University Graduate Committee - Minutes

March 11, 2015

Members Present: Michael Amundson (History), Karen Applequist (Educational Specialties), Nadine Barlow (Physics and Astronomy), April Brown Judd (Mathematics and Statistics), Colleen Byron (Administration), Joe Collentine (Modern Languages), William Crawford (English), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry), Michael Costelloe (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Ann Huffman (Psychological Sciences), Tom Kolb (Forestry), Kooros Mahmoudi (Sociology), Gretchen McAllister (Chair, Teaching and Learning), Todd Joshua (Substitute for Marcia Metcalf, College of Business), Patricia Peterson (Faculty Senate Representative), Jim Sample (School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability), Erik Schiefer (Geography, Planning and Recreation), Singne Slayton (Substitute – Steve Hempleman, Biological Sciences), Cathy Small (Anthropology), Anna Sosa (Communication Sciences and Disorders), Nora Timmerman (Sustainable Communities), Barbara Tomlinson (Nursing), Meghan Warren (Physical Therapy)

Members Absent: Steve Brown (Music), Emily Babcock (Physician Assistant Studies), Cornel Ciocanel (Engineering), Angelina Castagno (Educational Leadership), Amy Hughes (Ex-officio: Cline Library), Evie Garcia (Educational Psychology), John Masserini (Ex-officio: Graduate College), Stephen Nuño (Politics and International Affairs), Brant Short (Communication), Singne Slayton (Substitute – Steve Hempleman, Biological Sciences), and Maribeth Watwood (Ex-officio: Graduate Dean).

Guests: Melinda Treml (Curriculum and Assessment), Lisa Wischmeier (Extended Campuses), Jenny Scott (Extended Campuses), Deborah Huntzinger (School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability), Laura E Sujo-Montes (College of Education – Specialties)

Graduate College: Alex Coleman

Call to Order: 3:01 pm

I. Welcome, Announcements and Brief Reports
   a. Approval of the Minutes of the February 11, 2015 Meeting – Gretchen McAllister

The minutes were approved with no further discussion.

   b. Graduate Student Government Report – Emily Schnurr

The GSG representative was not present.

II. Consent Items
   a. Academic Affairs
      i. GRAD Courses Not Taught 5+ years – Fall 2015 – Deactivate Courses
Dr. McAllister explained that the list is comprised of courses not offered in the past five years identified by the department administration and offered for approval to the respective dean and department chair. The purpose of deactivating courses is to reduce catalogue load otherwise causing confusion in programs of study and amongst students.

Several members expressed their reservations about the diligence applied to the process of deactivation. In some instances courses currently identified for deactivation are actually being taught this semester (2/5 history courses identified for deactivation are meeting during the current term).

In light of current courses being identified for deactivation, members sought clarification on the administrative process behind deactivation. A member offered that his personal investigation of the administrative process revealed that the various levels of departmental and college administrations appeared uncertain of the relevant administrative authority. Members also sought clarification of the administrative processes for notification of deactivation, and reactivation of dormant courses.

Members urged the process for identification remain at the college and department levels with consultation from their respective UGC Representatives. A motion was undertaken to stipulate that the departmental UGC Representatives be included in communication between the College Deans and Department Chairs regarding proposed deactivations.

The motion to include the UGC Representative in communications addressing proposed deactivation of courses was approved unanimously.

III. Curricular Items for Review
   a. College of Arts and Letters
      i. English
         1. ENG 668, Research Methods in Applied Linguistics – Fall 2015 – Prerequisites

Dr. William Crawford (English) explained that the course “ENG 504, Intro to Linguistics” is a prerequisite for ENG 668 and that the sessions are now taught concurrently in the spring semester, precluding students from registration for both courses within the same academic year. The change in requirement allows for students to enroll in 668 without the prerequisite but contingent upon their admission to the M.A. in Applied Linguistics. Understanding that this poses a potential conflict for Anthropology students required to sit the 668 course, a student may also enroll with instructor consent.

A member expressed concern regarding the relevance of the two courses if the soul reasons for the requisites change is course scheduling. She also suggested that the prerequisites should more specifically address Anthropology students in order to secure their access to the course.

Dr. Crawford assured the committee that the course is a large class with sufficient room for Anthropology students; the instructor’s consent clause offers access to these students and he found it hard to imagine his department or colleagues denying access.

A motion to approve the changes passed by voice vote with one abstention.

   b. College of Education
      i. Educational Specialties
1. Submission Summary
   a. ESE 519, Introduction to Positive Behavior Support – Fall 2015 – Cross-list, New Course
   b. ESE 529, ADV Applications in Positive Behavior Support – Fall 2015 – Cross-list, New Course
   c. ESE 539, Consultation and Collaboration in Positive Behavior Support, Fall 2015 – Cross-list, New Course
   d. ESE 549, Methods in Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention – Fall 2015 – Cross-list, New Course
   e. ESE 559, Verbal and Social Behavior of Children with Autism and Other Developmental – Fall 2015 – Cross-list, New Course
   f. ESE 569, Ethics in Applied Behavior and Analysis and Positive Behavior Support – Fall 2015 – Cross-list, New Course
   g. Positive Behavior Support GCRT – Fall 2015 – Text within Plan

Dr. Laura E Sujo-Montes (College of Education – Educational Specialties) explained that for the purposes of accreditation through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB), this program is required to be imbedded with an academic unit (rather than the Institute for Human Development). Moreover, the accrediting board does not want courses cross listed with multiple prefixes. As such, the courses will be cross listed until such time as current DIS students matriculate and the prefix can be retired. In the meantime, all new students will enroll in ESE.

A member asked if the program required SBS approval. Dr. Sujo-Montes explained that the provost was involved in the negotiations to move the program between units.

A motion to approve passed unanimously.

c. College of Engineering, Forestry, and Natural Sciences
   i. School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability
      1. Climate Science and Solutions: M.S. – Fall 2015 – Major Requirements-
         Course(s) Added, Major Requirements – Course(s) Deleted

Dr. Deborah Huntzinger explained that the proposed modification split fieldwork experience between 3 credits of internship and 3 credits of professional development. This adjusts the credit to more appropriately reflect the experience of the student and allow for a more robust evaluation through letter grading.

A motion to approve passed unanimously.

IV. Informational Items
   a. March 11, 2015 Fast Track

No further discussion of the Fast Track items occurred.

V. Discussion Items
   a. GPA Requirements for Graduate Students Policy
The change in GPA requirements conforms this policy to dismissal policies regarding GPA at the graduate level. When originally published, the policies conflicted in specific rules regarding minimum acceptable GPA. This was a non-action item to be considered by the UGC at a later date.

b. Requirements for Master’s Degrees Policy

Changes in this policy also render policies consistent, and a hyperlink has been added to the Dismissal Policy. Further discussion will occur in the next academic year. Dr. McAllister reminded the committee the program and college requirements should provide hyperlinks to Graduate College policy and forms.

A member noted that the program-specific exceptions itemized in the GPA Requirements should also be itemized in the Master’s Degrees Policy (where relevant).

c. ACCA Syllabus Template

Melinda Treml presented the master syllabi program on behalf of the Advisory Council on Curriculum and Assessment. Ms. Treml explained that the goal of the master syllabi project is to tighten up, streamline and clarify the process of course offerings and the courses themselves. In particular, the master syllabus seeks to identify the learning objectives of a particular course and provide a common foundation between sections. It is also a chance to review coursework and policies on a regular basis.

The intent is to have a university policy requiring all units to compose master syllabi thereby providing a record of courses approved by the curricular body, to conform practice and stated policy, and to promote shared learning outcomes tied to the catalogue. These files would be maintained by the department leader or designee in electronic form and reviewed on a regular basis.

The syllabi template includes a series of uniform requirements alongside a series of class or instructor-specific, modifiable requirements. Uniform requirements are identified with boldface or asterisk. Ms. Treml asked the committee to review the template and consider the needs of graduate vs. undergraduate requirements, and other items superfluous or required. Dr. McAllister noted that, ideally, the template should be viewed as a tool.

Members expressed a variety of concerns:

Some members are particularly concerned over the potential conflict of interests a master syllabi requirement might pose between the academic units and Curriculum and Assessment. Members are wary of a relationship in which a department’s progress or agenda is made contingent upon compliance with the syllabi program. Members referenced prior difficulties in attempting program changes made contingent upon satisfying ACCA requirements.

Administratively, some members expressed concern over departments’ capacities to administrate a new program with already limited resources. Members were concerned over the envisioned process for development, review and approval of the master syllabi – especially over extended periods of time. It was noted specifically that support from unit chairs will be required to successfully implement any change.
Some members were also concerned with the administrative authority of such a program – members would like clarification of university policy on syllabi (specifically from the Provost’s office) and Dr. McAllister, UGC Chair, has asked that John Masserini investigate.

In terms of practice, members expressed reservations about the implementation of the master syllabi format. Members were assured by Ms. Treml that the master syllabi provide sufficient latitude to properly and effectively tailor a course or to expand its learning outcomes, but some members expressed doubt that this is enough. The members are worried that that a super-imposed format, to include the provision of a suggested grade structure, does not fit the nature of a graduate course and constricts the academic freedom enjoyed by faculty.

Other members spoke favorably of a master syllabus construct, noting the usefulness of such a program in their departments’ experiences. A member noted that the goal of creating a record of courses reduces the reliance on institutional memory, and offers faculty knowledge that would otherwise require initiation or experience within the department. Moreover, the master syllabus would help a course fit within a program even before it was designed, understanding that sometimes courses miss program elements and goals.

Other members noted that a consolidated and published record of courses has improved their ability to respond to students’ needs and has proved very useful in the transfer and application process. Also, master syllabi have been very helpful in that they have allowed the department to address contingencies like the sudden absence of faculty. Members expressed confidence in the implementation of course or faculty specific requirements in a syllabus, and assured the UGC that grading paradigms have been used without controversy. Moreover, a master course syllabi helps students develop an idea of courses’ objectives and provides faculty the means to understand the course, its role in the program, the department itself and the vision for the curriculum.

Members asked for clarification of the logistics of the master syllabi program. Members specifically asked about timelines, retroactive application of the program to current or previous courses and publication. Ms. Treml explained that, generally, these issues are program-specific but would likely be captured in the seven year review, when both new and existing courses will be assessed.

Dr. McAllister explained to the committee that she has struggled to impress upon the Faculty Senate that they are attempting to address graduate studies from a particularly undergraduate-based perspective. In this respect, Ms. Treml expressed the ACCA’s need to better understand the graduate level, and asked the UGC to actively help develop it.

In particular, Ms. Treml asked if the UGC saw a need for a separate form or template at the graduate level. Members were amenable and further suggested that it would be prudent to implement the program at the undergraduate level in a form of a pilot program before addressing the graduate level. Depending on their respective programs, members reiterated the general disposition a program might have towards this policy. Some are inherently prepared thanks to accreditation requirements, while others would find this a novel and perhaps challenging experience. In either case, members emphasized the nature of the graduate level curriculum challenges the proposed format and requires a bespoke approach.

d. Informational Items
   i. Proposal Cover Page
ii. **Full Program Proposal**

Dr. McAllister briefly outlined the general process for proposing a new academic program.

The meeting adjourned at 4:27pm