

**Curricular Affairs Committee –  
Draft Minutes for Mon., Feb. 9, 2015 – 1-2 p.m. 408 RASM**

Present: Brian Cook, Chair; Ken Abramowicz; Casey Byrne; Rob Duke; Alex Fitts; Linda Hapsmith (audio); Cindy Hardy; Jayne Harvie; Joan Hornig; Stacey Howdeshell; Dennis Moser; Rainer Newberry; Caty Oehring

**I. Approve minutes from January 26 meeting (attached)**

Minutes were approved as submitted for January 26.

**II. Old business**

**A. GERC and “C” –**

- Current plan (motion is in development):
  - **Departments will demonstrate how they address communications learning outcomes (see next bullet) by submitting a communications plan as part of their SLOA plans, and subsequently, by submitting a short summary report addressing how the plan is working (and revising the plan as necessary).**
  - **Each baccalaureate degree program must include, as part of its degree plan, integration of communication at the lower- and upper-division level, as evidenced by baccalaureate graduates’ abilities to address the following four communications-related Learning Outcomes:**
  - **UAF undergraduates will demonstrate effective communication when they are able to:**
    - **Explain disciplinary content using a variety of modes of communication.**
    - **Communicate to audiences in the discipline using appropriate disciplinary conventions.**
    - **Translate disciplinary content to audiences outside the discipline, making disciplinary knowledge relevant to broader communities.**
    - **Integrate feedback from others to enhance or revise communication.**
- How this is tracked: GERC is proposing a committee that would review these programs every 2 years (basically they’d look at each department’s regularly-submitted SLOA reports). Minus the committee, this is similar to how the capstone will be assessed and tracked; however, it may make record-keeping complicated on how individual students are completing these Baccalaureate requirements.
  - If all required communications courses exist within the same department or degree program, this seems like less of an issue. However, if some communications outcomes are being addressed through courses offered by other departments, this seems more complicated.
- Should a C designator still exist – would that assist in tracking this? For instance, if a department identifies 5 courses across its curriculum that provides a given student with communications skills (based on the above outcomes), should each of those have a C designator?

GERC is discussing making the Communication plan part of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA). See the four square bullet points indented and highlighted above.

Reports are already done yearly and submitted every two years. Ken asked about following the 5-year review cycle instead. Alex pointed out the 5-year cycle is different from the SLOA cycle. She and the Provost look at the SLOA now, but want more eyes on it.

The committee discussed how to find out what Communication plans are accomplishing. Rainer thought it would be more manageable to for that to occur at the unit level. Ken noted SOM has its own assessment committee - other units could also do likewise.

Brian will share these ideas with GERC.

The implications of removing the Oral-intensive and Written-intensive designators was discussed. Embedding Communication content throughout programs was discussed, but difficulties in making this auditable were acknowledged. Giving required courses a designator would still be needed.

## **B. GER Buckets to replace PHC**

- GERC Chair Leah Berman attended CLA's Chair Council meeting on Friday to ask departments to submit suggestions for courses that could fulfill the GE requirements. She is also going to reach out to other colleges (especially ANS and School of Management – both already offer current PHC courses). The idea is to begin to solicit options for courses and to have an idea of what the buckets might look like so that, when common GERs are established between UAF, UAA and UAS by the statewide committee, a significant amount of work towards creating the buckets has already been done.
- Obviously, vetting the lists and approval of the change from PHC into buckets in committees and Faculty Senate would still need to happen after we know what the GERs are.
- The other benefit is that instead of saying “there will be buckets,” as we go through the approval process, specific classes in the buckets will be part of the proposal.
- The process for approving the individual courses populating each bucket has not yet been decided.

### **Current General Education University Regulations:**

- Written Communication Skills                      6 credits minimum
- Oral Communication Skills                        3 credits minimum
- Humanities/Social Sciences                      15 credits minimum [3 unspecified]
  - At least 3 credits in the arts
  - At least 3 credits in general humanities
  - At least 6 credits in the social sciences, from 2 different disciplines
- Quantitative Skills/Natural Sciences            10 credits minimum [3 unspecified]
  - At least 3 credits in mathematics

- At least 4 credits in the natural sciences, including a laboratory

**TOTAL**

**34 credits minimum**

Perspectives on the Human Condition	Current University Regulations
HIST F100X--Modern World History	"broad survey courses which provide the student with exposure to the theory, methods and data of the social sciences"
ECON/PS F100X--Political Economy	
ANTH/SOC F100X--Individual, Society and Culture	
ENGL/FL F200X--World Literatures	"courses that introduce the student to the humanistic fields of language, arts, literature, history, and philosophy within the context of their traditions"
ART/MUS/THR F200X, HUM F201X, ANS F202X--Aesthetic Appreciation	"an introduction to the visual arts and performing arts as academic disciplines as opposed to those that emphasize acquisition of skills"
ETHICS (BA F323X, COMM F300X, JUST F300X, NRM F303X, PS F300X, PHIL F322X)	[UAF-specific requirement]

The committee talked about the Ethics requirement disappearing if it is not part of the requirements. Departments have been asked what courses they consider to fulfill the GERs.

**C. Statewide Gen Ed committee updates** –Rainer can fill us in on any updates he has about the committee or its process.

Rainer has communicated with the members by email, but hasn't heard back from anyone yet. They are supposed to have a report due back in April.

**D. Probation/disqualification policy** – still on hold.

**E. Aerospace engineering minor update** – Michael Hatfield has amended the proposal to remove the sentence about a future new program, and to correct the error about the minimum passing grade (should be C-). This minor will be on the agenda for the Ad Comm meeting this month for consideration for the March Senate meeting. Michael is prepared to be in attendance at the Senate meeting to address questions, assuming the motion is brought forward for consideration.

AE Minor is on the March Faculty Senate agenda.

**III. New business**

**A. Core Class Compression in Wintermester and Maymester (Referred from Core Review)**

1. Core Review Committee has considered a course compression proposal for SOC 100X, which generated a lot of debate.

2. From email from Leah Berman, Core Review Chair: “We had a long discussion in Core Review about the wisdom of trying to compress SOC 100X into 10 days as a wintermester course. In the final analysis, Core Review did vote to approve the compression—in large part because ANTH 100X had already been approved for such a compression (!) in the past. However, there was significant concern as to whether it is really, truly possible to complete a semester’s worth of intellectual engagement in 10 days; while it is technically possible to complete the in-class minutes, it is not possible to complete the typical “two-hours-out-of-class-per hour-in-class” outside work.
3. The current Maymester schedule offers the following Core courses: ANTH 100X, ART 200X, MUS 200X, JUST 300X, PHIL 322X, PS F100X, which means all of these courses have previously been approved for course compression. They are also PHC-fulfilling courses.
4. The issue is one of precedent: since previous committees have approved the compression of these courses, in the case of SOC 100X, Core Review saw fit to approve the compression proposed.
5. This becomes relevant again as the PHC courses are to be replaced with bucket lists to fulfill GE requirements. A change does not NEED to be made, but it seems a good time to discuss the issue Core Review raises to see if CAC/the Senate feel any change or clarifications should be developed/implemented alongside new GE requirements.
6. It is important to note that a significant percentage of 2015’s Wintermester and Maymester offerings were/are compressed Core courses.

One of the main problems with compressed courses is the accreditation issue concerning the requirement of 2 hours of outside work that is required for every 1 hour in the classroom.

It was acknowledged that the instructors who are teaching ‘Mester courses seem happy with the outcome. It seems to work well for some types of courses. The students seem to be stronger, as do the instructors, but the numbers are too low for a true sample.

The bucket list scenario will open up the compression issue; Core Review Committee wants guidelines.

Seemed to be general consensus for letting instructors self-select how they will teach a course in a compressed environment.

Rainer provided a copy of 2 documents created the last time the issues was raised; one is a report from an instructor of a Maymester course, the other a chart of success rates from Wintermester 2012 classes. These are attached.

## Comparative Analysis of Maymester 2012 and Fall 2012 US History Classes (HIST 131)

### Notable differences between the classroom experiences in Maymester and Fall 2012 were:

- No. of students 10 v. 37 who finished
- Attrition 0 v. about 20%
- Grades
  - All students in the Maymester class earned A's or B's
  - In fall there were 14 A's, 9 B's, 6 C's, 2 D's and 4 F's (2 outstanding)

### My sense of the caliber of the students

- In Maymester the students were medium to strong in ability; all were disciplined, knew how to study and wanted to achieve; none was a superstar.
- In Fall I had a much wider range, with 3-4 very strong (clearly graduate school potential); several strong, along with being disciplined, so they know how to earn A's; many in the middle; and quite a few who either have no self-discipline (very poor attendance, don't do the reading) and/or are not prepared for or committed to succeeding in college.

### Regarding participation

- Maymester: all participated actively, at least when we did "small group discussions"
- Fall: about 1/3 participated rather to quite actively.
  - I didn't offer as many opportunities that basically forced students to participate actively in Fall.
  - In the larger class there was less accountability. It was much easier to never say anything.

### Regarding writing

- Both classes benefitted from my incorporation of fast writes as a part of the class routine. I believe that I had the strongest set of final test essays that I have ever had in my Fall class.
- Thus, an innovation that I began in Maymester 2011, because I knew that I needed to vary the routine more (because of the 5 hour days), has proved to be beneficial, for Maymester, & for students in my Fall class.

### Regarding contact/connection between professor and students

- I felt as though a stronger rapport developed with a larger percentage of my Maymester class.
- On the other hand, I have a TA in the fall, and students often times connect with the TA more than the professor. I do know that several of the Fall students sought help from my TA, who is very accessible and helpful.

### Regarding the paper requirement on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

- In Maymester I had to give an extension to the following Tuesday so students had time to read and respond to the book (it's over 500 pages)
- In Fall I also gave an extension of a week (but the paper was still due within the semester). Several students simply did not write the paper, and several wrote rather poor papers.
- Overall, the Maymester class wrote better papers on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. I believe this is because they were more disciplined students.

### Conclusions:

- After having taught twice during Maymester (a 400 level class the first year and a 100 level class the second year), I am convinced that the concept of Maymester is pedagogically sound for the following reasons and under the following conditions:
  - The students are self-selected and they tend to be more disciplined than the average student.
  - The "immersion" concept seems to be beneficial; students are focused, rather than scattered as they try to balance obligations for various classes.
  - The instructor designs the class to keep it lively and engaging.
- I cannot say whether students retained more from one class or the other.
- I have heard from colleagues in Political Science and History that their Maymester experiences were positive also. One said he thought it was because the students were higher caliber.

**I'm leaving my comments from Maymester below, in case they should be of interest.**

My initial thoughts (May 25) after last day of class

- The students (there were 10) were especially engaged, and that contributed a lot to the success of the class.
- I didn't have a single really passive student
  - One did fall asleep on 3 days, but he was very bright and managed very well anyway.
  - Three students were fairly passive, but I engaged everyone through "roundtable" discussions in which everyone had to participate and having students read sections of primary source documents
- The five hour days kept me on my toes; I had to think quite a bit about how to keep the students engaged. I was quite sensitive to when I'd been doing standard lecturing too long, and then I'd mix it up with an activity ( "roundtable discussion," video clip, fast write).
- The fast writes, which I haven't done in my regular classes are very useful.
  - They force the students to process and integrate content they've received in a number of forms (reading, lecture, in-class reading of primary docs, and video clips).
  - They also are very good practice for test essays.
  - I think the students did better than average students do on their test essays because of this practice.
  - I gave rather copious and next day feedback, which is rather labor intensive, but it was worth it.
  - My initial thoughts are that this was successful.
- I did have to give them an extension on the paper they're writing on Uncle Tom's Cabin.
  - There was no way they could finish the book and write a good paper while also keeping up with the other reading and being prepared for quizzes and tests.
- Having just 10 students was ideal.
  - They developed a good rapport with one another.
  - Each time I came back from a break they were already there and chatting with one another.
  - They spoke up on some rather sensitive/controversial topics (e.g., current day implications).
  - I'm not sure that would have happened in a larger class.
- All students completed the class (one had to take an incomplete, but finished by the end of the summer).

**On the final day I took 10-15 minutes to get their feedback on the class. Here are questions & their responses****Why did you choose to take U.S. History?**

Ed majors – required      Degree requirement, minor      Choice

**Why take a Maymester course?**

- Fun – liked idea of intense short course – focusing on one topic at a time      Quick credits
- Convenience – no other time      Knew it would be a small class, and that that would be beneficial

**How many are first timers in a Maymester course?**      7 first timers (of 10)**What has worked well?**

- No fluff      Felt it was "honest" history, not sugar coated      Multiple perspectives
- Variety of methods kept things lively, kept us awake

**What could have worked better?**

- Too many multiple multiples! (Multiple choice questions with multiple combinations of options for responses) = (Tests were a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and essays.)
- Uncle Tom's Cabin would have been impossible if we didn't get an extension on submitting the paper
- Having an actual lunch hour and going to 4:00 or starting earlier (some, not others)
  - Some thought this (10:00 to 3:00 with 15-20 minutes to get lunch) was best arrangement.

**Did you have the syllabus and start the reading ahead of time?**      One student did**How much learning took place?**

- "It's like immersion – I learned more than I usually do"      It's easier to retain, focusing on one class
- 9/9 appreciated being able to focus on one class at a time      "too much reading" (was required)
- One student said she read more than she usually does because she felt the pressure to keep up.
- No room for procrastination (thus the student was more disciplined and felt she learned more).

WINTERMESTER 2012

3 credits

		A	B	C	D	F	W	NB	AU
39980	ANTH 100X	22	3	0	0	4	0	0	0
39983	MUS 200X	28	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
40952	MUS 200X	12	5	0	0	0	1	0	0
39984	PHIL 322X	20	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
40922	PHIL 322X	6	8	1	2	0	0	1	0
40878	PSY 455	10	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
40710	FILM 295	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1