

## MINUTES

Faculty Assembly  
Wednesday, December 2, 2015  
Bazarsky Auditorium

Quorum Count: **79**

I. Approval of Minutes of Faculty Assembly Meeting of November 4, 2015: Approved.

II. Treasurer's Report: Dr. Emily Colbert Cairns

III. Scheduled Announcements:

- Dr. Jim Ludes, Chair, Jubilee Committee: Opening of the Ochre Gates
- Dr. Troy Catterson: Faculty Liaison Position

IV. Curriculum Committee: Dr. Madeleine Esch presented a motion and a discussion.

Motion: The Curriculum Committee moves that the Faculty Assembly endorse the proposal to amend the core model to count themes for both UNV101 and 102 toward the requirement for Part IIIA.

Yes (89%)    No (5%)    Abstain (5%)

The motion passed.

Discussion: Teaching about race and racism across the curriculum brought to the FA on behalf of the following working group:

Tim Neary, Emily Colbert-Cairns, Craig Condella, Debra Curtis, Arthur Frankel, Sally Gomaa, Nancy Gordon, Anthony LoPresti, Elaine Mangiante, Amanda Minor, Sheila Quinn, Chad Raymond, John Tawa

The working group put forward a motion, unseen by the FA. The following comments and questions were attempts on the part of the working group and the Assembly to clarify the process (by which the motion wasn't presented) and the proposal itself.

Tim Neary presented the group's aim: To foreground the issue of race and racism in America by adding a stipulation to Part IIIA of the core: One of the courses counting for the American Experience theme must explicitly deal with race and racism in America.

As for process, he explained the working group couldn't bring forward a motion since they are not considered a "Group with Standing."

Question: How feasible (i.e., how many additional sections/classes needed)? Could this be accomplished another way?

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Answer (Tim Neary): We reached out to department chairs and it does seem feasible.

Question: Most envision Part IIIB fulfilling this requirement. Must it be limited to the American Experience theme?

Answer: (Tim Neary): Yes. The group discussed at great length, acknowledges global problems of racism. Part of just fulfilling AE theme is practical (to make feasible), part is generated from a broad consensus about racism in the US, as seen so frequently in the news.

Question: Wonderful idea. Is there a mechanism to determine how a course will count for this requirement (e.g., a percentage of course material devoted to issues of race/racism)?

Answer (John Tawa): We can't quantify how much counts at this point.

Comment: Students want to chat about race but they don't have analytic tools. They grew up in an era of color blindness, the dangers of which lead to stereotypes.

Question: This is a very important issue—more so than the usual agenda items. Why doesn't this group have standing?

Answer (Troy Catterson/Parliamentarian): To protect the integrity of the process of the FA. The EC made a decision based on a 2012 document, "Protocols for Curriculum Committee." To add any group as a "Group with Standing," we must first *define* such groups.

Comment (referring back to AE theme): Racism plays out differently in the US than other countries.

Question: Why can't this group be considered as an hoc committee? And why would it take a curricular matter to the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC), which doesn't answer to the FA?

Answer (Troy Catterson/Parliamentarian): As per Robert's Rules of Order, an ad hoc committee cannot be set up if it duplicates the charge of another committee. This is the case with the working group and MAC, which does report curricular matters to the FA.

Comment: Let's keep business related to curriculum and not process.

Comment: Ironic that we all want to discuss this question in FA but cannot. There are thirteen professors representing ten departments. The whole process reminds one of the historical resistance to addressing racial injustice. Could CC just circulate this proposal to discuss in February?

Comment: All committees work very hard—Executive, Curriculum, Core Review—the issue shouldn't be reduced to what one group wants.

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Question: How did the group collect data about how courses aren't addressing this already? How would this proposal ensure this is being addressed?

Answer (Tony LoPresti): We went through the catalogue and identified a handful of courses—only about 15% deal with this in a substantive way. SLOs would ensure a course meets the objectives and would determine a course as “counting.” Details regarding SLOs are in the proposal.

Question: Are the thirteen of you claiming to represent your respective departments?

Answer (Chad Raymond): Simple answer: no. We don't claim to represent our departments.

Comment: MAC doesn't report to and has never submitted a report to FA.

Answer to an earlier question about the group's data collection (Art Frankel): Data is generally a useful tool, but the fact is we can assume learning about race and racism is beneficial for our students. It's an important endeavor and the need for evidence is not necessary but will arrive through the implementation.

Comment: We may be doing more than meets the eye. Many courses may already address these topics. How much does the committee “want”? How much is being overlooked? The fear is we might need 25 sections/year. This would concern the CRC.

Comment: Students have four years to fulfill this requirement.

Comment: Concern about nursing students fulfilling this given they need to finish core requirements in first two years.

Comment: Reiteration that courses in the catalogue address this issue, though their titles might not reflect this.

Comment: The initial intention was to make themes broad enough to accommodate large majors. This may be a good idea but it goes against the idea of the core.

Answer to a number of comments that together posed the question about courses already addressing race/racism (Amanda Minor): Courses already dealing with race and racism [that may not have been included in the 15% estimation] would likely fit the group's proposal.

Comment: The core hasn't been in place long enough to change.

Comment: Why be a prisoner of Robert's Rules? What can we do about it? Can the provost assign a standing committee?

Comment: Courses concerning race and racism should be prevalent and obligatory.

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Comment: Students have dissonance. They need to study black history, yes, but how many classes address what it means to be white and white privilege? This needs deeper attention. MAC is not the appropriate committee (a committee that includes students and staff) to implement curricular matters. We need to be declarative if we are going to do this. It needs to be implemented formally, especially as a Mercy institution.

Comment: Why privilege this and not address other prejudices?

Comment: The CC was favorable to this proposal but is the core subject to change? We as an assembly need to vote on that.

Comment: Many important issues to consider. Are we limiting the proposal by having it fulfill one AE theme? Can it fill a role elsewhere?

Answer (Tony LoPresti): This group has discussed these issues brought up at FA. In light of the fact that the CC defers to the FA, we need to go around the bylaws and make a motion to break order.

Motion: In light of the fact that the Curriculum Committee defers to any directive from the Assembly on any matter [Protocol section A.2 a.11], the Faculty Assembly requests that the Curriculum Committee notify the faculty of the Proposal on Race in the Curriculum and that the proposal be placed on the agenda for discussion and vote at the February 2016 Faculty Assembly meeting.

This motion was called out of order.

Motion: To suspend the bylaws for normal procedure for the approval of curriculum change.

Comment: It was noted that the Core Review and Curriculum Committees had expressed the opinion that such an action would subvert them.

Comment: We value protocol but we need to be responsive. We have a moral obligation to our students and society to prepare our students for the world.

Question: What are we voting on exactly and does it set a precedent?

Answer (James L. Yarnall): This doesn't set a precedent. We are just voting to suspend bylaws at this point.

Comment: CRC hasn't seen the proposal. The process seems murky. Are committees being bypassed?

Question: Has this group met with the curricular committees?

Answer (Madeleine Esch): CC deferred to EC. Felt issue at center of discussion was important enough to bring to the Faculty Assembly.

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Motion goes to a vote.

Yes (43%)    No (55%)    Abstain (2%)

This motion does not pass. The original motion will not go to a vote.

### VI. Other Business/Unscheduled Announcements

- None

Adjournment: **4:45**