**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

February 11, 2015

Present: Faller-Mitchell, McCandless, Miller-Francisco, Oline, V Smith; Highland, Waters

Guest: Michael Parker

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. The minutes from the 1/21 meeting were corrected and accepted; the minutes from the 1/28 and 2/4 meetings were accepted.

Susan Faller-Mitchell was welcomed as a new member of the committee.

Biology catalog changes

Introductions were exchanged with Michael Parker. He provided background for the biology catalog changes. The degree option areas will be discontinued; it will no longer be possible to offer them with the number of faculty they have. The credits for most lab-component courses will increase to 5 credits, which is a reflection of the amount of work and time required in the courses. There was a lengthy discussion about course credit increases and faculty loading; whether increasing credits for individual courses means that students must take fewer courses per term, thus extending their time to graduation; whether departments will eventually decrease the number of courses required in their majors because of the credit increases in individual courses. Parker said the overall increase in credits for the biology major are only increasing about 3-5 credits.

Parker explained the addition of BI 488 (Junior Seminar in Biology) and its relation to BI 489 (changing to Senior Seminar in Biology). BI 488 will be the preparation for BI 489. Waters asked whether the Junior Seminar could be numbered at the 300-level, but Parker said there were no 300-level numbers available that would keep the two courses in a logical sequence. The changes to the capstone course also involve corrections to faculty loading.

The committee continued the discussion about course credit increases and faculty loading. Questions included out of class component for labs; the difficulty of standardization across disciplines; whether courses with a lab component should have reduced lecture hours to make up for the time spent in labs. Are some of these changes driven by curriculum, or by loading? Waters said the changes seem to be driven by curriculum, but that good points have been raised. Parker emphasized that it’s still a 180 credit degree. McCandless asked: if the assignment of course credits translates into the amount of work students are doing, is the department requiring too much work? Parker said they’ve balanced that by reducing the number of electives. As to whether students have responded about the proposed increase in course credits, Parker said students are already aware that the courses require a lot of work.

Smith/Miller-Francisco moved to approve the Biology curriculum changes. Further discussion included clarification of the course title for BI 362; whether the Division Director should study the credit requirements and possible standardization; whether departmental honors programs had been eliminated [they have not, but are limited]. The committee voted to approve the motion 5Y/0N/0A. (Parker left the meeting.)

Other business

Oline reminded the committee that several curriculum proposals are still unfinished – Theatre, Music, Communication, Innovation and Leadership—in addition to several that still haven’t been presented yet. Thorpe is preparing a document showing which programs are unfinished and will send it to the committee. Oline said the committee also needs to set aside some time to discuss general issues such as cross-listed courses (which will likely involve broader campus participation) and differential tuition.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.