

Committee on Curriculum

May 9, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Voting Members present: Bujanovic, Cohen, Dibble, Reuter, Shannon (for Wheeler), Tao, Verostek, Wagner

Guests and others present: Batorsky, C'Dealva-Lenik, Liu, Minard (for Rutkowski), Meyer, Newman, Spuches, Ramarao, Sanford, Scott

Unable to attend: Donaghy, Rutkowski, Stavenhagen, Wheeler

- 1) **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm

- 2) **i) Approval of Minutes from April 6, 2016 meeting.** The minutes from the April 6 meeting were approved unanimously.

ii) Approval of revised Minutes from March 9, 2016 meeting. The revised minutes from the March 9 meeting were approved unanimously.

- 3) **Announcements**
 - i) **Proposals posted for CoC and faculty review:** There were no proposals currently posted for CoC and faculty review.
 - ii) **Proposals submitted for CoC completeness review:** The following proposals were still undergoing completeness review:
 - EFB 438/638 Phytoremediation (new)
 - EFB 492 Senior Synthesis in Aquatic/Fisheries Science (revision)
 - EFB 306 Plants and Culture (new, Gen Ed)
 - iii) **Recent Administrative Approvals.** There were no recent administrative proposals to report.

- 4) **Updates from the Dean.** There were no updates from the Dean.

- 5) **Old Business:**
 - i) **Guidance document for differentiation between course levels.** Wagner reported no progress on this issue.
 - ii) **Catalog updates – deleting courses.** C'Dealva-Lenik noted that he was waiting for information from Environmental Science on administratively dropping courses.
 - iii) **Proposals for action tabled from last meeting**
 - BPE 650 Advanced Catalysis and Surface Reactions.**
 - BPE 658 Advanced Biocatalysis**Dibble noted that he had made comments on these proposals that had been addressed to his satisfaction by the revisions posted April 10th. With no further discussion both of these proposals were approved unanimously.
 - iv) **Curriculum changes approved administratively.** Shannon noted that there have recently been a number of incidental requests to approve minor curriculum changes. These are housekeeping changes that have no impact even within the department. Reuter noted that course changes can be handled administratively, and asked whether curriculum changes could be handled the same way. Shannon replied that it is exactly the same process. Wagner asked if the Committee would be informed about changes approved in this way. Shannon responded that these would be reported at Committee meetings with other administrative approvals. Shannon explained that such changes would take the form of course number or prefix changes, sequencing, etc. After some discussion it was decided that the Executive Committee should be informed that the Committee is considering adding this procedure. Shannon was asked to provide verbiage to present to the Executive Committee asking that CoC be authorized to administratively approve minor changes to curricula as long as the changes were in parallel to minor course changes. A motion to forward this request to the Executive Committee was approved unanimously.

6) **New Business:**

i) **Proposals for action:**

EFB 696 Special Topics in Environmental and Forest Biology. The proposal filled a gap in the offerings of EFB, as they did not have a special topics course at this level. Unanimously approved without further discussion.

BS in Renewable Materials Science (major revision of Paper Science program). During the review period some comments had been received and responded to. Shannon pointed out that having PSE 201 (The Art and Early History of Papermaking) as a required/GenEd course for each of the three options was questionable. Students should have a choice of GenEd classes. This may be a good choice for Paper Science students but not students taking the other options. SUNY's Seamless Transfer path requires more flexibility in choice of GenEd classes. GenEd classes should not be providing specific information for a program. C'Dealva-Lenik agreed that there is a relevance of this class for Paper science and possibly also Wood Science, but he could not see any relevance to those students taking the Polymer Science option. Dibble said he could not recall if any polymer chemistry students had ever taken PSE 201. Shannon noted that transfer students will probably not have been able to take this class anywhere else, and therefore would have to take it when they entered the program. He suggested that at the departmental level, the course could be recommended as a Gen Ed course, but not required. Students should be able to make their own choices about which GenEd classes to take. His objection to the course as a requirement was mainly on behalf of those students taking the polymer science option, as it is least applicable to them. Bujanovic pointed out that all options would be requiring the same courses early in the program, and this would broaden the students' exposure to the options so that they would have full information to make choices within the program. Shannon responded that orientation 'xxx132' classes fulfil this need, and GenEd classes should not be used in this manner. Wagner asked for the rationale for the course's inclusion in the program. He noted that in FNRM GenEd courses are electives. Ramarao, the proposer, indicated that PSE 201 was a requirement for the Paper Science program, which is being replaced by this major revision into a new Renewable Materials Science program. Shannon noted that this course did indeed make sense for a Paper Science program. Scott, Department Chair, explained that the program is so credit-limited that there is very little freedom for free electives, although he would not object to this class as a GenEd elective. Reuter asked for a straw vote on whether PSE 201 should be included in the curriculum as written (0 votes) or whether it should be an optional (i.e. not required) GenEd course (7 votes). Bujanovic asked for clarification on whether the vote was for the Polymer Science option only or for all options. Another straw vote was taken on dropping this course as a requirement for Polymer Science only (0 votes); dropping it from all three options (4 votes); or leaving the course as written (0 votes). Tao offered that this should be a departmental decision, but Shannon countered that, as a GenEd issue, it is a campus concern. Meyer noted that the discussion was confusing the GenEd question with the question of whether the course should be required. This course is important for both wood science and paper science students. Scott expressed a preference for having early semesters for the three options remain the same. Discussion then revolved around what is best for students and what they can get by with. Although not an optimal situation, students can get by without taking the class. The department will strongly advise students to take this class. Scott estimated that the number of transfer students in this program would be quite low.

With regard to the requirement that paper science and wood science students take EFB 326 (Plant Diversification, Conservation and Evolution), which in response to comments on the proposal, had been changed to EFB 336 (Dendrology), Meyer noted that a biology course was needed in the program. Shannon suggested that the students should be able to decide which course to take, and had difficulty seeing how this course could be a requirement. Ramarao explained that historically the course has been required for Paper Science. Shannon again noted that at ESF there is a tendency to require courses. If this is not a core course, the students should be able to decide whether to take it. If it makes sense for the student to take a particular class, then they should be strongly advised, but not required, to do so. Ramarao stated that dendrology may be a critical addition to the wood science program. Shannon explained that the course is an identification course based on leaves, fruits, etc., and does not have much to do with wood. At this point Wagner asked if the proposal could be moved forward as is, and any peripheral changes could be made at a later date. His fear was that the Committee could end up being prescriptive on something it knows little about. There followed discussion on the lists of electives for each option of the program. Ramarao said that these lists still needed to be updated. Scott pointed out that the technical electives for the polymer option are present, and he did not see that these would be

any different from those electives for paper science and wood science. Shannon stated that the focus areas should be differentiated in their choices of directed electives. Scott responded that the differentiation in the focus areas lies in the required courses. Dibble asked that complete lists of electives be provided, with indication as to whether they were technical, directed, or free. Currently, the wood science and paper science options differ by one course, and we do not have listings of their respective electives. Scott pointed out that it was rather late in the process to bring up problems with the lists of electives. Dibble said that, as written, he could not support paper science and wood science as distinct options, and that if the options are differentiated because of the electives then lists of electives should be available. Ramarao indicated that it would be easy to add listings of electives to each of the option areas, and indicated he would do so immediately after the meeting.

Wagner asked about the implications of not submitting the program until next year. Shannon stated that if it is not listed in next year's catalog the first students entering the program will not do so until Fall 2018. Everything will be a year behind. Shannon proposed that the Committee move the proposal forward with a friendly amendment to list the elective courses, showing differentiation between the focus areas.

Sanford noted that option areas are actually locally governed, and can easily be redefined. It would not be problematic to send the proposal to SUNY with electives similar for all focus areas. She further stated that program listings are due by July 1, and the program cannot be added to the program listings if SUNY has not approved it. SUNY approval will take 2-6 months. Wagner would like to have the proposal moved forward but required assurance that the details would be completed correctly. Dibble asked if SUNY would balk at the lack of differentiation in the focus areas. C'Dealva-Lenik pointed out that this lack of differentiation would be minimized if the elective lists were updated. He also pointed out that there were some inconsistencies within the tables in the proposal. Shannon explained that these would be corrected during the preparation of the proposal for submission to SUNY. Scott assured the committee that if the proposal were approved by SUNY he would see to it that minor changes would be proposed next year. The proposal was approved (with one vote in opposition) with a friendly amendment that minor changes will be made in the near future and that lists of electives would be provided by the proposer before submission to SUNY.

ii) Course deletion procedures. Minard, speaking for the Registrar's office, explained that up until the present there had been no formal process to deactivate courses. An addition had been made to the Course Proposal Form to rectify this by giving the proposer the opportunity to indicate that a course is being replaced. A note had also been added to the Course Proposal Form indicating that the Registrar should be consulted regarding new or reused course numbers. An additional form was proposed to cover instances where a course was to be deactivated without having to complete a full Course Proposal Form. These forms should also be used for Administrative Approvals. The adoption of the revised Course Proposal Form and the new Course Deactivation Form was unanimously approved.

iii) OpenSUNY. Spuches passed out some explanatory documentation regarding OpenSUNY. He explained that ESF has been using online technologies for many years. Recently, SUNY has branded OpenSUNY as a system-wide initiative, although there will soon be a rebrand, so that there is no confusion that "Open" could possibly mean "free of charge". OpenSUNY is defined as online-enabled education (courses, certificates, degree programs, etc.) delivered in the most part asynchronously, although hybrid/blended experiences are also included. ESF envisions a "college within the college" to extend our reach beyond bricks and mortar. We can, through OpenSUNY, expand upward and compete with a distinct mission to extend our campus around the world. Recently the college offered credit and non-credit online courses funded by a grant from the Department of Labor. These served both matriculated and visiting students, with some obtaining an advanced certificate. The grant also provided the opportunity to offer some customized in-house training in various locales. Recently the college received another small grant from SUNY to help rethink and reassess our ability for online delivery. As a result we are establishing the ESF Open Academy, which is a college-wide effort, representing all departments. In order to initiate the establishment of the Open Academy, we have taken part in an institutional readiness program offered by SUNY and we are currently about half-way through the 9-10 month process. We are establishing a teaching/learning collaboratory to provide faculty support, and Outreach staff member Brandon Murphy will be working fulltime on this effort. What all of this means for the Committee is that, since this is an institutional effort, commitments must be made, with an internal vetting process which will probably reside with the Committee. Requirements for offering online course/programs have changed, even since our online RCP certificate program was set up four years ago. The ESF Open Academy will generate revenue, similar to the way Summer Session does now. There is a

lot more for everyone to learn about. Spuches is meeting almost every weeks with various groups, both internal and external to the college, in an effort to compose a theory of action and path forward. He is willing to answer any questions and meet with anyone at any time. Wagner noted that SU offers online programs in concert with 2U, where instructors and courses are vetted, and asked if ESF will be following the same path. Spuches explained that 2U has an 8-month course adoption process. At ESF we are not thinking about developing new courses, rather, we hope to adapt existing courses to an online format. The aforementioned Radiation Curing Program was an exception. Courses will not be considered unless there is a willing and supportive instructor, appropriate course content, and a recognized market for the content. We do not have the resources to build an online presence where there is no market. The chairs will be closely involved in the process of course selection. Liu mentioned that there is a potential for students in China to take online ESF classes while fulfilling the lab requirement at their home university. Shannon noted that this scenario is a blended format, and that ESF has revived its COIL membership to explore this model. Spuches pointed out that in delivering online classes we must have richness and reach. Generally, when classes go online richness is sacrificed for reach. Liu commented that it is possible to have both. Wagner asked if OpenSUNY is going to help identify which courses would be our strongest offerings, as opposed to those that we could do well, but that would have competition. Spuches stated that OpenSUNY does not get involved in marketing, but that courses will be identified collaboratively. Tao asked if there were minimum enrollment requirements to make a course feasible. Spuches said that we need to be looking at populations that can be served programmatically, rather than on a course by course basis. Target populations need to be sustainable. Reuter closed the discussion by asking that any additional questions be directed to Spuches.

iv) Other. Reuter stated that there had not yet been a volunteer for Chair of the Committee. Any member of the Committee is eligible. A volunteer needs to be identified before the Academic Governance meeting on May 12. Anyone interested should speak to Reuter.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 pm. This was the final meeting of the 2015-2016 academic year.

Action items: Ramarao to add elective lists to the RMS proposal before full approval is granted.