

COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM

December 10, 2014

12:45 p.m., 254 Baker

Meeting Minutes

Voting Members present: Daley, Dibble, Kyanka, Shannon (for President Wheeler), Whitmore, Wagner, Whipps (for Dr. Cohen)

Non-voting members and Guests present: Ettinger, Newman, Margolis

Unable to attend: Bujanovic, Cohen, Delaney, Donaghy, Rutkowski, Sanford, Spuches, Vanucchi, Verostek, Wheeler

1. **Call to Order (Daley)** The meeting was called to order at 12:52 pm
2. **Approval of Minutes from November 12 (Daley/All)** The minutes of the November 12 meeting were approved by acclamation.
3. **Announcements**
 - a. Proposals posted for CoC and faculty review: (Daley)
 - i. None
 - b. Proposals submitted for CoC completeness review: (Daley)
 - i. Environmental Science has proposed a new graduate area of study: Human Dimensions of the Environment. Newman explained that this is the addition of an area of study, with no required courses or new resources. Daley asked whether this was a new curriculum or a marketing tool within an approved curriculum. Shannon explained that this is not a new curriculum – rather a marketing tool or area of study. The GPES degree program is already an approved curriculum with core courses and already existing specialized areas of study. Wagner asked if this new area of study causes a special designation to be placed on the thesis or degree certificate. Shannon replied that it did not. Daley and Shannon commented that areas of study are more properly dealt with when the student and steering committee create the Form 3B Program of Study. This is not a degree program – the student does not study for a degree in Human Dimensions of the Environment. Newman was asked to return the proposal to the proposer with the explanation that based on previous practice and current policy the Committee does not need to approve areas of study. It is a local/departmental decision. The department simply needs to make sure that the new area of study does not contravene current GPES policy. Even if extra resources were being requested it is not a Committee matter. The question remains as to whether the Committee should be involved in implied programs within curricula. Shannon suggested that he should confer with provost to develop documentation on definitions of areas of study/option areas. If the area has a distinct curriculum then it should be in the catalog as

such – if it is just a new research group then the Committee, in consultation with the Provost, needs to work out how to address this. Daley noted that we can use areas of study as a recruitment tool, but the degree is not to be awarded in the area of study. The existence of an area of study by definition may take some of the advising away from the student's advisor and give the faculty concerned with the area of study more power. Dibble noted that if an area of study is to be seen as a separate entity then there should be some requirements that are different from other areas of study. Daley suggested that this should be an advising handbook issue. Margolis told the Committee that incoming students can be confused with multiple tracks (in LA) or areas of study (in other departments). There is really no different course structure for different tracks. Daley stated that areas of study must be handled differently in the future, and defined so that students are not confused. Kyanka noted that SCME has 5 areas of study -- just a marketing tool. Daley stated that this proposal will not go any further in the Committee process and will be returned to the proposer.

- c. Administrative approvals by the Dean
 - i. Correction to catalog listing of ENS 335/535.
This was a course description correction.

4. Updates from the Dean (Shannon)

The Dean stated that the Provost is handling issues of seamless transfer. He also noted that programs will be examined with regard to the 126 credit hour limit. Daley informed the Committee that ERE will be sending in a minor curriculum modification for this. The Environmental Health program is also going through some minor adjustments. The Dean noted that the assessment plan has been finalized for the General Education program. This may need campus-wide review, as the plan must now satisfy Middle States requirements. ESF needs to comply with general SUNY requirements but tailor the General Education program more to the local campus needs.

5. Old Business:

- a. xxx96 generic course descriptions (Daley). Progress will be made on this topic next semester.
- b. Development of a Study Abroad course (Shannon). Progress will be made on this topic next semester.
- c. Minor Enrollment Form (Shannon). Progress will be made on this topic next semester.
- d. Revisions to the Curriculum Proposal Form and process (Dibble, Kyanka). Dibble distributed a flow chart showing how to submit a curriculum change. Text on the back of the flow chart indicated the additional steps to be taken once the type of submission has been determined. It was suggested that he should also add affected departments to the flow chart and text in order to make sure that all affected parties are informed of the new or revised curriculum. Dibble noted that the submission of the “new and major revisions”

form required signature pages. Kyanka presented the minor change form. The form has now been reduced, but signatures are still required. There is adequate space for the rationale for the minor revision. Daley asked whether a minor course revision changing the semester of delivery initiates a program change. Shannon noted that in some cases it does, especially when courses are sequential. If courses are not sequential then it does not matter so much. In Landscape Architecture courses have to be taken in order; the courses are seen as building blocks, and are not interchangeable. In other programs that are not sequential it does not make any difference, especially if it is an elective course. If a required course changes semester does it trigger a minor curriculum change? If a course is changed we must make sure that the catalog is changed. We should make sure that minor curriculum changes come through the committee; they cannot be approved administratively. The proposer needs to make sure that students taking classes from other departments are not harmed by the curriculum change. The Committee needs to ask if there are such implications at proposal time. The Committee decided to adopt the Dibble flow chart with minor modifications. With regard to forms, major program revisions or new programs require the SUNY forms to be completed. The minor revision form needs to have updated catalog pages as part of the submission. Dibble is making the assumption that catalog descriptions for new programs or major revisions to programs are asked for on SUNY forms.

- e. Review of the Bylaws and clarification of Committee responsibility (Donaghy). Donaghy not being present, this was tabled until the next meeting.
- f. Review and compilation of academic policies (Vanucchi, Donaghy). Donaghy and Vanucchi not being present, this was tabled until the next meeting.

6. New Business:

- a. Proposals for action:
 - i. EFB 437/637 Plant Propagation

When last discussed, the Committee noted major problems with EFB 637. Comments had been received, particularly with regard to the differences between the 400 level and the 600 level offerings of the course. (Daley noted that current academic policy also allows a 400/500 split.) The proposer, Ettinger, had responded with revised proposal for EFB 637. The Committee appreciated that he had submitted his revisions using track changes; this helped with the review. Wagner noted that an undergraduate can take a 600 level class if s/he has a 3.0+ GPA and s/he petitions to do so. An undergraduate can take a 500 level class with permission of instructor. Wagner saw a problem in that, of the 60 credits a PhD student is required to take, 12 must be at the 600 level or above. How can the spirit of a PhD level course be satisfied by a 600-level course that is also taught at the 400 level? By definition, the 600-level course should be taught at well beyond the 400-level. Wagner asked that his aversion to shared resource courses with a 400/600 level split be recorded. Daley noted that a 600-level course should impart "advanced specialized knowledge" while a 500-level course imparts only "specialized knowledge." If the major part of the course is taught at a 400 level can it be deemed as imparting advanced specialized knowledge? How do instructors achieve that split? There are clear differences in expectations for graduate students. At the PhD level they must attain a synthesis of knowledge with an ability to convey that knowledge. Ettinger, in a general comment to the Committee, stated that putting the proposal together over a year ago was a

complete mystery. He encouraged the Committee make available better guidelines on the distinction of a 400/600-level class. There is not much guidance in the Catalog, except for a few lines on the course numbering system. Even this is interpreted differently across departments. In addressing the issue of synthesis by graduate students in EFB 637, Ettinger stated that his expectations were to have them each develop a specific topic, and then work with Ettinger to teach a part of the course in that topic (especially using video delivery so that problem solving can be done in class). The in-class part of the course consists of team-based exercises. The graduate students have to develop lecture content and the delivery method for the in-class problem solving exercise, and also develop and deliver a lab exercise. Ettinger thinks that this structure is a prime example of Blooms taxonomy. Kyanka noted that institutional constraints prohibit the delivery of separate 437 and 637 courses. The motion to adopt both EFB 437 and EFB 647 as recently submitted was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm

Action items:

- Daley will continue to work on the xxxx96 generic course descriptions.
- Shannon will continue to work on the development of a Study Abroad course.
- Shannon will continue the development of a Minor Enrollment Form.
- Dibble and Kyanka will complete the curriculum proposal forms and Newman will post them on the web page.
- Daley and Shannon will confer with the Provost to determine the status of and proposal process (if any) for new areas of study within existing curricula.
- Donaghy will continue the review of the Bylaws and clarification of Committee responsibility.
- Donaghy and Vanucchi will continue the review and compilation of academic policies.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on January 7, 2015 at 12:45 in 254 Baker.