

Curriculum Committee Meeting  
October 5, 2018  
Wyatt 308

In attendance: Bill Barry, Peggy Burge, Kathleen Campbell, Julie Christoph, Regina Duthely, Nick Gerard, Nate Jacobi, Julia Looper, Gary McCall, Jennifer Pitonyak, Geoff Proehl, Holly Roberts, Doug Sackman, Maria Sampen, Leslie Saucedo (chair), Finn Secrist, Jeff Tepper, Courtney Thatcher

Meeting called to order at 12:02 PM by Chair Leslie Saucedo

**Agenda Item 1:** Approval of Minutes, September 28  
Accepted without amendment.

**Agenda Item 2:** Announcements

a. Procedure: Julie Christoph opened a discussion of the process through which courses are approved through our current working group model. Context was brought up, on how the CC has moved over the last two years from course proposal discussion in working groups, followed by discussion in the full CC, to evaluation of course proposals going through working groups, with a single member of the group being the point person for each proposal. Discussion ensued about the specifics of our current model, and questions were raised about adjusting the model to designate, for example, more than one person in the working group for each proposal. It was pointed out that the full working group may discuss proposals when the point person raises any questions, and it was suggested that that this may be a mechanism to balance the need for deliberation on proposals when needed and warranted with the interest in maintaining an efficient process.

b. Inserts: Christoph also passed around the current guidelines on optional and required syllabus inserts. Current policy stipulates that information of Accommodations and Emergency Procedures be included, while Copyright information and Bereavement policy are optional items.

**Agenda Item 3:** Courses moved for approval:

- a. CLSC 305: Inventing the Barbarian (existing, fulfills KNOW requirement)
- b. HIST 307: The Crusades (existing, fulfills KNOW requirement)
- c. HIST 375: History of Sport in the U.S. (new, fulfills KNOW requirement)
- d. SSI2 158: The Digital Age and its Discontents (new, English dept).
- e. SSI2 185: Queer Case Files (new, Religion dept, fulfills KNOW requirement)
- f. IPE 388: Exploring the Chinese Economy (new).

Floor was open for discussion of any of the courses that had been approved. There was a short discussion of IPE 388 regarding the fact that the instructor would not be in residence with the students for their full time in China. It was reported that International Education Committee had considered this matter.

**Agenda Item 4** Distribution of edited "Introduction to the Curriculum Committee" document

Committee briefly discussed and affirmed the edits Leslie Saucedo made to the document.

**Agenda Item 5:** Updates from Working Groups: Initial consideration of Senate charges and Core reviews.

Holly Roberts reported on Working Group 3's meeting and consideration of Charge 1 (Develop formal guidelines for distinguishing between activity credits and academic credits). Roberts explained that two questions had been raised that they wished to discuss with the full CC before proceeding with their work: 1) clarification on the reason and origin of the charge, so that the Working Group could be sure to be responsive to the issues behind it, and 2) whether there exist now any written guidelines for activity versus academic units.

It was noted that there are currently no written guidelines. Julie Christoph and Kathleen Campbell explained that Charge 1 originated within the CC, as former Associate Dean Martin Jackson had raised the issue of clarification of activity units as activity course proposals from non-academic units (e.g. CICE and the Library) were coming in that also seemed quite "academic" in their form. Christoph also reported that the CC had discussed the issue twice in the past, but not conclusively. Later, Christoph explained that taking up the issue now seemed important, as we seem to be seeing more units and programs across campus explore the use of partial-credit courses to fulfill different types of pedagogical goals. One example includes Environmental Policy and Decision Making, which is increasingly utilizing partial credit courses in its program. Saucedo also noted that these courses count toward graduation, so guidelines seem appropriate.

Peggy Burge noted that there is a wide discrepancy in expectations for activity courses. It was implied that this creates problems for instructors wishing to deliver a rigorous course, when students may have taken other activity courses that only required attendance. Leslie Saucedo later explained that activity courses offered by different departments in the sciences have different expectations. Burge suggested that guidelines could address the disparities. It was also noted that currently, the Library and CICE, for example, are only able to offer activity courses.

Maria Sampen explained that any effort to come up with uniform standards for what could be an activity course versus an academic course could have serious ramifications for different programs. Changing the status quo would "open up a can of worms." Sampen explained how the different kinds of courses are used within the School of Music to meet complex and competing demands and considerations: assuring that majors are able to meet requirements of outside accrediting bodies and receive at least partial credit for the work they do while also not forcing them to pay unreasonable extra fees for overloads, making performance groups open to non-majors, and more. While not ideal, Sampen implied that the School of Music has developed a working model; new guidelines could upset this. Sampen also noted, later, that some departments are overload exemptions.

Gary McCall wondered if it would make sense to have departments and units come up with their own guidelines on activity courses, and the CC could review and approve these?

Geoff Proehl explained that this issue was connected to the "economy of time" within which we operate together as a campus. Appreciating that some programs have external accrediting

requirements, Partial unit course can be used as ways to increase the effective amount of units and time majors and programs claim from students, impacting other programs (for example, a student may find it impossible to double major).

Nate Jacobi explained that students are often frustrated by the lack of transparency about expectations in a syllabus, particularly for .25 and .5 unit courses. Greater clarity of expectations would help students navigate their choices in a more informed manner, and perhaps mitigate some of the problems with the wide discrepancy of expectations in seemingly analogous courses.

McCall wondered, since there is certainly wide discrepancy in 1 unit academic courses across the university, if the issue was more visible or more pressing because these are partial unit courses.

Courtney Thatcher wondered if there were “activities” that students can do that are not transcriptable. Conversely, is it the case that all activities now *need* to be credited in some way. Proehl noted that students often perform in theater productions without credit, so it certainly happens. Saucedo observed that we in the contemporary US, and in our education system, are increasingly a culture where all activities get credited in some way.

Christoph, Proehl and others discussed the questions of equity, and what we might mean by it (time, nature of class, etc).

Sampen pointed out that perhaps behind all of these questions about the Charge was the issue of tuition in relation to overloads. Would a change in policy (whereby, for example, formerly activity courses would need to become academic ones) result in emptied classes, or exorbitant extra fees for students? Christoph later noted that a change in designation for a CWLT course correlated with changed enrollments.

Nick Gerard explained that these kinds of courses are very important in making up shortfalls that might occur from how study abroad transfer credits are counted, for example. He explained that paying additional fees for overloads, or paying for an additional semester or summer courses, would simply not be feasible for him and many other students.

Doug Sackman noted that the ambiguity in the current approach creates a certain amount of flexibility that is being used well (for students and programs); at the same time, the increasing use of these courses and the problems and frustrations noted in the conversation warrant this additional consideration.

Roberts explained that the working group will begin on the issue, planning, among other things, to talk with department and program chairs that seem most involved in this matter.

The meeting adjourned at 12.54.

Submitted by Doug Sackman