

## Report of Curricular Review Committee F'09-S'10

Rainer Newberry

This year we have nearly completed 118 requests for new or changed Undergraduate courses and degrees. We will complete the final ones next Monday (probably) and if not, will continue meeting until we do so.

Our major tasks are to insure that new and modified courses are sufficiently thought out that students who take such a course will not suffer from organizational, expectation, prerequisite, or similar problems. In addition, we check the arithmetic of course credits and credit assignment and of degree programs. We try to ensure that new degree programs are practicable and do not lead to unpleasant surprises (e.g. absence of O/W courses). Finally, we enforce the Faculty Senate's syllabus requirements for all courses submitted, whether new or modified.

The Curricular Review Committee consists of the chairs of the various School/College curricular review committees and is chaired by a member of the Curricular Affairs Committee, hence, a faculty senator. The advantage of this arrangement is that there is reasonably good communication between Curricular Review and Curricular Affairs; the historic disadvantage has been the chair changes every year and committee continuity suffers.

In principal all of this is done at the School/College curricular review committee level, however the degree to which courses and programs are reviewed depends drastically on the level of experience and rank of the School/College curricular review committee chairs. Commonly the task of chairing a school/college curricular committee falls to a low rank, relatively new faculty member, who lacks experience and tends to feel intimidated by higher rank faculty in the school/college. It's also a time-consuming job, requiring considerable work before, during, and after meetings. This year in particular one of the members simply failed to participate ('insufficient time'). I suspect that this member was not aware that chairmanship of school/college curricular committee involved this additional significant duty at the time of his appointment. We have found that the best method for helping members 'learn the ropes' is for old and new members to overlap a little in their service: this has worked out well in the cases that its been tried. I will again appeal to members to attempt such upon retiring from the committee. **It would be very useful for someone from the Faculty Senate to send a message to school/college Deans both requesting such and making sure that the new Chairs have adequate time for Curricular Review meetings.**

Jayne Harvey has created a remarkably efficient system for keeping track of where various items are in the review process. I doubt that we have told her frequently enough how much a difference her contributions have made. She suggested this spring that it might be useful to her to also attend meetings and thus help the Chairman track the specific problems and solutions that arise for each submission. **Depending on what has to 'give' to make such possible, I very strongly endorse this suggestion.**

After six years of serving as the chair of the Curricular Review Committee, I was not re-elected as a Senator in the recent spring election cycle. However, I will be serving as an alternate for a faculty senator on Sabbatical during Fall '10. During that 4 month period I will co-chair both this committee and the Curricular Affairs Committee, and hand over responsibility for both committees to two new members of the Curricular Affairs Committee by January, 2011.