must be linked to the Assessment Committee’s work.

Dr. Flint suggested this may be a “cart before the horse” approach—the core must flow from the mission, but we have not yet approved the mission/vision/values statement. She further noted that the conversation must take place among all faculty members, not just those who deliver the core; there are models available to check on what is being delivered in each course (skills, knowledge, etc).

Dr. Whitman closed the discussion by noting that we will wait for the information to be gathered and given to us. We do agree as a committee on the need for certain skills (e.g., communication), but skills are not a goal; skills are a means of reaching a goal. If the deans are a means for us to get information, we will look at it as an opportunity, not necessarily a top down mandate. It will give us information to work with.

Dr. Rexer pointed out the need to move forward on WAC, since we are running out of time for offering the WI designated courses. We have to approve all WAC proposals next semester. So far two WAC proposals have come forth; Dr. Tuttle and Dr. Rexer will represent their departments for the presentation of these proposals.
III. Multiculturalism/Global Awareness: Dr. Morrison gave the background on the multiculturalism initiative, beginning with the work of the Task Force formed by the Provost in 2000/2001. She explained that James Banks describes four approaches to multicultural/curriculum reform: contributions approach, additive approach, transformation, and social action approach, and she reiterated the four components of multicultural education: self awareness, awareness of the ways of others, awareness of issues that divide us, and empowerment to social action.

She discussed possible ways to add multicultural/global awareness to the core:

* ask each department/division to address how they meet the four components
* add multicultural component to FYF (student surveys show it is crucial to address diversity in first year of educational program)
* add to capstone
* add area V to core (Dr. Redmond’s proposal; Area I then would be reduced to 6 credits)
* Integrate diversity into all core courses (we will meet resistance to this one)
* Require divisions to add courses (probably won’t work)

Discussion: it is important to acknowledge what is already being done in the social sciences and other areas and address this in the yearly reports. Dr. Rexer noted that we don’t want this to become a check list; do we need to address it in every course? Dr. Miller expressed reluctance to force everyone to add diversity; indeed some divisions (e.g. international studies) are uniquely positioned to deliver this in a comprehensive and coherent way. Dr. Flint asked if every core course should have to address all four components, or if the components might be addressed in different areas. For example, FYF deals with awareness of self; other courses deal with the components in different weights; we don’t want this to be a recipe or cookie cutter approach, but by the end of four years students should have a balance in all four areas. Professor Simon raised the issue of assessing the four areas; Dr. Rexer suggested entrance/exit assessments, and Dr. Morrison noted there are surveys such as a diversity index available. Dr. Morrison also stressed the need for diversity training for faculty so we know how to handle difficult classroom situations.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wenger