

Committee on Curriculum
April 11, 2017
Meeting Minutes

Voting members present: Liu, Shannon (for Wheeler), Stavenhagen, Tao, Teece, Verostek, Wagner

Guests and others present: C'Dealva-Lenik, Ettinger, Minard, Moran, Newman, Sanford, Spuches, Sonnenfeld, Teron, Vidon

Unable to attend: Amidon, Cohen, Neumann, Reuter, Wheeler

- 1) **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 11:03 am.
- 2) **Approval of Minutes from March 9, 2017 meeting.** The minutes from the March 9, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously

3) **Announcements**

i) **Proposals posted for CoC and faculty review:**

ERE 408/508 Water: An Incredible Journey (new)

MCR 484/684 Scanning Electron Microscopy (revision)

MCR 785 Scanning Electron Microscopy (deactivation)

Tao asked if the Committee accepts courses cross-listed at the 400/500 levels. Teece noted that the original listing was for a 408/608 split but, due to concerns about content, he had encouraged the proposer to change the 608 course to a 500-level course. Discussion ensued regarding the need for a 400-level course, since it is an elective course within the department. Shannon offered to encourage the proposer to withdraw ERE 408, and leave ERE 508 as the only course proposed. C'Dealva-Lenik expressed concern that general chemistry is listed as a prerequisite for the course. Shannon explained that incoming graduate students should already have taken general chemistry, so it should not be an issue.

ii) **Proposals submitted for CoC completeness review:**

EST 415 Environmental Justice (new)

iii) **Recent Administrative Approvals (with approval date)**

**FOR 696 Special Topics in Forest & Natural Resources Management
(April 3, 2017)**

As a general announcement, Liu noted that the position of Committee Chair would be open for the following year. Teece expressed some interest.

4) **Updates from the Dean**

There were no updates from the Dean.

5) **Old Business:**

Liu explained the split between ongoing and old business.

6) **New Business:**

i) **Proposals for action:**

EST 615 Environmental Justice (new)

Wagner had some comments that had been addressed at the review stage. He clarified with the proposer (Teron) that EST 615 and EST 415 (not yet submitted to the Committee for review) were not shared resource classes, and that these classes cannot have the same learning outcomes. Teece asked why the course was not being proposed as EST 515, instead of separate undergraduate and graduate courses. Teron explained that they are offered in different semesters and there should be enough students to fill each class. There being no further discussion, the course was approved unanimously.

EST 624 Nature, Recreation, and Society (new)

There had been no comments on this proposal during the review period. There being no discussion, the course was approved unanimously.

EST 652 Managing Sustainability: Purpose, Principles and Practice (new)

Wagner provided some history on this course. The course had been offered as a special topics course for several years. Originally, the learning outcomes were not well developed, but, in consultation with the FNRM Chair, who is also involved in the CASSE program, the learning outcomes were revised satisfactorily. Moran, the proposer, explained the course's position in the CASSE program, which is cooperatively run with SU. Wagner asked if the current learning outcomes are comparable to the outcomes in the SU courses. Moran responded that they are. Sonnenfeld noted that this course is cross-listed three ways – with two SU courses. It was explained that having this as an ESF course meant that the students did not have to use their SU credits to take part in the CASSE program. With no further discussion, the course was approved unanimously.

EST 759 Sustainability-Driven Enterprise (new)

This course, as part of the CASSE program, had some of the initial problems as EST 652. The resolution of these problems followed the same path as EST 652. With no further discussion, the course was unanimously approved.

EST 690 International Environmental Policy Consultancy (new)

During the review period, Wagner had had some discussion with the proposer, Sonnenfeld, regarding the instructional methods, which did not match the learning outcomes. Sonnenfeld had corrected this to Wagner's satisfaction by revision of the proposal. Teece noted that the way the frequency of the class is listed is confusing. Sonnenfeld explained that the course is officially offered during the ESF fall or spring semesters, but it also has to match the scheduling of the partner school. The three times the course has been offered it has had to conform to the scheduling of its partner school in the Netherlands. The number of credits earned by the students is dictated by the extra work and classes needed to match the schedule of the partner. With different partners, the credits could change. Whether the course is offered in the Fall or Spring is decided according to the partner's schedule. Generally, the number of credits is decided about a week before the course is offered. Teece noted that this may make it difficult for students to plan their schedule. Sonnenfeld explained that the ideal situation would be to secure a client in February for a fall course. The number of credits could then be assigned before fall advising. In response to a question from Spuches, Sonnenfeld noted that the course was not seen to be within the COIL (SUNY Center for Collaborative Online International Learning) framework. A major difficulty was the match of teaching terms/schedules between ESF and the partner school. Wagner, returning to the outcomes/concepts/teaching sections of the proposal, stated that these now seem internally consistent. Sonnenfeld added that the course employs two major instructional methods: the group project and a self-assessment. There being no further discussion, the course was approved unanimously.

ii) Other

There was no other new business.

7) Continuing Business:

i) Discussion on requirements and procedures to be followed when a change is made in a course's method of delivery. (Spuches/Cohen)

Spuches distributed a handout on the Open Academy (OA), previously used to update Academic Council on the progress of the OA. He noted that we have reached a watershed with online education. He explained that Mark Hill has enlightened the members of Academic Council concerning the impact of financial aid on our online offerings. Basically, online programs are not financial aid-able. ESF has recently submitted two online programs (advanced certificates) to SUNY for approval. These will then go to Middle States. Currently we are not approved by Middle States to deliver online programs. Once Middle States has approved our 2 online programs, we can complete the SARA paperwork that will allow us to offer online courses/programs to other states. Currently, 48 of 50 states are part of the SARA agreement. Once Middle States has approved the two programs under consideration, ESF does not have to have additional programs approved by Middle States. SUNY is concerned with the content of programs (online or otherwise); Middle States is concerned with the institution's capacity to deliver online courses. In anticipation of ESF's push toward online programming, ESF Outreach has been renamed ESF Open Academy. The ESF Open Academy will have a Teaching and Learning Collaboratory, and will have resources available for instructors. There may be further resources available, in the form of an EIPF (Expanded Investment and Performance Fund) grant. The recent state budget scholarship announcement will have an impact on online enabled

teaching, but we do not yet know what this impact will be. Spuches further noted that Scott Turner and Terry Ettinger had raised some questions regarding online course delivery. Spuches is in the process of convening a group to discuss the issues raised. Spuches pointed out that any discussion of online programming was concerned with procedures, and not policy. Using the University of Florida experience as an illustration, he explained that ESF cannot increase enrollments based on physical capacity. The college has to go online. Even with online programming, we have limited capacity and must be more surgical in our process. ESF also needs to look at programming that doesn't currently exist that we may want to consider offering online. The discussion of this agenda item may be better articulated after the meeting he is in the process of organizing. Wagner asked about the timeline of the ESF Open Academy. Spuches stated that we are waiting for SUNY to approve the amendments to our programs, so the Open Academy should hopefully be up and running within a year. Wagner noted that the Open Academy issue was separate from the agenda item at hand. Teece was hopeful that all issues could be discussed together. The Committee, under this agenda item, was looking at a much smaller scope than the discussion of the Open Academy. The discussion needs to be limited in order to come to a resolution in good time. He asked about the implications for a change in delivery of a course. Ettinger asked about the difference in the authorization for online programs and online courses. The agenda item at hand is focused on course delivery. Spuches offered that there may be implications for matriculated students when a face-to-face course is changed to be exclusively online. Ettinger asked about the current limitations if an instructor chooses to do this, and whether the change has the Committee's blessing. Teece asked about the responsibility for overseeing and administering a situation such as this, and where the Committee sits in the hierarchy of the process. Quality is a major issue, and he was not clear who at ESF would look at quality control. Spuches noted that the Provost had indicated that with situations such as this there is a quality issue as well as an administrative issue. Spuches and Shannon suggested that the academic department and its curriculum committee should be responsible for overseeing a change in delivery. Spuches noted that the process is clear when a program is at stake – the department and ultimately the Provost is responsible for directing the process. When the change in delivery concerns a course, the procedures are currently vague. "Online" is a delivery mechanism, not a delivery method. Ettinger noted that in a face-to-face class, it is simple to count students and hours in class. The question is how to count hours in a class when delivery is online. Wagner stated that assessment is important. Can we develop metrics from the learning outcomes that can be assessed in multiple ways, so that we can assess what is being delivered regardless of the mechanism of delivery. Ettinger asked how online delivery would be assessed differently from delivery, for example, directly to students using a face-to-face format and whiteboard. Wagner countered that this was not the issue, rather we have to be concerned generally with how learning outcomes are able to be delivered and assessed. Spuches suggested that the delivery mechanism should be unimportant when developing a new course. Shannon pointed out that if a course is not a required course then there is more latitude when developing learning outcomes. If the course is a required course, then the instructor, the departmental curriculum committee, and the Committee should be involved in determining the learning outcomes. There are even more restrictions and oversight when the course is a General Education course. If there is an assumption that the online course is achieving outcome goals, then there is an opportunity to develop an online version. If the online version is meeting or exceeding the same outcomes then the course would be acceptable in its online version. Shannon also noted that ESF is noted for its traditional, hands-on, classes. The college may be embarking on a slippery slope if it offers courses in only an online version. Teece asked how credit hours are measured when the class is delivered online, and whether measure is made by "instructional contact hours". Spuches noted that OSCQR (Open SUNY COTE Quality Review) speaks to this issue, and that it would be his (and others') responsibility to evaluate contact hours. There needs to be guidelines on this, and a clear understanding of where the Committee should be involved. Wagner noted that the College does not currently have a structure or process with which to evaluate this. Teece asked what the roadblocks would be. Shannon responded that ESF at present does not have an institutional level of course assessment. End-of-course surveys are a weak example of the college's course-level assessment, but it is the only process we have. Wagner mentioned that ABET and other accrediting agencies may have additional course-level standards that we have to adhere to. Spuches offered that there is no perfect definition of contact hours. Ettinger offered that, in his flipped class, he can offer the same content online more efficiently and therefore in a shorter time frame. Spuches added that contact hour is not only about the content, but also about what the instructor is asking the learner to do and the kind of

feedback required from the student, along with the assessment of the learning. Ettinger noted that the students in his class are performing the required work in response to a shorter exposure to the [instructional] material. Wagner pointed out that the instructor needs to make sure that the various parts of online are supplemented with quizzes, etc. Spuches noted that the presentation of a lecture is part of the instructional process, but not all. Teece asked if the instructor and student need to be present together in the class. Spuches said that presence need not be physical, as with an online course, but there must be interactivity, at least between the instructor and student. There should be no course where there is no interaction between student and instructor. Shannon pointed out that we have policies regarding feedback to students in any type of course, and that there are various ways to obtain feedback in an online class. Spuches and Teece agreed that instructors need to be educated as to how to do this. SUNY has developed its own best practices as to course interactivity and accessibility. Teece asked whether this would become a requirement of the learning outcomes of a course. Ettinger informed the Committee that there is a requirement that all video content be captioned. This is a time-consuming process, but it is also well documented that all students process video information better if it is captioned. These and other issues under this agenda item will be discussed at the meeting to be convened by Spuches. Issues such as instructor support for teaching and learning, which was a concern to Ettinger, but which Spuches indicated is currently available, would be better discussed at the meeting to be convened by Spuches. Potential policies and procedures would also be discussed there and brought back to the Committee. Discussion on this topic was tabled until the next meeting of the Committee.

ii) Guidance document for differentiation between course levels. (Wagner, Cohen, Stavenhagen, Liu)

There had been no progress on this item.

iii) USA policy proposal regarding treatment of courses not recently offered.

C'Dealva-Lenik asked whether Shannon had received any emails from departments regarding the deletion of courses from the catalog. Shannon reported that Landscape Architecture and Environmental Studies had responded in part, and that there should be a reduction in the number of classes offered in the next published version of the catalog. He could probably provide students with a list of those classes dropped and those remaining. Teece asked about the possibility of flagging courses in the catalog as "inactive". Shannon responded that, given the current computing capabilities, it may not currently be possible, but it may be possible in a few years when ESF begins to use Banner. Teece then pointed out that as a college it may look like we are refusing to accommodate the student's resolution. Shannon suggested that he and the Provost would draft a response covering the feasibility of the student's request. This would not be a flat rejection, but a "soft no". Shannon added that ESF is in better shape than some institutions regarding this situation, and New York State provides better funding than some other states, but the size of ESF is a problem. Economies of scale do matter. Teece suggested that the USA re-draft its resolution to soften the language so that the college would not be in a position of absolutely rejecting the student's request. Shannon indicated that he and the Provost would provide the USA with a response.

C'Dealva-Lenik also mentioned a problem regarding the roll-out of the Renewable Materials Science catalog description. Shannon explained that the website should exactly reflect what was approved by SUNY. During the ESF approval process, the Committee had recommended some changes, and then SUNY had asked for some additional amendments. C'Dealva-Lenik expressed some concern that the plan sheets did not align with one another, and that Committee changes are not reflected in the Catalog.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:29 pm.