Mason Core Committee

November 29, 2016

10:00 – 11:30 p.m., Merten Hall, 3300

**Attending**: Janette Muir (Chair), Dominique Banville, Melissa Brockelman-Post, Kelly Dunne, Doug Eyman, Stephanie Foster, Marcy Glover, Shelley Reid, Matt Scherer, Mara Schoeny, Krista Shires, Andrea Weeks, Peter Winant

**Out:** Becky Ericson, Tamara Maddox, Carol Urban

**Visitors**: Dr. Brian Platt, Chair of History and Dr. Jennifer Rittenhouse, Undergraduate Director of History

**Agenda**

• Announcements

• Action Items:

History requirements update

Rough Proposal from Honors College

Future Mason Core Assessments

**Announcements**

Krista Shires and Marcy Glover will be sending out the second round of the Doodle Poll to determine what days will be best for everyone for the Spring 2017 Mason CORE Committee meetings.

Mason Impact: President Cabrera is considering using the Mason ENCORE model as a vehicle to deliver on Global Component of the Mason Impact Category. Janette will encourage submission of proposals of new Mason Impact components to the CORE Committee before implementation.

Janette will be taking a proposal for “Ethics Across the Curriculum” to the Faculty Senate in December and will keep the committee appraised of their decisions.

This may or may not be Janette’s last meeting as leader of the committee, but she plans to return as ex-officio or visitor in the future to help the new Associate Provost get acclimated.

The posting for the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education has closed and committee members may receive invitations to meetings, presentations and lunches with candidates.

**Action Items**

History Category Requirements

Dr. Brian Platt, Chair of History, and Dr. Jennifer Rittenhouse, Undergraduate Manager of History joined us to discuss the impending changes to the Western Civilization/World History category. Students have remarked that they would like to see history courses offered for CORE credit that they feel are more representative of them (i.e. African American History, Women’s History).

Dr. Platt raised the concern that if the proposed learning outcomes are put into place, almost any class could count towards the history requirement, making enrollment difficult and possibly undermining the goal of the CORE curriculum. He and Dr. Rittenhouse suggested that the breadth of the World History and Western Civilization courses offered actually emphasizes global connections and diversity and serve as a broad narrative of the human experience. Dr. Rittenhouse continued that the two core courses are meant to give everyone, including non-majors who may never again take a history class, a basic appreciation of the discipline and the skills appropriate for an introductory course.

Dr. Platt mentioned that there will be an upper level course in the works that would essentially accomplish what the lower level courses accomplish, but at an upper level. This way, students could have more options. It was clarified by committee members that the department is welcome to submit any course they would like-the committee evaluates based on the learning outcomes and does not create courses.

Dr. Rittenhouse explained that it was her understanding that a CORE course was to provide a basic foundational understanding of a discipline and therefore, is of the position that the two core courses offered, best fulfill that goal (as opposed to say, The History of Baseball).

Janette proposed that we perhaps limit the number of courses that transfer students may count as CORE fulfillment, to balance out the offerings. Dr. Rittenhouse was asked what the History Department was looking for from the CORE Committee in regards to the history category, and whether or not the learning outcomes were adequate.

Dr. Platt was not able to stay for the whole meeting, as he had to teach a class. The issue will be revisited at a meeting next semester. Janette will request that the History Department send us a summary or introductory paragraph, as well as suggestions on the learning outcomes. The committee generally settled on the title “World Histories” by vote, but several more questions were raised that determined the matter should be settled at a later meeting.

Honors College

Janette met with Zofia Burr from Honors who will be submitting a “white paper” proposal with more detail. The concern from Honors was that students coming in with several IB or AP classes would be essentially entering at a different level than the main population of Mason students and generally want more “space” to do extra things (i.e. double-major). They are also under pressure to think in terms of sustainability of the Honors Program. This topic will be revisited in the Spring.

Future Mason Core Assessment

A draft of “Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education” was passed out for members of the committee. Stephanie and Janette updated the committee on recent state-level conversation on assessments, informing the CORE Committee that they may see several assessments in the near future, as assessments have been dormant for the CORE courses for the last two years.

**Items for Next Meeting**:

• Western Civilization/World History revisit outcomes

• Honors College discussion

**Next Meeting**: Dates for Spring Semester meetings will be confirmed after Doodle Poll results are in. We have sent out round 1 and will be sending out round 2 ASAP.