

COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM

December 16, 2013

254 Baker

Meeting Minutes

Voting members present: Cohen, Daley, Donaghy, Hassett, Kyanka, Vanucchi, Verostek, Wagner, Shannon (for President Murphy)

Non-voting members/guests present: Chandler, Liu, Newman, Sanford

Unable to attend: Benza, Chatterjee, Murphy, Spuches, Vandeburg, Whitmore

1. The meeting was called to order at 1.03 pm. This was marked by a special presentation of "The Clock" to the current Committee Chair by the past Committee Chair
 2. Approval of Minutes from November 13. The minutes from November 13 were approved as submitted.
 3. Announcements:
 - a. New meeting schedule has been set for the remainder of the 2013-2014 academic year.
 - b. SUNY Curriculum review procedures are on web. The SUNY procedures are on the CoC web site. The Committee will attempt to make sure that the Curriculum Proposal Form used for ESF curriculum proposals is consistent with SUNY recommendations. We need to make sure that we are generating information that is necessary, sufficient and of the right kind to be compliant with SUNY policy. This will lessen the burden for proposers at the point where the new proposal will be forwarded to SUNY for approval.
 - c. Proposals posted for general review: The following proposals are currently on the CoC website for general faculty review:
 - FCH 511 Atmospheric Chemistry
 - FOR 340 Watershed Hydrology
 - FOR 540 Watershed Hydrology
 - d. Proposals under administrative review:
 - FCH 232 Career Skills for Chemists
 - Environmental Chemistry BS revision (it was noted that this in fact is a proposal for a new curriculum, and not a revision)
 - Environmental Science BS revision
- Kelley Donaghy expressed that the agenda item d. "proposals under administrative review" caused concern with some faculty because of the perception that the proposals were being reviewed by the College Administration, and not by the Committee. It was clarified that the "administrative review" of proposals is actually being performed by the Committee, with Chair and with staff support, to ensure that proposals are complete, that affected programs and departments have been notified, that the proposer has indicated that resources are

available and that the proposal is consistent with academic policies. Following this preliminary review, and any revisions by the proposer, the proposals are then distributed to the Committee and College Faculty for an open review and comment period. In order to avoid confusion, proposals that are received by the Committee and undergoing completeness review will be identified in the future as "Proposals submitted to and undergoing CoC completeness review."

e. PBE 3+2 admissions requirements for cooperative agreements

PBE had submitted what it termed program revisions for a curriculum that allows students in their senior year to take both undergraduate and graduate classes, the latter to be transferred into an MS program upon completion of the undergraduate degree. They could then continue taking graduate courses, with a view to completing their MS degree one year after completing their BS degree. The students involved could be either currently matriculated ESF undergraduate students or students entering the program under cooperative agreements with several Chinese universities. The undergraduate classes taken by the Chinese students would count toward their baccalaureate degree from their home (Chinese) institution. The graduate classes taken by all students would apply to an ESF MS degree. No classes would be double-counted as undergraduate and graduate classes. Students (whether current ESF undergraduates or Chinese students studying under the cooperative agreements) would have to go through the normal Graduate School application process. There would be no change to the College Catalog. Daley commented that this proposal looked more like an admission requirements revision, rather than a curriculum revision, and questioned whether it was appropriate for the proposal to be brought before the Committee as a curriculum revision. Dr. Liu, the proposer, was on hand to answer questions and, after some discussion, it was noted that the Committee, after examining the proposal, is recommending that PBE withdraw it from review by CoC because it is not a curriculum issue. The Committee is satisfied that academic policies are being followed in this instance and that the details of the articulation agreements should be worked out with the Dean of the Graduate School.

4. Old Business:

a. Committee member reports on home department position on Form 3 of candidacy exam.

Each departmental representative present reported on his/her home department's position on Form 3 of the candidacy exam. In addition, Environmental Studies forwarded a written statement in lieu of representation at the meeting. EFB (Cohen) would not use the form. SCME (Kyanka) would not use it because of issues of breadth and depth. LS (Vanucchi) noted that the issue is moot in her department. ES (Whitmore) stated that although Form 3 is not a format that ES would use, it should be kept in the policy as a way to keep standards consistent across programs. Programs could then choose from options. She also noted that it would be helpful to have a clear articulation of the purpose/goals of the candidacy exam in the policy, especially in light of Form 3. FNRM (Wagner) would not use the format because of its lack of breadth and depth. The Library (Verostek) echoed the position articulated by ES, and further noted that Library faculty members are only involved when called on to chair a committee. ERE (Daley) reported that his department is split on the use of Form 3, and noted that, whether a department uses the format or not, there is a need to

make sure there is a consistent policy across all departments. On behalf of the Chemistry department, the driver of the Form 3 format, Hassett noted that the need for breadth and depth in the candidacy exam is specified in the preamble to the new college policy.

The Committee agreed, after this report and discussion, that no further Committee action is needed, and this topic is now closed for discussion, with no changes.

b. Committee member comments on curriculum review procedures

Committee members were confused as to what was being requested of them under this item. The Committee will review committee procedures against SUNY requirements.

c. List of special topics classes to be added to catalog

At the beginning of the discussion the Dean of Instruction was not present. Donaghy pointed out that at the last faculty meeting there were questions about the syllabus for special topics courses, and whether special topics courses should have a generic syllabus. According to the new grading policy from IQAS, each special topics course should have a syllabus. A question arose as to whether all special topics course across campus were consistent? Wagner noted that CoC had previously discussed the issues of visiting instructors and special topics courses. These issues had been remanded back to the subcommittee for further review and clarification, although there was a general consensus that each special topics class must have a specific syllabus. Health and Safety should also be addressed for each special topics course. Donaghy also brought up the subject of whether thesis/research credits need to have a syllabus and be consistent across campus. General consensus was that this is a departmental responsibility and not an issue to be brought before the Committee. Chandler stated that not all departments have special topics courses, and, for those that have, there is a generic course description in the College Catalog. This course description does not address course content.

With the Dean of Instruction present, the discussion continued. He will create an inventory of *96 (Special Topics) classes for each department and present this listing to the Committee. Departments will then create Special Topics courses at the 296, 496, 596, and 796 levels (where presently missing) to ensure that students have access to new special topics classes at the appropriate level of instruction. In addition, the Dean of Instruction will instruct the Registrar to compile a list of all special topics courses that have been offered three times, with a view to asking the departments to begin the process of normalizing these courses as part of their curricula. There ensued some discussion concerning special topics classes that are run more than 3 times within a specific time frame and then never run again. The Dean noted that we should be able to make exceptions to the rule if the instructor can provide a rational explanation of why the course should not be normalized (e.g. seminars or Special Topics courses offered as part of a grant, certificate or other defined duration project).

5. New Business:

a. Proposals for action: FNRM Curriculum Revisions

Sanford noted that current ESF/SUNY policy is that students must take 30 General Education credits out of 7 areas in order to fulfill requirements. Past policy required only 27 credits distributed among 9 areas (with a foreign language waiver). From now on all curricula must have 30 hours of General Education classes. The Dean of Instruction noted that the current College Catalog does not reflect this, and individual curricula only reflect this if recently

revised. The FNRM curriculum revisions under discussion were unanimously approved in principle (motion proposed by Hassett, seconded Wagner), subject to a correction of the credit counts in the course tables. These revisions will be an agenda item for faculty governance on January 22.

6. Updates from the Dean. There were no updates from the Dean apart from those already discussed above.
7. Summary of action items.
 - a. Dean Shannon will prepare an inventory of *96 classes for each department and inform departments that missing classes need to be created.
 - b. Dean Shannon will direct the Registrar to compile a list of special topics classes that have been taught three times or more in order to ascertain whether they should be normalized within their home department's curriculum.
 - c. FNRM curriculum proposals, as amended, will be forwarded for approval by faculty governance.

Next Committee meeting will be held on January 15, at 12:45 pm, in 254 Baker.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm.