

Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the November 28, 2017 meeting

Present: Ben Tromly, Leslie Saucedo, Julie Christoph, Chris Kendall, Gary McCall, Kent Hooper, Jonathan Stockdale, Bryan Thines, Bill Barry, Jenny Pitonyak, Jason Struna, Eric Orlin, Matt Fergoda, Michael Pastore, Gary McCall, Holly Roberts, Martin Jackson

The meeting was called to order by TROMLY at 3:03 pm.

1. The minutes of the November 17, 2017, meeting were approved.
2. The schedule for Spring 2018 committee meetings was discussed and the committee agreed by consensus to meet on Fridays at 3:00.
3. The following courses were approved.
 - SOAN 102 Introduction to Anthropology, approved for KNOW
 - LAS 100 Introduction to Latin American Studies, approved for KNOW
 - GERM 202 Intermediate German II, approved for Humanistic Approaches
 - GERM 305 Culture in the Third Reich, approved for Artistic Approaches and KNOW
 - SSII 149 Transgressive Bodies, approved for SSII
4. The committee discussed the Critical Dialectical Theory SIM proposal from Jennifer Paul (student) and Stuart Smithers, William Beardsley, and Grace Livingston (advisory committee). HOOPER reported that all faculty letters have been submitted and that they fully support approval. STRUNA moved to approve the major. SAUCEDO requested clarification on whether the scope of the major was too narrow. STRUNA reported that based on the faculty letters, which addressed this issue directly, there is quite a bit of breadth to the major and the methodological approach is broad enough to support the Interdisciplinary major. The motion was approved.
5. JACKSON moved that the Curriculum Committee will recognize experiential learning opportunities in the curriculum by adopting the definition and rubric articulated by the Experiential Learning Faculty Advisory Board (in a memo dated November 10, 2017) to label such opportunities on class schedules. To implement this, the Curriculum Committee delegates authority to the Associate Dean for Experiential Learning to act on its behalf in reviewing proposals from faculty members to have a class labeled as experiential learning. All actions will be reported monthly to the committee and the committee will retain an inherent right of appeal to those actions. This authority will be effective until the date of the second Curriculum Committee meeting of Fall 2018. The motion was not seconded, but a discussion followed.

JACKSON clarified that the Fall 2018 Curriculum Committee would have the opportunity to consider renewing the authorization. ORLIN voiced two concerns. The first was that he has questions about course content and what counts as experiential learning. He opined that all of the elements of experiential learning outlined in Appendix A of the proposal dated November 10, 2017, should be included in every course offered at the Puget Sound. His second concern was that this may be a backdoor way to have experiential learning approved by the Curriculum

Committee. Since it is not a requirement, the Curriculum Committee should be thoughtful about what curriculum we expect for our students. Perhaps UPS should have a proposal for an overlay, similar to the KNOW requirement. Further faculty discussion was recommended.

BARRY suggested that the committee clarify the process. Is labeling a course as experiential learning an administrative role or a faculty role? CHRISTOPH clarified that the guidelines were developed by a faculty group. STRUNA and MCCALL expressed that experiential learning is a value that a lot of faculty have and already include in their courses, but may need to package and market it. They also asked if the same definition is appropriate for all disciplines, and if not, are there points of commonality? KENDALL noted that the faculty should have a shared idea of what experiential learning is. He suggested that members of the committee should come to a meeting with syllabi from courses that meet the criteria so that the committee can agree what experiential learning is, beyond a course attribute.

HOOPER asked if each department could determine what constitutes experimental learning for their respective department and suggested that the question could be addressed in the curricular review. TROMLY suggested that the committee should know the definition of experimental learning before applying a label to courses.

CHRISTOPH stated that the committee should respect faculty time, and be collaborative in helping the Experiential Learning Faculty Advisory Board (ELFAB) shape the criteria with disciplinary perspectives. She suggested that the committee could help by adding examples of courses that meet the criteria and those that don't to create a longer list of courses (such as 10) instead of two course examples. She also suggested that we encourage the ELFAB to consider revisions to the definition and guidelines and then go to the full faculty with a proposal and examples of courses.

STRUNA stated that a lab is experiential learning, but reading is important and helps students build a foundation that allows them to learn from experiential opportunities. He cautioned that we do not want to undermine one at the expense of the other. SAUCEDO reminded the group that reflection is an important component of experiential learning. BARRY stated that he would like to see clear link between the list and experiences and asked if the Curriculum Committee will be approving the guidelines. TROMLY stated that we need to agree on a definition before approval. KENDALL stated that we don't need an approved definition, and that the Curriculum Committee should look at courses to see which ones we think meet the criteria. TROMLY asked if we should return to the departments to inform them of the description of experiential learning and ask which courses meet the criteria. JACKSON proposed that the committee should do this ourselves, first. MCCALL suggested that each committee member pick a course and discuss them with ELFAB and test the model – does it meet criteria and why or why not? KENDALL suggested that we also each add a course that we do not think fits the criteria. THINES described interaction among students and collaboration between students and faculty as they perform authentic projects in science, and asked, does there have to be real-world consequences to failure? Does experiential learning include presentation at meeting? What constitutes a failure? JACKSON supported the idea of the committee testing the model and inviting ELFAB to discuss our experience. BARRY stated that it would be nice to consider syllabi to get a sense of the proportion of a course content that includes experiential learning activities.

CHRISTOPH suggested that we can then return to the ELFAB and state that the Curriculum Committee does not understand the definition, feels that it may be overreaching and that the issue needs to go to full faculty. At that time, the committee can give the ELFAB syllabi that we think fits the criteria and why, and can make recommendations for revising the guidelines. TROMLY concurred that he wants to give the ELFAB something concrete. BARRY agreed that we are not ready for this to go to full faculty and that we need to sharpen the distinction of what constitutes experiential learning. He suggested that we could generate questions about the definition to send back to ELFAB, such as can you give examples of courses that would not fit and why. SAUCEDO stated that the Curriculum Committee should submit our syllabi and a summary to ELFAB stating which courses we think fit the criteria and why. MCCALL suggested that after the committee discusses the syllabi, we invite the ELFAB for a large group discussion to ask questions, discuss distinctions, and clarify the guidelines. It was agreed that the committee needs to send 1-2 syllabi from each of core area along with the range of options that we've considered and discussed. It was generally agreed that this is an opportunity for the Curriculum Committee to have input on the guidelines and definition of experiential learning before it goes before the entire faculty.

Action item: TROMLY requested committee members to volunteer to bring syllabi along with a one-page description of why the course does or does not meet the criteria for experiential learning to the first Curriculum Committee meeting in the spring.

6. KENDALL moved to adjourn. TROMLY adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Holly Roberts.