



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Committee on Curriculum

Agenda for October 26, 2017 Meeting

324 Bray Hall, 11:00 am

Voting members present: Christy Gilbert (USA rep), Liu, Schulz, Matthew Smith (for Ruth Owens),
Stavenhagen, Tao, Teece, Wagner

Guests: Spuches, Teron, Tochelli

- 1) **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m.
- 2) **Approval of Minutes from September 21, 2017.** The minutes from September 21, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.
- 3) **Announcements**
 - i. Proposals posted for CoC and faculty review
EST 415 Environmental Justice (revised)
Chemistry department notes on proposal: Toxic used as a noun in description, needs to be changed to toxic substances. Distinguishing between 400/600 level learning outcomes despite it not being a shared resource course, this has been addressed.
Wagner-move to approve, second by Stavenhagen
Discussion: None
Unanimously approved
 - ii. Administrative Approvals (with approval date)
EWP 350 - dropped honors program requirement (10/10/17)
Spuches wants to know what the relationship is between this committee and the honors program. **Contact Bill Shields for an update from Honors Program.**
- 4) **Old Business-** None
- 5) **New Business-** Ruth had her baby! Congratulations 😊
Teece- Working on the by-laws change for committee intervention on more challenging petitions if requested (Scott Shannon usually approves on his own). It will go to Executive Council for review then be forwarded on to Academic Governance for a vote.
- 6) **Continuing Business**
 - i. Shared resource courses (Wagner, Tao, Stavenhagen, Liu)
Wagner- Concern from grad students getting stuck in undergrad courses. ESF approaches shared resource courses differently than many other institutions. Current

policy allows 400/500 (400 is undergrad senior course, 500 entering grad course) split level courses, we also allow 300/500, and 400/600 (600 is advanced grad-level). The 400/600 is of most concern. Why are undergrad seniors and advanced grad taking classes together? Based on conversations with other institutions, our 400/500 courses would be ok to continue. Undergrads could take 600-level courses as long as they understood it was a grad course and they would be required to complete work at that level.

- 1- Continue with our current numbering allowing 300/500 or 400/500 shared resource courses and disallowing 400/600
- 2- If we adopt SU's numbering system, 500 are considered shared resource courses. 600 would be first-year grad, 700+ would be advanced grad and so on.

Extensive discussion ensued over this topic. Schulz brought up the point that this issue could be resolved if we allowed for grad students to take 300/400 level courses as part of their degree program. This would also provide faculty with more time and resources to teach more 600-level courses. Also Schulz noted that undergrads cannot be required to take any 500-level courses by SUNY standards. Tao mentioned **GSA has a document relating to shared resources and we should contact them to share it** to help inform this continuing conversation.

(UPDATE- Wagner spoke to Dean Shannon and SUNY does not allow grad students to take undergrad courses and have them count towards their graduate degree)

ii. Online Education- Update (Spuches)

Teece- One of our roles as the CoC is to ensure that online courses are delivered in the best possible way, but we need a way in which to measure that. OSCQR is an evaluation rubric adopted by SUNY to review their online courses. All of the questions are based on how a course can be improved.

Spuches- We are going to commit to a modest stipend for ESF faculty and/or grad students to become OSCQR certified peer reviewers so we can review our own courses for best practices.

Teece- From the CoC point-of-view, we need to know what do we need to do after an online course gets approved by a department. We want to be sure that there has been some consideration on how this course is effectively taught through the online medium.

Shulz- There should be an additional form for the CoC approval process if someone is planning to offer a course online. They should have to go through the department-level where the Undergrad Committee can debate whether or not it's appropriate to offer course online because there is not currently a mechanism for that.

Spuches- There is also a debate about whether or not someone can change the format of a class that is required of students and what that means for traditional students. I believe it is beyond the prerogative of a single faculty member to make that decision.

Teece- If we have the faculty member and department agree that it is appropriate to put a course online, is it up to the CoC to decide whether or not to allow for it?

Schulz- We need to be sure that what we are approving is what is being delivered. There is a potential to do more harm than good to ESF's reputation if we do not do well with our online courses.

Teece- **John Wagner is going to ask Dan Edge about how to "police" online courses for quality.**

Wagner- We could create an advisory committee to help decide if a course should be allowed in an online format.

Schulz- Those on the committee may not understand whether or not a course is appropriate for online because they don't know the discipline.

Item to consider for the change in format form:

Justify the change in format (why would this be appropriate online)? We need to think of the ramifications and if we (CoC) are to be a judge and jury on this. Spuches suggests that we could look at the learning outcomes as the "driver" of whether it is appropriate.

For example, we could include a series of questions that require the proposer to "Justify how the learning outcomes can be achieved through this online format?"

Discussion occurred about the potential for blended classes, or creating local partnerships for certain courses that may need a physical space to do certain work. We also considered if online TAs would be available for courses that already have TA help and whether or not we would have the resources to get more TAs when we don't have enough for our current classes.

Discussion occurred regarding whether or not a faculty member or department should be allowed to change a disciplinary requirement to a fully online course, and if that does a disservice to our traditional students, who may not wish to take an online course.

Decision to bring the issue to USA.

Questions for USA- How would you feel about required disciplinary courses only being offered online? Would you be comfortable taking these courses, with the knowledge that there would be no on-campus resources for you?

Gilbert, Spuches and Teece will talk offline about how to approach this conversation.

Adjourn 12:37