

## Agenda 'The agenda from hell, cont.' Curric Affairs Comm 18 April 2012

### 1. Approve minutes from previous meeting

### 2. UPDATE ON GENERAL EDUCATION REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE (GERC) (short version):

We've been working diligently, have made progress, are committed to BOR policy and the SLOs, but feel that it's premature to present a proposal at this point. There are two major dangers to presenting something that isn't finished: 1) getting a lot of feedback at this point will distract and derail our progress. We need to come up with a well-articulated curriculum that reflects the whole of our discussions; 2) it will lead to a lot of hand-wringing, worry, complaints, and maybe even work (in the planning of new courses, etc.) based on something that is unfinished and will certainly change between now and its final version.

### 3. Report from subcommittee (stacking): ...short version...

Results from Fac Survey were mixed (not too surprising). Student survey was recently sent out. Subcommittee plans to pursue this topic over the summer (???) and come up with a short report to GACK & CAC by fall 2012.

### 4. Approval of proposed new form for regular classes to be held as 'individ studies'

### 5. Proposed Academic Calendars, cont. : need a process to create BEST Wintermester solutions

### 6. PROPOSAL TO CHANGE DISQUAL AND PROBATION TO INCLUDE SUMMER

(we need to create a strategy for this one, too, beyond "Deal with it next year") ...

#### SUGGESTED REVISED LANGUAGE:

PROBATION: Undergraduate students – Students who's cumulative and/or semester GPA falls below 2.0 after each ~~fall and spring~~ semester will be put on academic probation. Students on probation may not enroll in more than 13 credits a semester, unless an exception is granted by the appropriate dean. Probation may include additional conditions, as determined by the dean of the college or school in which the student's major is located. Students on probation will be referred for developmental advising/education and/or to an advising or support counseling center. The student will work with an academic advisor to prepare an academic plan for achieving a higher GPA; the advisor is responsible for forwarding this plan to the appropriate dean. A student on probation will not be allowed to register unless the academic plan is on file. Removal from probation requires the student's cumulative and semester GPAs to be at least 2.0.

[Academic Disqualification Note from Mike: again, why do we distinguish "regular" semesters from summer? Summer is Financial Aid eligible and counts toward degree programs....]

#### SUGGESTED REVISED LANGUAGE:

Undergraduate students -- Undergraduate students on probation whose semester ~~and/or~~ cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 for two consecutive ~~regular (fall/spring or spring/fall)~~ semesters will be placed on academic disqualification. Academically disqualified students may continue their enrollment at UAF only as non-degree students, are limited to 10 credits per semester and are ineligible for most types of financial aid.

### 7. THREE Motions from Core Review Committee for our consideration (as modified)

Motion#1: Submitted by Core Review Committee 19 March 2012

The UAF Faculty Senate moves to adopt the recommendation of the Core Review Committee that BOTH the lower-division communication requirement and the lower-division writing sequence that are specified in the Core Curriculum will all be prerequisites for all "W", "O"- and "O/2" designated courses.

EFFECTIVE:

Fall 2012 and/or upon chancellor's approval

RATIONALE: To remove inconsistencies in the requirements for lower-division communication and writing courses as prerequisites for all upper-division "W", "O" and "O/2" designated courses.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Motion#2: (looking for final approval—wording has not changed since 4 April meeting**

The UAF Faculty Senate moves to adopt the recommendation of the Core Review Committee requiring a syllabus statement for Oral Intensive O and O/2 courses.

EFFECTIVE: Fall 2012 and/or upon chancellor's approval

RATIONALE: The Core Review Committee's assessment of W and O course syllabi has found that there is frequent confusion amongst some faculty members about the general and specific requirements for the three options of the oral intensive O designator and for the single O/2 designator. The inclusion of this statement in a course syllabus will make explicit the general course requirements for the O or O/2 designation and provide a reference location for the numerous specific requirements. Inclusion of this statement will make the syllabus requirement for the O and O/2 courses consistent with the existing syllabus requirement statement for Writing Intensive W courses, per Faculty Senate Meeting #109 on May 6, 2002. No new course requirements result from this action. These syllabus requirements should be added to the Faculty Senate's "UAF Syllabus Requirements."

\*\*\*\*\*

**Syllabus Statement Regarding the Oral-Intensive (O) Requirement**

***This statement, or a statement similar to it, MUST appear in the syllabus of each "O" or "O/2" course. Courses failing to provide this information jeopardize their continuing status as "O" or "O/2" courses.***

**"This course is designated as Oral-Intensive (O). This designation means that the "O" or "O/2" is evident in the course number on the syllabus (e.g., EducationF452 O). The designation applies to upper-division courses. ORAL ACTIVITIES IN THIS COURSE WILL FOLLOW THESE RULES:**

- \* A minimum of 15 percent of the graded work in the O course (7.5 percent for "O/2") will be based on effectiveness of oral communications.
- \* Students will receive intermediate instructor assistance in developing presentational competency.
- \* Students will utilize their communication competency across the span of the semester, not just in a final project.
- \* Students will receive instructor feedback on the success of their efforts at each stage of preparing their presentations. "

***In addition, THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS APPROPRIATE FOR THE PARTICULAR 'O' OPTION REPRESENTED BY THE COURSE (FOUND AT <http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/faculty-senate/curriculum/course-degree-procedures-/guidelines-for-core-desig/>) WILL BE LISTED.***

**Motion#3: (wording modified slightly since 4 April meeting)**

The UAF Faculty Senate moves to amend the UAF Faculty Senate Bylaws, Section 3, Article V: Committees, subsection E, Permanent Committees.6. and to approve the Core Review Committee's authority to revoke O or W status (Oral intensive or Writing intensive designator) for classes following the second consecutive time that they fail to pass review by the Core Review Committee.

EFFECTIVE: Fall 2012 and/or upon Chancellor's approval

RATIONALE: Many classes with the O or W designator fail multiple assessments by the Core Review Committee. The appropriate Dean and Department Chair are then informed of the need to bring syllabi into conformity with the O or W guidelines, but often no changes are made. It is hoped that this will spur action.

CAPS = Addition [ | ] = Deletion

### SECTION 3 (ART V: COMMITTEES), SUBSECTION E., PERMANENT COMMITTEES:

6. The Core Review Committee reviews and approves courses submitted by the appropriate school/college curriculum councils for their inclusion in the core curriculum at UAF. The Core Review Committee coordinates and recommends changes to the core curriculum, develops the process for assessment of the core curriculum, regularly reports on assessment of the core curriculum, monitors transfer guidelines for core courses, acts on petitions for core credit, and evaluates guidelines in light of the total core experience. This committee will also review courses for oral, written, and natural science core classification. **IF THE COMMITTEE DETERMINES THAT A COURSE FAILS TWICE IN A ROW TO MEET O OR W GUIDELINES AS SPECIFIED BY THE FACULTY SENATE, THE COMMITTEE SHALL HAVE THE POWER TO REVOKE O OR W DESIGNATORS FROM THAT COURSE.\* COMMITTEE ACTIONS MADE PRIOR TO MARCH 1 WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE IN THE NEXT YEAR'S CATALOG. DESIGNATORS WILL BE RESTORED AS SOON AS THE COURSE HAS BEEN REAPPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE AS ONCE AGAIN CONFORMING TO O OR W GUIDELINES.**

**\*AS FOUND AT: [HTTP://WWW.UAF.EDU/UAFGOV/FACULTY-SENATE/CURRICULUM/COURSE-DEGREE-PROCEDURES-/GUIDELINES-FOR-CORE-DESIG/](http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/faculty-senate/curriculum/course-degree-procedures-/guidelines-for-core-desig/)**

The committee shall be composed of one faculty member from each of the core component areas: (Social Sciences, English, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Communication, and Library Science) and one faculty member from a non-core component area. Membership on the committee will include an undergraduate student and representatives from the colleges specifically tasked with core assessment.

## 8. COMPLETE KOLLEGE AMURKA proposed resolution

**Submitted by the Student Academic Development and Achievement Committee and the Curricular Affairs Committee and probably will modified more by AdComn.**

### **RESOLUTION:**

The UAF Faculty Senate admires the goals of, but nevertheless rejects joining "Complete College America". Instead, the UAF Faculty Senate urges the Alaska State Legislature and the administration of the University of Alaska to support and encourage programs that are tailored to address the goals of Alaska's students, rather than to bind Alaska to a rigid set of one-size-fits-all national rules. Or best strategy is to provide support, preparation, and access to programs and degrees without any real or implied penalty for length of time to degree.

### **MOTIVATION**

- The entire faculty, staff, and administration of the University of Alaska Fairbanks support measures to increase the ability of students to make use of UAF's educational opportunities.
- We note that 40 percent of incoming UAF students are non-traditional, enrolling after a gap of more than one year after high school graduation. A significant number of UAF students hold jobs, are raising families, and juggle a number of other life concerns while attempting to earn a degree, making graduation in four years as a measure of "success" an unrealistic ideal, yet their graduation after a longer time period is a major accomplishment and success for them.
- The UAF Faculty Senate holds that no student should be denied the experience of higher education to meet the student's own definition of success or learning enjoyment, and holds that we should be celebrating the graduation of all our students, not just those who are able to graduate the fastest.
- The University of Alaska Fairbanks should continue to work towards finding better ways to provide accessibility and flexibility for ALL our students to realize their educational goals.

- The one-size-fits-all approach of Complete College America is not appropriate for our student body. The University of Alaska Fairbanks is in the best position to evaluate the needs of its own students and determine ways to meet those needs.
- Complying with the additional reporting requirements of Complete College America would be an additional, unproductive burden on university resources.

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

The Complete College America program was initiated in 2009 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in an effort to enlist state governments, principally the governors, to reform higher education. The program now has additional foundation sponsors. Its goal is to increase completion rates for a “college degree or credential of value” from ~40% to ~60% by 2020. It recruits governors and state legislatures to its cause, seeing the universities and colleges themselves as the impediment to reform. At present, 30 states have joined this program, adopted its goals, and pledged to follow its requirements.

**The stated national problem** is insufficient completion of higher education degrees in the context of an increasing need for workers with post-secondary education. Specific problems cited are a national ~40% graduation rate in college degree and certificate programs, increasing time-to-degree, increasing student debt which grows with time-to-degree, and persistent attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.

**The premise** of the Complete College America program is that best practices/essential steps for increasing completion rates have been identified, but that recalcitrant colleges and universities are invested in current practices and will not change unless paid or forced to do so. State governments, in contrast, have a vested interest in actual success of students and higher education, and also have a great deal of leverage over public colleges and universities. CCA recommends that state governments should force change by requiring their public higher education institutions to adopt these best practices/essential steps. In other words, the idea is to shift higher educational policy-making away from the educational institutions and governing boards (e.g., Board of Regents) to the state legislative and executive branches which will be more responsive to the needs of the state and its students. From the CCA document “The Path Forward”:

- “Institutions have strong incentives to shape reporting to mask failure and avoid confronting problems. States are much more likely than individual institutions to share and publish data to drive reform.”
- “States are the best positioned to ensure reform across systems and campuses by setting goals, establishing uniform measures, and monitoring progress. They can also serve as the most efficient clearinghouses of best practices, allowing for rapid scaling of successful reforms.”
- “Higher education attainment is inextricably linked to future economic success. State leadership will ensure stronger linkages between each state’s economic needs and higher education delivery.”

The Complete College America program issued the 2011 publication *Time is the Enemy*, which primarily advocates for full-time rather than part-time enrollment as a way to decrease time-to-degree, increase graduation rates, and decrease student debt. It also criticizes “excessive course-taking” and remedial coursework as factors that discourage students or hinder students’ ability to complete degrees.

The Complete College America program also issued the 2012 publication *Remediation: Higher Education’s Bridge to Nowhere*. The main theme of this publication is that most students who start in remedial classes ultimately do not graduate, and therefore remediation does not work and represents a dead end for students. It asks “Can an ‘open access’ college be truly open access if it denies so many access to its college-level courses?” Their research “shows that students who skip their remedial assignments do just as well in gateway courses as those who took remediation first.” The report advocates either mainstreaming these students in full-credit

courses with intensive tutoring support or redirecting them to “high-quality career certificate programs that embed extra help in the context of each course and lead to jobs that pay well.”

From the CCA document “Structure and New Models”:

“New models are needed to significantly increase the number of students completing and completing on time. This is systemic reform. While colleges can implement these approaches differently, focusing on different programs and/or segments of the student population, colleges should be encouraged to be responsive to all of these principals, not pick and choose among them.” (emphasis in the original)

The specific recommendations range from the mundane to inane. The full list is many pages long. Below are examples (some are paraphrased):

- Replace semesters with 4-8 week terms, “with fewer courses per term and fewer weeks away from school between the terms.”
- “Utilize year-round attendance; no summers off.”
- Require a prescribed set of courses and course sequencing for each program to reduce the complexity of registration, course selection, and the need for course advising.
- “Compress classroom instruction to reduce seat-time requirements and allow students to proceed at an accelerated pace.” Classroom instruction is to be supplemented by other resources, e.g., online technology.
- “Embed remediation” in regular courses.
- “Require a certain number of credit hours be taken through online courses.”
- “Offer prior learning assessments that allow students to demonstrate mastery of college-level content and test out of and/or earn credits for demonstrated mastery.”
- “Require formal, on-time completion plans for every student upon enrollment, updated annually.”
- “Require that students transferring with associate degrees have junior-level status at the four-year universities.”
- “Enact credit caps of 120 credit hours for a Bachelor’s degree and 60 credit hours for an associate degree so students do not earn excessive numbers of credits to complete a degree (allow exceptions only when necessary to maintain program accreditation).
- “Charge students more for taking excess coursework of more than 12 additional credit hours beyond the credit caps...” [120credits]

Some of the practices discussed by CCA are already in place in Alaska. For example, students who complete general education requirements at any of the three MAUs (UAA, UAF, UAS) can transfer to another MAU with that completion recognized. This is UA Regents’ Policy. Other CCA practices are currently under discussion at UAF. One is the possibility of allowing students to demonstrate mastery of college-level content and waive certain general education (core) requirements, in order to allow students greater flexibility in selecting courses and designing their education while ensuring the intended learning outcomes.

However, some of the CCA requirements would directly contravene educational policies at UAF and system-wide. CCA requires a cap of 120 credit hours for Bachelor’s degrees. In the UA system, Regents’ Policy sets 120 credits as the minimum, not the maximum. Half of UAF’s bachelor’s degrees currently exceed 120 credit hours, including some of its most prominent and successful undergraduate programs. Examples: Education 130 credits, Alaska Native Studies 130 credits, Earth Science 130 credits, Engineering and Mining programs 131-135 credits. There is necessarily a balance between the number of credits/courses to meet the intended learning outcomes for a degree, and the investment of time and resources this requires from both the

university and the student. Undergraduate engineering programs nationwide have a higher course requirement and less room for electives than other majors; this is driven by the technical requirements of engineering, and for CCA to arbitrarily mandate that engineering programs (for example) must cap credit requirements at 120 credits would not be in the best interest of our engineering graduates, potential employers, or the State of Alaska. While engineering programs are accredited and might fall under the exception allowed by CCA, they serve as an easily understood example. Other programs also have discipline-specific reasons for their course requirements.

The Complete College America program is designed to interfere in a major way in the design of education programs in colleges and universities. It is designed as an inflexible, one-size-fits-all program in order to prevent states or higher education institutions from picking and choosing among what it sees as an essential set of prescribed practices. This structure is an attempt to remove options and to direct the educational system from outside, to reorient it toward a specific set of priorities and “uniform metrics.”

We have seen this movie before. In fact, we are living it now. It is called No Child Left Behind. Like the Complete College America, No Child Left Behind sets an ambitious goal for an educational system and imposes a rigid structure and set of requirements to force institutions to adopt its priorities and approaches. For Alaska, many of its provisions are impractical, counterproductive, and distract from other, locally developed solutions that would be more effective. They also crowd out educational experiences that are not deemed to be “essential.” Similarly, the Complete College America program would eliminate much flexibility and choice both in terms of how UAF adapts to a changing world and changing needs of its students, and in terms of options that the students themselves have at UAF.

UAF needs to be able to respond to the needs and goals of its own students, without being constrained by mandates developed for students elsewhere.