

Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee
Wednesday, April 18, 1979
3:00 p.m. Room 2067 - Cushwa Hall

Present: Dr. Hill, Mr. Quinby, Dr. Richley, Dr. Swan,
Dr. Koughl, Dr. Edgar

Actions:

1. There was consensus to wait until the next meeting for approval of the minutes of April 11.
2. Dr. Cohen was present for discussion of the experimental courses proposal.

Dr. Swan pointed out some basic problems. There are a number of By-Law changes needed, the charge of the Curriculum Committee would be changed and the Academic Vice President's role (as evident in the Red Book) would change. There would be a change in the responsibilities and rights given faculty over curriculum matters. This experimental course proposal is a restriction on their rights to deny such courses. Item #2 is disastrous because some schools may apply and supposedly others will not.

Dr. Cohen felt that the charge of the Curriculum Committee included jurisdiction over this kind of proposal. He continued, there is a problem to be considered, there is an implication that a college may not subscribe to the proposal. Department courses may be so interrelated that some colleges (administration) may not want any experimental courses. Approval is by departments only, the by-passing of approval by the Deans, Curriculum Committees, etc. is the end result. What is implied is that when a department approves a course, it is a valid one and accepted at the college level. Area requirements will be honored by all departments and schools, regardless of whether or not a school offers experimental courses. A school can deny its departments the option of offering experimental courses, however these courses will receive credit in all schools. The intent of item #2 is to allow a school to say to its departments, you may elect not to offer experimental courses, but you may not deny their validity.

Dr. Richley's opinion of item #2 was that a School may disapprove of these courses, and refuse to recognize the credits, therein.

Dr. Cohen pointed out that item #2 was necessary, a school may desire its departments to follow the traditional path in curriculum proposals.

Dr. Swan was concerned with the phrase, "subscribing to this policy" in item #2. We're talking about a University policy which applies to all schools, however, a school may not wish to create experimental courses.

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Dr. Cohen answered, right now the route for having a new course approved goes from the faculty, through the schools and University committees, the Deans, etc. The idea of this proposal is to enable a department to approve a course, if the school is willing to accept experimental courses. The school must be willing to accept these courses. When an experimental course is approved, the entire University must recognize it as a valid course. My thoughts are, a school should have the prerogative to say no to all experimental courses within.

Dr. Edgar suggested rewording item #2 to read, the faculty of any given school may decide to reject the proposed experimental courses as applied to their school.

Dr. Swan added, in academic departments curriculum is a faculty matter.

Dr. Cohen agreed that the area of curriculum revision is a prerogative of the faculty. This proposal is simply adding the possibility of a speedy enactment and acceptance of their curriculum proposals. It is still a departmental matter and within faculty responsibilities. We're not talking about the development of a course, we're talking about quick acceptance of that course. This is a faculty matter, however, the Academic Vice President does not think it violates the contract and the Academic Senate can vote on it.

Dr. Swan argued, the view of the OEA Executive Committee is that it does violate the contract. The freezing of rights to function in certain areas, where those rights are now present, is an example.

In Dr. Cohen's opinion, the proposal is not inconsistent with the purposes of the OEA. It is an academic issue and should be examined, if it violates union contract, it won't go. It's our responsibility to take the academic initiative. Items #5 and #14 are used as checks to prevent the flooding of the apparatus with experimental courses. However, I don't think this will be a problem, since instructors don't dream up courses that quickly.

Dr. Swan asked what might happen if the Senate approved it all, except item #14.

Dr. Cohen answered that item #14 is the Senate's reign on these courses, and he didn't suppose them to be willing to approve the proposal without it.

Dr. Edgar thought item #14 to be a good check in holding back the multiplying of courses.

Dr. Swan pointed out that we do need a quicker method from thought to action. However, there are some problems in the proposal's wording which violate the contract.

Dr. Hill asked Dr. Cohen if he had thought of the technical problems which might develop through quick initiation. For example, will some of the experimental courses replace courses in the major

Dr. Cohen answered, it will depend upon the department, some have required courses and others will accept all hours within their department.

Dr. Hill continued, I could see a student in my department getting confused by an experimental course which has temporarily replaced a required

Dr. Swan wondered if there would be problems in transferring credit to other institutions. The course may never appear in the catalog and only be an X course on the transcript.

Dr. Cohen added, to have a course not present in one or another catalog is a usual problem in transcripts.

Dr. Kougl pointed out that this could also be a problem within the University. How could these courses be checked after one year, when they are off the inventory?

Dr. Cohen answered that the Dean of Admissions and Records will keep a copy of all courses designated experimental, which do not appear in the catalog. These copies will be available for transcripts.

Dr. Hill asked if a person reading just the title of the course would have trouble recognizing the content and requirements it entailed. Shouldn't we also require that a record of and description of the experimental courses be kept by the Registrar's office.

Dr. Cohen answered that it will be recorded for reference.

Dr. Richley was concerned with item #12. I will have no control at all over whether or not a course will satisfy area requirements. If it turns out to be a poor course and never is offered again, I'll still have to grant area credit for it. Won't this encourage some departments to offer courses with fancy names to attract students?

Dr. Cohen answered, most of the faculty is very professional and they are dedicated teachers. They won't want frivolous courses in their department. With additional freedom there may be some abuse, but I don't foresee it as serious. I see the main benefit of the proposal to be on the 500 level. I'll be optimistic and suppose the experimental courses will be just as rewarding as the current courses, who checks on quality now?

Dr. Richley answered, my department and many others check the quality of courses offered, so do the various accrediting units. I'm upset about the last sentence in item #12, wherein the Chairman has no control over the

applicability of these courses towards requirements.

Dr. Cohen pointed out that prescribed curriculum will not be interfered with.

Dr. Richley continued, in our prescribed curriculum, if a science course is required it is because we feel it meets the students' needs. However, when the student takes an experimental course, how can we be sure of the requirements it fulfills?

Dr. Edgar asked Dr. Cohen if he expected experimental courses would also be put through the regular channels of approval, at the time of proposal.

Dr. Cohen answered yes, since the experimental tag allows a course to be taught only once. If it is a good course, I'd like to teach it again, so I would start the traditional approval process.

Dr. Edgar asked if practically all new courses would be proposed in both ways.

Dr. Cohen answered, only one course per department per quarter can be designated experimental.

Dr. Swan argued, if I was on the Curriculum Committee and read that these courses must be automatically approved, I think I'd scream. I wouldn't want to be a rubber-stamper.

Dr. Kougl agreed with this rubber-stamping idea. She asked, why can't the veto power go to the University Curriculum Committee instead of bumping it over to the Academic Vice President?

Dr. Cohen felt that if the Curriculum Committee had this power they would spend time considering carefully the course, thus defeating the purpose. He assumed the Academic Vice President would veto whenever he received a reasonable objection; much more expedient than a committee vote.

Dr. Swan asked if this wasn't throwing the whole problem into Dr. Edgar's lap?

Dr. Richley asked if it was the schools' curriculum committees which usually presented the bottleneck?

Dr. Cohen answered yes, and added that all appropriate persons would be sent copies of the proposed courses.

Dr. Hill presented this problem, what if the University Curriculum Committee is the only group to raise objections about a particular course. They are too busy and miss the date for filing objections, will the course be automatically approved within a week or so? If there are no objections does it become a valid course as soon as the Registrar processes it?

Dr. Cohen answered yes, I suppose department could sneak in a potentially controversial experimental course. However, I don't think department will do this.

Dr. Hill added, you seem to feel the Academic Vice President, is important to check the

Dr. Cohen answered yes, and that proposal goes under the wire. He said this will happen. I think things may be lost if the

Dr. Edgar was not sure it would run so smoothly. Objections can be raised to me. However, or certain few in the school will receive the proposals the majority will not know about the course, thus can run no objections.

Dr. Cohen conceded this point. Maybe we should treat the experimental courses as regular ones if no one objects then it will go through. This problem should not kill the experimental courses concept.

Dr. Swan added, maybe what's needed is an expedited time limit on the current process.

Dr. Richley added, perhaps the University Curriculum Committee could be admonished to circulate quickly certain courses. Perhaps the X designation might be the process by which we sped up and quickly circulate the course.

Dr. Hill asked if the Chairman of the Curriculum Committee has the resources to circulate courses immediately.

Dr. Edgar answered he wasn't sure of the process.

Dr. Hill suggested a check to see what can be done procedurally in the University Curriculum Committee.

3. There will be no meeting next week unless new business is introduced.