

Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee
Wednesday, April 11, 1979
3:00 p.m. Room 2067 - Cushwa Hall

Present: Dr. Hill, Dr. Scriven, Dr. Kougl, Mr. Skarote,
Mr. Quinby, Dr. Swan, Dr. Baldino, Dr. Hovey,
Dr. Richley, Dr. Edgar

Actions:

1. Dr. Baldino moved that the revised minutes of April 4 be approved as amended. Seconded by Dr. Kougl. Unanimously approved.

2. Experimental Courses:

Dr. Cohen was present to discuss this proposal.

In discussing the AAC's jurisdiction in this proposal, Dr. Hovey pointed out the required change in procedure, not curriculum change.

Dr. Swan felt the proposal to be a violation of clearly established faculty responsibility. He felt items #2 and 5 of Dr. Cohen's policy statement restricted faculty rights as outlined in contract. The whole proposal would require a Senate amendment.

Dr. Richley thought the procedure for this type of course was spelled out in the Senate Constitution. As such, the Constitutional By-Laws Committee must rule on the proposal, perhaps they will decide a portion is under AAC jurisdiction.

Dr. Hovey inquired if the proposed policy will be presented in appropriate form as a Constitutional amendment.

Dr. Edgar discussed correspondence from Miami University concerning a similar proposal at that institution.

Dr. Scriven felt that Miami's faculty proceeded along the same lines as ours in developing senior special topics courses.

Dr. Baldino pointed out that the proposal does violate certain aspects of contractually established procedure for curriculum matters.

Dr. Hill asked Dr. Cohen for specific information about the derivation of the proposed policy and the expected procedure for approval.

Dr. Cohen summarized: the basic concept of the proposal is to work up a procedure for establishing these courses, within a department. There are students who are interested

in a particular subject, and circumstances which require a quick try-out. The course may be quickly initiated instead of going through curriculum committees and the Deans' offices. It may be used to establish a particular course right now, rather than waiting a year, when it may not be appropriate.

A department may offer a course once, on the experimental basis. Perhaps the intention may be to put it on a regular basis, thus going through the College procedures.

If a proposed course is inter-departmental there is a provision for veto and referral to the Academic Vice-President. I don't suppose you could guarantee no abuse of the proposal. However, my position is that the faculty is responsible and won't be abusive. The danger of abuse is minimal and there are checks. It could be innovatively rewarding.

Once a department has approved a course, it could be offered immediately. Book work must be done, and there will be help available in Dr. Scriven's office.

A department will have no more than one course designated experimental per quarter, four per year. The course will be a regular one, with all regular applications. The course will be included in the inventory for one year only. The applicability to the major or minor will be decided by the department. The area requirements will remain as usual.

Dr. Scriven clarified; meaning the courses may fulfill requirements in the department from which they come.

Dr. Hill asked if it was the Chairman's prerogative for the course to receive credit in his department.

Dr. Cohen answered yes. He continued, this proposal was also submitted to the University Curriculum Committee. They may have jurisdiction over portions and you may wish to consult with them.

Special topic courses have been mentioned, however not all departments have them. Special topics are usually at an upper, 700-800 level. These experimental courses could be designed for the 500 level.

Dr. Scriven asked if each department could come up with special topics at the 500 level.

Dr. Cohen answered yes, the AAC could encourage this type of innovative thinking, through a device like this. I think it is a good idea for the University to have a policy which takes this type of leadership position and encourages innovativeness.

Dr. Baldino argued strongly that opposition to this new experimental policy does not preclude innovativeness. He asked if there will be need for an appeal process, for departmental recourse? He asked if Dr. Cohen wants it to read as it does, an automatic movement through the bureaucracy, with only the Academic Vice President to veto?

Dr. Cohen answered, the Curriculum Committee will also look at the proposals and point out any objections to the Academic Vice President.

Dr. Baldino thought items #2 and 3 should be consolidated. He further remarked, the Graduate Dean made a recent statement to the graduate faculty to the effect that the time-line and various checks are very necessary in curriculum development. Do you want the prerogative to disregard these on the under-graduate level?

Dr. Cohen answered that he thought misuse would be brought before the Academic Vice President.

Dr. Baldino added, you could designate this as a three quarter sequence of courses. Saying that a department can submit no more than one course per quarter sounds modest, but you can run courses in sequence.

Dr. Cohen felt that a department would not invite that much work, to offer a course each quarter.

Dr. Edgar agreed that this may be a built-in check, the department must account for the resources used in new offerings.

Dr. Baldino asked if this were a way of meeting the threat of declining enrollment.

Dr. Edgar answered that it may well be.

Dr. Hovey asked Dr. Cohen if he believed the Curriculum Committee could develop a policy for this proposal, and that it would become University policy.

Dr. Cohen answered, the charge for that committee reveals it as in their jurisdiction.

Dr. Swan pointed out that Dr. Cohen has proposed a number of changes for that Committee to undertake. This can only be done through an amendment by the Charter and By-Laws Committee.

Dr. Cohen added, the Senate would instruct the Charter and By-Laws Committee to review the changes.

Dr. Hovey asked Dr. Cohen if he were attempting to do that himself.

Dr. Cohen answered no.

Dr. Swan asked what if a College chooses not to take part in this?

Dr. Cohen answered, the requirements are not affected. Departments develop a policy for these courses which may or may not influence requirements. Schools will be able to decide for themselves to implement or ignore the new courses. Even if the University has a strong policy in this matter, it would still be up to each School to decide for itself.

Dr. Swan argued that item #5 is clearly an alteration of faculty agreement.

Dr. Cohen disagreed, how can we be limiting their powers when they have no power over experimental courses now?

The discussion will be continued. Dr. Cohen will meet with the AAC at the next meeting.

3. The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.