

Minutes of the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, 10/14/03

Members present: McSweeney (chair), Bucki, Escobar, Newton, Porter, Rakowitz, Simon, Schlichting, Snyder, Peterson (guest), Poincelot (guest)

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of September 30, 2003 were approved though Newton objected that part of her written comments about Culture and Inequality had not been included.

Individualized Major

Dean Snyder provided background on the Individualized Major. It went through all of the faculty committees, but the institution failed, despite the requirements of the law, to submit the major to the state for approval. The discovery of the oversight led to an intense game of "Not It," after which Prof. Rosivach, the original proposer, put together the application with help from Prof. Rakowitz and the Dean and AVP's offices. Dean Poincelot has been appointed to oversee the program. The proposal is about to be sent to the state and distributed to the other universities in the state for their feedback. There is a good chance that students currently enrolled will be able to graduate with the degree they are expecting.

Snyder then raised the question of whether we should allow this degree as a second major. Poincelot explained that, contrary to Rosivach's claims, he recalled that the original intention of the proposal was not to use the individualized major as a second major. Prof. Newton agreed that that's how the project was sold to the faculty; Prof. Simon also remembered that the presentation to the curriculum committee emphasized students whose interest could not be served by an existing major. Rosivach had sent written objections that these students should not be treated differently from other students in the college with regard to the possibility of double majoring.

Poincelot argued that we don't have the resources for students undertaking the individualized major as a second major because each major requires approval from a 3-member faculty committee, in addition to working closely with their mentors/advisors. Currently two seniors are still awaiting final approval of their individualized major proposal. Peterson distributed a list of approved and pending individualized major applications. Many are extended minors, often building off of study abroad courses (e.g., extending an Italian Studies minor into a major with courses offered only in Florence), and/or incorporating courses taken for core. Many are second majors with at least one third major. Prof. Schlichting pointed out that the students he knows among those listed are phenomenal; and that a problem would arise only if the numbers rose dramatically. Rakowitz clarified that the double counting issue goes beyond individualized majors (e.g., there's potentially a five course overlap between majors in English and American Studies). Snyder argued that the individualized major is intended for a student whose primary passion can't be found in the catalog. Prof. Porter wondered why students came to FU if we didn't offer a major in their primary passion. Snyder explained that some discover a passion here (presumably he meant in the classroom). Prof. Escobar expressed concern that allowing the individualized major as a second major may water down minor programs; Prof. Bucki concurred. Schlichting argued that then we would have to address second majors in general. Snyder said that this is different because it's a

major that's not available off the shelf. Poincelot said with some majors (e.g., Biology), double majoring would be very difficult because of limitations on double counting. Porter suggested that only one of current students is not simply extending a minor. Discussion over whether extending minors was or was not part of the original intent ensued. Rakowitz returned to a conversation she had had with the framer, and expanded on Rosivach's concerns about attempts to limit the individualized major in this way, namely that: double majoring is allowed for other students, double counting is allowed for other majors, and students with an individualized major are required to have a capstone experience, which they might not be able to arrange through a minor or collection of electives.

Some questions arose about the mechanics of the program. Currently, the approval committee is Art Anderson, Joan Weiss, and Dennis Keenan, though the original proposal suggests that committees might be different for different students. Snyder expressed concern about resource demands of the program that may lead to a watering down of other programs. Poincelot expressed concern that as more students learned of this option, the number of applications and the concomitant faculty workload could rise dramatically. Bucki expressed concerns that the catalog description example of an individualized, interdisciplinary major in 19th century history seems to suggest an attempt to circumvent some of the requirements of the standard history major.

With no further questions, Poincelot and Peterson left the meeting.

Porter moved that we restrict the individualized major so that it is a student's only major. Simon seconded.

Rakowitz spoke against the motion, arguing for addressing the problem of double counting more broadly, and seeing the effects of such a maneuver when the individualized major comes back for review in a few years. She also questioned whether such a limitation would have to go back through the whole approval process, as Rosivach seemed to believe. Schlichting agreed that there doesn't seem to be a problem with numbers yet, and we could check again when the program comes up for review.

Escobar spoke in favor of the motion with concerns about the watering down of programs. Newton spoke in favor due to direct experience with the problems of reviewing proposals, designing a capstone, and related aspects of the major that are labor intensive for faculty. She suggested that the individualized major should be reserved for students with a singular passion that can't be handled by the current system. Bucki spoke in favor of the motion, suggesting that there is currently too much free rein. Simon spoke in favor, suggesting that the original proposal didn't address this issue but should have, and we should now correct that error.

Schlichting, able to count, noted in closing that the students currently in the program should be admired for their creativity and initiative, especially when we often complain of apathy and lack of intellectual interest among our students.

The motion passed 5 to 2 with no abstentions.

Rakowitz raising the routing question, and Schlichting argued that no substantive change was made to the content of the program, so it wouldn't have to go further. Simon

suggested that the chair write to the Academic Council explaining this action and our belief that it needed no further approval; Snyder suggested copying this memo to Rosivach. Chair McSweeney agreed to do so.

Snyder clarified that minors would not be affected by this action, and that individualized majors built on minors would be considered reasonable.

TA 35: Improvised Acting

Escobar spoke strongly in favor of the course. Simon asked the Dean whether he had concerns about a new course designed to be taught by an adjunct. Snyder said that he did because he can argue more effectively for new lines when there are fewer adjuncts. Schlichting noted that this is a good use of an adjunct because we're unlikely ever to have a full time instructor in this area, but it rounds out an education in theater. Newton echoed the notion that adjuncts should be used to bring in expertise that the full time faculty doesn't have. Bucki asked whether the course would be available for core. Porter said it would, but theater majors would have the first chance at registering.

Rakowitz moved to approve, Simon seconded, and the course was unanimously approved.

IT 262: Rome in the Cultural Imagination

Bucki expressed confusion about English language culture courses within modern languages. Escobar suggested that it had to do with the preparation of our student body. He pointed out that he's currently teaching a Spanish art course in which 2 students who are receiving Spanish credit are doing additional readings in Spanish. General confusion was expressed about the response to 9b; the committee's interpretation was that this course would alternate with the Italian American Experience. But there was much discussion over whether more resources would be required and/or students would have less access to current courses. Escobar felt the syllabus was not as detailed as it could be and that the catalog description was too long.

Escobar moved to table pending further clarification of 9b and the syllabus. Simon seconded; The motion passed 6 to 1.

Updates

McSweeney updated the committee as follows on issues raised about courses approved at the previous meeting:

EN 347: Still awaiting letter from Black Studies. Regarding the possible overlap with material in EN344, Prof. Garvey is currently teaching EN344 using the new format. Therefore students currently enrolled in EN344 should be able to enroll in EN347. The last time EN344 was taught was in Spring 2001. Only one of the books used in that course will be used in EN347, so there is not a substantial overlap in material.

BI 366: She received a satisfactory response to 9b as well as an updated syllabus that included class expectations.

AY 152/163: She received a satisfactory response to 9b as well as new syllabi for both courses. The final exam format and date were clarified. She's still waiting for a letter from International Studies.

RS 277: RS10 is a prerequisite and all 200 level RS courses will have RS10 listed as a prerequisite in the new course catalogue.

HI 219: She received a shortened and generalized course description.

PS122: She received an updated syllabus as well as clarification about whether the course was open to Physics majors (it is not). This will be stated in the catalogue.

Also, guidelines for 1-week courses have been posted on the website that Prof. Naser runs along with the modified ASCC new course proposal form that has lines for question 9b.

Schlichting suggested posting some sample well-done syllabi on the web site that has the course proposal forms. Simon added that a well completed proposal form might be nice as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.55.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Rakowitz