Faculty Planning Meeting: Standard 2: Curriculum

October 24, 2011

Present: Al Jones, Jami Jones, Kaye Dotson, John Harer, Gail Munde, Patrick Valentine (via Skype), Barbara Marson, Elaine Yontz

Absent: Larry Boyer, Ruth Clark

Harer distributed the following handouts: proposed meeting agenda, a list of proposed changes to the ECU Graduate Catalog, a detailed comparison of core courses taught by 12 ALA-accredited library programs and core courses in our program, and early results of alumni responses to the curriculum survey of September 2011. He opened the meeting by reviewing the four questions proposed at the last faculty planning meeting on curriculum:

Should we reduce the number of required courses in the program?

Do we need to re-title and/or update the content of any courses?

Do we need to include an information science course, or components of information science in multiple courses?

Which courses should be retained, and which might be discontinued?

The consensus of the group was that we were not in a position to answer these questions until we learned more about the present curriculum, i.e., a deep understanding of all courses, their objectives and discrete course assignments.

Jami Jones suggested that such a review might be engineered backwards from the desired outcome; that is, what kind of student do we want the program to produce in terms of capabilities, dispositions and skills? This expanded to issues of balance:

What is the correct balance between theory and practice in our overall program?

How can we incorporate a consistent and clear focus on the importance of librarians becoming integrated into employer organizations, rather than isolated within their employer organizations?

How much change does the content of the curriculum need and how much change does the approach to teaching, or teaching style need to change?


Regarding the description of desired student outcomes, Jones further wondered if there weren’t dispositional and capability threads that could be embedded into courses throughout the curriculum. If faculty could identify and define these threads, it might be possible to assess their achievement. Perhaps there could be pre and post-program student self-assessments developed for TaskStream that would replace the initial and final essays. Perhaps there could be key assignments identified at different points in the program sequence and students’ performance on
these assignments used to assess the threads; or for each course, we would identify the threads and state how each one would be met, e.g., readings, assignments, discussions.

Al Jones through the faculty should jointly write a departmental philosophy of librarianship and all agreed this would be useful. This might be a useful beginning to identifying curricular threads. Reading the Lankes book would help us begin from a central point of understanding. Jami Jones suggested that the faculty develop a common list of readings that each student should encounter during the program. The reading list should include what we believe are the seminal documents in librarianship.

Jami Jones also suggested that we look at the dispositions included in AASL’s 21st Century Learning Standards for Students, for if our curriculum doesn’t embody those dispositions, how are we teaching our students to promote them in their practice of school librarianship?

Munde briefed faculty on charts that were emailed earlier showing the distribution of 65 core course assignments across AASL/NCATE and DPI standards and ALA Core Competences. She noted areas of high coverage, areas of no coverage, and potential problems for further analysis. Two preliminary areas of need were identified: learning theory and instructional strategies, and career/professional development. Faculty were asked to revise Standards Bridge Workforms if necessary, and Munde would revise the charts accordingly.

Munde noted that only alumni responses to the curriculum survey had been compiled, and Harer thought there might have been a software problem in Qualtrics. He will investigate. Marson and Munde offered to send the survey to students as part of the final portfolio review process. This would at least capture current students who have taken all 39 hours.