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Minutes from the January 18, 1979 meeting of the University of Montana faculty

University of Montana (Missoula, Mont. : 1965-1994)

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Absent: Bornstein, Ellis, O'Donnell (out of town), Shafizadeh, Walsh

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Shellen. The minutes of the November 30, 1978 meeting were approved as distributed.

2. Announcements
   A. Shellen announced that two special elections were held over the Christmas break to fill vacancies on the Review Committee. Gregory Patent, Zoology, was elected to a one year term on the committee and Lane McCaughy, History, was elected to a two year term.

3. There was no old business.

4. New Business
   A. Election was held to elect a member from the Schools group to serve on the Salary and Promotions Review Committee to fill a vacancy caused by a resignation. Dick Withycombe was nominated. Motion was made and seconded to close nominations. The chair ruled that Dick Wythcombe was elected to fill the vacancy on the Review Committee. There were no objections.
   B. Seconded motion from ASCRC: "Guidelines for an Undergraduate General Education Requirement to be Implemented Fall 1979."

Chairman Shellen said that the Senate would be allowed an unlimited amount of time to question the Chair of ASCRC and other members of the committee on the proposal. No amendments, motions, debate, etc. will be allowed at this meeting. There were no objections.

Shellen also said that the students have requested time to present their opposition to the general education requirements proposal. They will be given as much time as needed to respond.

Motion was made by Shannon to limit the time of today's meeting to 5:00 p.m. Motion was seconded and carried.

Wayne Van Mater, Chairman of the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee, presented the Guidelines for an Undergraduate General Education Requirement. He gave a summary of the background of general education requirements. He said that last year in accordance with a mandate from the
Faculty, ASCRC set up a subcommittee to study and begin work on some form of general education requirements that would insure a broader fundamental education for all of the University's graduates.

The beginning of the document, "The Problem" is strictly an essay from one faculty member on the committee. "A Response" outlines four non-traditional divisions from which classes are to be taken.

Van Meter discussed the roles and duties of the Committee on General Education (COGE) and why the committee feels such a committee is necessary. He stressed that the importance of COGE would be in identifying courses which would help students from one area understand another and to encourage the faculty to make adjustments in courses to help do this. COGE would also be charged with the responsibility of monitoring the program.

Van Meter said that ASCRC conducted a superficial survey while working on this proposal to see if there would be sufficient student credit hour capacity. They feel that there will not be a problem in this area. He stated that the Committee estimated that three times the number needed could probably be generated. New courses are not required for implementation of the general education requirements. Courses that have been taught will work, possibly with a little modification.

The Committee has intended to devise general education requirements in which the entire University can participate. They realize, however, that because of accreditation requirements of the professional schools there may be limited space in their curricula to fit in the required general education courses. Because of this, the professional schools will be treated somewhat differently than the College of Arts and Sciences. The Schools will be allowed to present to COGE a plan using a combination of general education and distributional requirements to fulfill the requirements.

Regarding transfer students, Van Meter said that number 2 under this section should read as follows: "2. The Dean's office of the College of Arts and Sciences decides area designation for transcript items which the Admissions Office cannot categorize as belonging to any one of the University of Montana's disciplines."

Distributed and discussed by Van Meter was an errata sheet of three changes and additions to the proposal and possible catalog copy. (on file)

Question and answer period followed Van Meter's presentation. A summary follows.

Chesnin asked if general survey courses would be reinstitted. Van Meter responded that the committee does not expect to have, nor do they want to have new courses, as a matter of practice. There will be 150-200 courses that will apply so there should be no reason to make up new ones. Existing courses may need to be modified slightly. Huff noted that the Law School should not be prematurely excluded from the program as it may have course offerings which pertain.
Erickson questioned whether or not the current process of Faculty Senate approval of ASCRC/COGE actions would still be in effect under the proposal. Van Meter stated that the Faculty Senate will ultimately approve all actions.

Rationale for the letter grade requirement was requested. Van Meter stated that it was the feeling of the committee that the students should develop the attitude of trying just as hard to understand general education courses as those in their major and should be graded accordingly.

Porter noted the importance of the composition of COGE and questioned the wording of "tenure track." Van Meter stated that the original wording had been "full professor" which had been criticized.

Campbell questioned the under-representation of professional school members on COGE. Van Meter and Shellen explained that the committee composition would follow Faculty Senate representation. Campbell also questioned how courses would be "qualitatively" evaluated. Van Meter stated that the committee envisioned that COGE would solicit student opinions but did not feel that the current evaluation forms would be adequate for this purpose. They would like to see a format in which students could respond in their own words. Campbell questioned whether or not this would constitute evaluation based on student popularity. Van Meter replied that he would hope for considered opinions from the students.

Ballard asked why student members of ASCRC voted against the proposal. Van Meter noted that while the student members last spring quarter were in favor, the present student members were more in favor of a distributive system, if any. These students have conducted a survey which showed that student opinion opposed group requirements.

Haddad questioned whether or not it would be possible to avoid science altogether because Division D allows students to take Psychology, a Behavioral Science. Van Meter acknowledged that this was correct.

Jacobsen (ASUM) asked if the committee had investigated the cost factor of transfer evaluations and whether it might result in an increase in student fees. Van Meter said that the issue was discussed many times. Certain suggestions were rejected for reasons of difficulties in the Admissions office, some for academic reasons. The one adopted seemed to avoid some of the unfairness to students while being the easiest for the Admissions office to handle. Admissions people attended discussions on the problem and guaranteed they would be able to handle it. If there are additional personnel needs, the administration will have the responsibility of handling this.

The matter of the Deans of the College of Arts and Sciences deciding area designations for transcript items which the Admissions office cannot categorize was questioned. Van Meter explained that Dean Feyerharm had been present at the meeting when this was discussed and volunteered to do the job.

Van Meter was asked approximately how many courses per academic year would be available in each category. He said about 25-30.
Regarding transcript evaluations, Van Meter explained that a prefix indicating whether or not a course was approved as a general education course during the quarter it was taken will appear on the transcript so there will be no necessity for checking back to determine whether or not courses were approved.

Porter questioned how the division of courses was decided and asked if the divisions were slanted. Van Meter stated that the department will initially decide where its courses fit and COGE will have to concur. COGE will try to keep courses balanced by allowing one course to be listed in only one division.

The question of the problem of graduate assistants rather than higher qualified professors teaching general education courses was raised. Van Meter said that the committee didn't address having COGE know who is teaching which course. COGE will not be able to tell the Department who must teach the courses, but it will be able to urge quality.

It was asked whether COGE will monitor the program to see if certain courses are "snap" courses resulting in most of the students receiving A's. Van Meter stated that this should be the job of the Department Chairers and Administrators.

The question of whether COGE will have a set of criteria to evaluate general education courses and if COGE will go against a Department's wishes was raised. Van Meter said that he really can't answer this yet. He agreed that there could be some problems since the implication is that COGE is to oversee the program.

Van Meter was asked if the Senate would have the chance to okay the criteria for choosing classes. He said that once the criteria are set it would come back to the Senate. Any change of policy would come before the Senate.

Ballard asked whether the committee had considered how many hours the general education requirement would tie up for students, especially those seeking double majors. Van Meter stated that the committee recognized this problem but felt that the benefits to the majority of the students would outweigh the disadvantages.

It was moved and seconded that the Senate meet again on January 25. Motion was amended to read that the purpose of the January 25 meeting would be to first hear the students, to receive amendments and to disseminate information. The motion and the amendment both carried.

5. Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Cathy Gardner
Faculty Senate Office