CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

October 16, 2009 – Student Senate Room (HUB 119)

MINUTES

Present: Bonnie L. Bechard, Julie N. Bernier (2:39 pm), Christian Bisson, Mary E. Campbell (consultant, non-voting), Stephanie M. Caron (student, voting), Elizabeth A. Cox (Chair), D. Benjamin Dearth (student, voting), Robert G. Egbert, Lindsay E. Harrington (student, voting), Joyce C. Larson, Lisa D. Spradley, Anil Waghe [11 voting members]

Excused: Karolyn Kinane, Francis M. Williams (new faculty observer)
Presenters of Proposals: Paul M. Fedorchak, Zhizhang Shen

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all curricular changes noted below will become effective with the 2010-2011 edition of the Academic Catalog. Recorded in the order in which the agenda item was discussed.

Beth Cox called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm. Ben Dearth was welcomed as a new student member for the fall semester.

I.   The minutes of the September 18, 2009 meeting were *approved as presented.*

II. New Business
A. Computer Science:
1.   New course: CS 1xxx Computers: Past, Present, and Future (3 credits). Reviews the history of the modern computer system, its origin, development, current status, and future. Focuses on the computer's transformation from an adding machine in its infancy to an engine of the current information age. Discusses some of the core ingredients and historical aspects such as the people and places that precipitated change, social and political pressures, problems and solutions, hardware and software, etc. Falls. *Approved 10-0-0-2.* [This course is being proposed as a PPDI and is on the October 26th General Education Committee agenda.]
2.   Web Technology minor: discontinue. *Approved 11-0-0-1.*
3.   CS 1140 Introduction to Multimedia Technology (TECH): obsolete the course.
4.   CS 1160 Introduction to Communication Technology (TECH): obsolete the course.
Approved 11-0-0-1.
B. Psychology:
1.   Psychology courses below the 4000 level, not including PS 2100, PS 3140, PS 3150, PS 3210, PS 3220, PS 3260, PS 3600: delete prerequisites. *Approved 11-0-0-1.*

III. Reports
A. SAPC. Has not met since the last Curriculum Committee meeting.
B. General Education Committee. Met September 28th. Discussed assessing the program by continuing to have faculty focus groups for those teaching Directions and Connections; one will be held this semester for GACO and one will be held in the spring for PPDI. Approved BIDI 1070 Solving the Mysteries of Inheritance which the Curriculum Committee approved as a permanent offering, as SIDI; approved two courses seeking renewal as SSDI and PPDI respectively. Next meeting is October 26th.
C. Council of Teacher Education. Met September 21st. Discussed the proposed curricular changes to the Biological Science Education Option of the BS Biology that had been on the September 18th Curriculum Committee agenda and voted to table until the October 19th meeting further discussion so the program can investigate further whether there is a non-certification BS in Biological Science that a student can use as a contingent plan if they cannot complete the certification option. Discussed the

possibility of developing a carpool to get students to Concord to take the electronic version of the required Praxis test, which is cheaper than the paper and pencil version offered on campus. Discussed what the passing criteria should be for student teaching. The reviewers from the State Department of Education will be on campus November 15-18. Next meeting of the Council is October 19th.

D. <u>Steering Committee.</u> Discussed (a) Administrator Evaluation Committee, its tasks (for faculty to comment on the principal administrators), composition; (b) coordination of web sites for governance; no plan yet.

IV. Discussion of future work and NEASC Report
NEASC report: http://www.plymouth.edu/neasc/pdfs/2003TeamReport.pdf
Interim report: http://www.plymouth.edu/neasc/pdfs/NEASCFinalPlymouth.pdf

From the NEASC report in 2003:
<u>Areas of Concern</u>
• The institution has a commodious offering of majors (and options), some of which have low enrollments and have had few degrees awarded during the past decade.
• The present dynamic at PSU is to overreach by expanding programs and services, while putting less emphasis on assessing the effectiveness of programs and services that would lead to program adjustment and elimination. It appears that in trying to be all things to all people, everything becomes equally valid and valued.
• Despite the obvious scarcity of resources, PSU does not demonstrate that program development and elimination are guided by a clear set of priorities central to achieving the institution's mission and purposes.

<u>Suggestions</u>
• Simplify the undergraduate curriculum to feature programs central to the mission of the institution, paying particular attention to programs with excessive credit requirements. Eliminate under-enrolled programs, where appropriate, so as to fund new programs and initiatives.
• The University is encouraged to coordinate assessment efforts directed at learning outcomes systematically

We have to address items cited in the last NEASC report before they come for our next 10 year visit. "Commodious offering of majors (and options)." How should we address these areas of concern? What information is needed? What is the definition of "low enrollment" for a major? NEASC did not define it; it is for us to decide. Look at a program that is a critical need (would not drop it). Philosophy major? We have talked about it. The Department had dropped their proposal to discontinue the major. The Provost is researching the issue. They do offer many courses that are required in the major by individual enrollment, but not all courses.

We need the number of students enrolled in each major and the number of graduates in each major. We need the number of students enrolled in each Philosophy course.

Is it the kind of weakness for which they would not accredit us? We have to address it in the next report. If we don't do anything, we have to explain what we did do and why. NEASC could come back for a focused visit. Would like to not have NEASC decide our curriculum. This is why this Committee should be looking at things. What kind of university does not have a Philosophy program? Philosophy courses versus philosophy major.

Do we look at majors, options and minors? Yes, options, too. You want to use resources wisely; be good stewards of our resources. May have few enrolled in an option but the courses in that option

have good enrollment. More useful to look at course enrollments. Some low enrolled courses are our choice, based on pedagogy. Concern over quantity versus quality. Do assessments; link to strategic plan. Inability to fund new initiatives. There is no authority in the hands of the people to do it. We are good at adding (programs, courses) but not at assessing and reducing. We're not using data as fully as we should. Assessment at the graduate level is less than at the undergraduate level. These are legitimate, important issues that relate to each other. We do have TrackDat and we will do some training with departments. We have a license through 2012. It can do individual assessment at course, major, department levels.

Once we have the data and we assess it, then what do we do with it? Data says student can't do x, y, z so we have to address that in the curriculum but some don't want to.

Restructuring of Academic Affairs: who will do assessment in each area? Some of that is faculty governance. May not need any change, e.g., campus-wide curriculum committee. Maybe some proposals will need only the Dean's approval; some will need both the Dean's and Provost's approval.

What constitutes a bachelor's degree? So many options have little difference between them. Are we trying to do too much? What is a BS versus a BA? At other institutions, the BA has a different philosophy than the BS. There was a taskforce studying that. What should be the difference between a BS and a BA, versus what is the difference on our campus? BS majors are often large because of requirements from outside agencies/accrediting bodies. The BA is usually broader versus the BS that is more focused. At private liberal arts institutions, the BA is usually 1/3 major, 1/3 general education and 1/3 free electives, so majors are usually 40 credits. If other schools can do it, why can't we, if we are held to the same external requirements? Our BA Criminal Justice program did it last year when it revised the requirements of the major to be 39-40 credits (1/3 of the 120 credit degree), with 36-38 credits of General Education and 37-34 credits of free electives. The transfer agreement with NHTI for our BA Criminal Justice was changed to a 2+2 agreement, as suggested by the Curriculum Committee. The structure of the BA Criminal Justice easily allows for 2+2 agreements.

[A spreadsheet showing for each degree, major and option the number of credits in the major, credits in General Education, credits of free electives, total credits required and General Education Waiver was distributed with the September 18th agenda.]

Currently, our BA programs require 36 to 68.5 credits in the major (degree totals 120-122 credits). Our BFA programs require 67-73 credits in the major (degree totals 122 credits). Our BS programs require 30.5 to 99 credits in the major (degree totals 120-124 credits).

How do we get people to change their thinking? Do we want to call departments to this meeting to tell us what they are doing? This Committee is supposed to be reviewing the Program Reviews conducted for each major on a six year cycle.

If one could reinvent one's major, would it be smaller? Could it be reinvented with less pressure/boundaries? How do we get people to do that? What is it that we want students to know and to be able to do? Then what do we need to do in order to accomplish those goals? Where is the authority to get this done? Outside agencies tell us the competencies that must be met in each program. It's the way we are packaging it—do we require one course for each competency or can the competencies be met throughout courses?

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People do pay attention to what the Curriculum Committee is doing. We need more communication with departments. This is something we're actually looking at. Should we bring this up to the Council of Chairs? It has been, more than once.

Workload; heavy committee work. Committees take leadership and lots of work. Sometimes doing it through a committee does not work. We need to find better ways to do this. If the faculty is going to do it, need courage.

General Education courses have a sunset date and departments must apply to renew the Gen Ed status of each course. Maybe we should have a sunset date for each program. Perhaps a faculty member could review programs in a department that is not their own. If it is a BA program, the department has a 40 credit challenge. If it is a BS program, the department has a 60 credit challenge. Make each department reinvent their program to meet this challenge.

Are we serving students? Should a major be that intensive, e.g., Music Education? Five year programs? Five year program that includes a master's degree?

We need data to confirm or not confirm these concerns. In some departments the basic job of teaching is more difficult, e.g., 19 contact hours for 12 credits, lots of time in lab courses, studio courses, clinicals, practica.

Sunsetting all courses—look at all to see if they are meeting expectations, but not courses required for teacher certification. New faculty come with a new course; we should look at them. Review all or those not well subscribed or not required by the major? It is easier it look at the major versus looking at all courses.

Every six years each program conducts a review, with an outside external consultant. Each report is to be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. However, the Curriculum Committee has not been looking at them. That's what's missing . The Provost will give the Committee the most recent reports. We really have to read through them, then discuss and follow up with the department. The Provost will also distribute to the Committee the number of students in each major, the number of students who have graduated in each major and for Philosophy, the enrollments in classes.

We should meet more than once a month. The Student Senate meets weekly to stay current with issues. Is it better to meet twice a month to do these reviews? Maybe one meeting for proposals and one meeting for reviews. The Committee agreed to meet the 2nd Friday to discuss Program Reviews of majors and to meet the 3rd Friday for proposals, beginning next month.

11/13/2009 discuss Program Reviews
11/20/2009 discuss and act upon Curriculum Change Proposals and New Course Proposals
12/11/2009 discuss Program Reviews
12/18/2009 discuss and act upon Curriculum Change Proposals and New Course Proposals
02/12/2010 discuss Program Reviews
02/19/2010 discuss and act upon Curriculum Change Proposals and New Course Proposals
03/12/2010 discuss Program Reviews
03/19/2010 discuss and act upon Curriculum Change Proposals and New Course Proposals
04/09/2010 discuss Program Reviews
04/16/2010 discuss and act upon Curriculum Change Proposals and New Course Proposals
05/14/2010 discuss Program Reviews
05/21/2010 discuss and act upon Curriculum Change Proposals and New Course Proposals

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The meeting adjourned at 4 pm.

The Curriculum Committee meets on the third Friday of the month from 2:30 until 5 pm in the Student Senate room (HUB 119). Proposals need to reach the Chair 10 days prior to the meeting. Their next meeting is Friday, **November 20th**.

        Respectfully submitted,

        Mary E. Campbell, Scribe
        Director of Curriculum Support

These minutes were approved November 20, 2009.