

COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM

October 15, 2014

12:45 p.m., 254 Baker

Meeting Minutes

Voting Members present: Bujanovic, Cohen, Daley, Dibble, Donaghy, Kyanka, Shannon, Verostek, Wagner

Non-voting members and Guests present: Delaney, Margolis, Newman, Paterson, Rutkowski Spuches

Unable to attend: Sanford, Vanucchi, Wheeler, Whitmore

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 12:45 pm.
2. **Approval of Minutes from August 27.** The minutes from the August 27, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously as posted.
3. **Announcements**
 - a. **Proposals posted for CoC and faculty review:**

The following proposals have been posted for CoC and faculty review:

 - i. EFB 437/637 Plant Propagation. This proposal is from Terry Ettinger in EFB. Daley has already made comments, which will be distributed to the Committee at the end of the review period.
 - b. **Proposals submitted for CoC completeness review:**
 - i. There are currently no proposals under completeness review.
4. **Updates from the Dean (Shannon)**

Dean Shannon noted that he had no updates other than those covered under "Old Business" below.
5. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Development of xxxx96 generic course descriptions.** Daley reported that the development of these descriptions is still in process.
 - b. **Development of a Study Abroad course.** Shannon reported that the paperwork for this course is currently with the Registrar for comment. He will have more to report at the next CoC meeting. He is proposing a boilerplate course name and number, to be used for administrative purposes to allow the identification of students in the program. Emily Quackenbusch will be "instructor of record" as she is the overseer of the Study Abroad program.
 - c. **Modification of a Minor Enrollment Form.** Shannon has been working on the modification of this form. After the removal of the block on justification, there is room on the form to list all the minor coordinators. He will email all chairs within the next day or so to verify the identity of the coordinators and will also update the website to show the correct coordinators. Petitions will no longer be needed. The form will be online on the Registrar's web site and will be accessible from other web locations.
 - d. **Revisions to the Curriculum Proposal Form and process.** Daley suggested that ESF should use the SUNY forms and process. CoC's current forms ask for approximately the same information, but in a way that creates confusion on the part of the proposer, which results in a prolonged interaction between the proposer and the Committee. Since the SUNY form ultimately needs to be completed, it seems clear that this form should be the only form required for the proposal to be submitted to the Committee. There are only a few items that

CoC does not require during submission, but if the SUNY form is submitted then the Dean has all the information that needs to go to SUNY. Kyanka pointed out that the SUNY form is 13 pages long. Dibble noted that we still need to provide clarification and guidance for the SUNY forms. Completion of a local form is extra work, and now unnecessary as SUNY has recently developed a form and process. As part of the guidance to the proposer, it needs to be made clear that Provost approval of resources has to be part of the process before the proposal is submitted to the Committee. The proposer and Chair should sign the proposal. As a heads-up, Daley informed the Committee that Environmental Health will shortly be proposing program modifications. He has asked them to use the SUNY forms. These modifications may not be extensive enough to trigger a submission to SUNY, but they will need to be communicated to departments and other entities within ESF. With regard to the development of an ESF curriculum/program process, Dibble and Kyanka will work on the guidelines and report back at the next meeting.

- e. **Revisions to the Course Proposal Form and process.** These revisions are in process.
- f. **Report on review of the Bylaws and clarification of Committee responsibility.** Donaghy reported that Bylaws revision is currently being undertaken at the officers' level of Governance. The review of Committee charges has not yet been addressed.
- g. **Report on review and compilation of academic policies.** Donaghy reported that recent issues have brought to light the importance of an examination of how policies are developed. Daley noted that the review, updating, and sunseting of academic policy come through the Committee. He asked Donaghy to pull all policies into one repository. Donaghy is developing a "policy on policy."
- h. **Report on whether there is a process for the monitoring of prerequisites when registering for classes, and whether the instructor has authority to act if prerequisites have not been met.** Under the current registration process at ESF there is no way to determine whether course prerequisites have been met. Rutkowski reported that grades for ESF students for ESF courses do not appear on Myslice, which is an SU-controlled system. Daley stated that there is currently no policy on student removal (due to prerequisite problems), but that the instructor does not have to officially have the authority to remove a student. Rutkowski agreed that if the instructor sees the need to drop a student because of non-compliance with pre-requisite requirements then s/he should talk to the registrar and the student can be dropped. Course prerequisites are listed in the published course description, although Daley seemed to think that not all students read the course descriptions. Delaney agreed with this. Wagner noted that we need to have some way to record grades and check compliance with prerequisites electronically. If prerequisites are actually not needed then the course should be amended to drop them. Bujanovic noted that, in PBE, advisors are encouraged to check prerequisites during advising week, and students have to sign a form confirming that they meet the class prerequisites, where necessary.
- i. **Report on the role of CoC in General Education Assessment.** Donaghy reported that General Education needs to go through the entire process of assessment and meet the deadline by March or the College will lose Middle States

accreditation. Donaghy, Whitmore and Abdel-Aziz have generated a set of learning outcomes which have been sent to the Provost, who in turn should shortly be asking the departments for student materials to use in assessing them. Other faculty members involved in developing the outcomes are Luzadis, Scott and Shannon. However, as far as the Committee is concerned there is no role in assessment. The Committee's role is to make sure that courses are consistent with SUNY General Education policy. IQAS will be responsible for General Education assessment process. There is no further need for discussion of this issue by the Committee.

6. New Business:

a. Question from FNRM:

- i. Should an instructor be required to submit a new course proposal when making a major change in class delivery (e.g. to an online format).** Wagner had raised this as a question, relating to a specific case where the delivery method advertised (in the course description) was not what was delivered, resulting in some confusion among students. The course had been approved in lecture format and then went to an online "forum" with instructor Q and A. The question is whether this change should require a formal course revision. In Wagner's opinion changing the delivery method does have an effect on students, because of the variety of ways students learn. It therefore constitutes a major change. Rutkowski noted that some courses are offered both in an online format and face-to-face. Daley pointed out that SUNY has a question in the course guidelines on the mode of delivery, requiring a course to be seen as "distance education" if more than 50% can be completed by distance learning. Donaghy asked how the 50% would be determined. As to whether the mode of delivery affects the outcomes of the course, Wagner again maintained that the mode of delivery affects how students learn. Some do well with online courses and some do not. Spuches stated that "delivery" is a strong word. For example, a student who is used to coming to class and taking notes may not do well in a collaborative learning environment. This is an example, not of delivery, but of methods, and is an acceptable switch. Historically, "flipping" courses has not raised a lot of concern because it is a method; however, it impacts how a class is delivered. With regard to online classes, some instructors use Blackboard and also meet with their class. Wagner asked whether Blackboard is used to supplement or to deliver new course material. Donaghy replied that in her case it is used for both, but that Blackboard does not supplant the face-to-face aspect of her class – it is supportive only. Spuches suggested that if you supplant 50% of the class learning time with online delivery then it is an online class. However, since SUNY guidelines are predicated on seat time and face-to-face classrooms, and online learning is an outcomes-based approach, how do you measure "seat time?" Daley gave an example of a flipped classroom, where videos viewed remotely were used to teach methods, then when the students came to class they were expected to utilize the methods. With regard to the current ESF course environment, Daley noted that in the course catalog we have an approved course description where we ask the instructor to define the

methods of delivery. Donaghy asked that we set up a set of definitions for different delivery options. Donaghy noted that this already exists on the policies web page. The question is how to define “online” vs. “in person” learning, and how much online delivery can be used in a course before it is defined as an online course. According to Daley, the method of delivery should be a minor change in the course proposal. The delivery method is noted in the course description. Donaghy pointed out that different instructors will deliver the same class in different ways, to which Dibble added that the course description should not have to be changed every year, just because there is a change in delivery. Shannon suggested that if there is a significant change in the delivery method it should be handled in the syllabus. It is the syllabus that defines how the course will be delivered. A proposal was put forth that since we are talking about syllabi, the Committee should remand this issue to IQAS with a recommended resolution that the syllabus should include the method of delivery for the semester the course is offered. Donaghy suggested that when there are multiple course sections with different delivery methods the Registrar can note this in the schedule

b. Proposals for action:

- i. **ENS 470 Environmental Risk Assessment.** In a written comment, Eddie Bevilacqua had asked that APM 391 be added as a prerequisite to this course. Paterson stated that he would change his proposal to accommodate this. He also agreed to reduce the number of prerequisites by referencing the higher level prerequisite only. It was noted that prerequisites do not need the term “or equivalent” added, as this is already assumed.
As a general question, Paterson was asked where APM 391 and ENS 470 fall within the student’s program. He responded that the program is set up so that the student will take APM 391 before ENS 470. A comment was made on the requirement of FCH 221 and FCH 223 for this course. Paterson agreed that the student does not need to know the structure of a toxin, rather the student needs to know specifically how the toxin is a hazard, and which specific properties of the compound are hazardous. Paterson agreed to revise the chemistry prerequisites for ENS 470 to FCH 152. The course was approved as amended.
- ii. **ERE 570 Hydrology in a Changing Climate.** There were no faculty or committee comments on this course. The course was approved as proposed.

As a general point of discussion, Donaghy asked how the Committee can better communicate information on proposed new/revised courses/programs. Daley agreed that this is a perennial issue. Donaghy maintained that the current method does not work, as the Committee is assuming that faculty silence on a course/program is approval of the proposal. Daley pointed out that, as well as Committee emails to faculty, the Committee departmental representatives need to be actively communicating Committee activity to the members of his/her department. Donaghy concurred but still expressed concern that there is a communication issue between the Committee and the faculty.

Adjourned 1:46

Action items:

- Daley to continue working on the xxxx96 generic course descriptions.
- Shannon to continue working on the development of a Study Abroad course.
- Shannon to continue working on the modification of a Minor Enrollment Form.
- Dibble and Kyanka to work on revisions to the Curriculum Proposal Form and process.
- Daley to work with Newman on revisions to the Course Proposal Form and process.
- Donaghy to continue a review of the Bylaws and clarification of Committee responsibility.
- Vanucchi, aided by Donaghy, to commence a review and compilation of academic policies.