

## **Curricular Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes of Aug. 26, 2015**

Present: Ken Abramowicz, Jennie Carroll, Mike Earnest, Alex Fitts, Doug Goering, Carol Gering, Catherine Hanks (Zoom), Joan Hornig, Cindy Hardy, Eileen Harney, Jayne Harvie, Ginny Kinne, Jenny Liu, Lisa Lunn, Rainer Newberry, Caty Oehring, Patrick Plattet, Holly Sherouse

Absent: Eric Collins

### 1. Election / approval of CAC Chair

Jennie Carroll convened the meeting and was confirmed shortly thereafter as the new Chair. (Ken A. had re-examined his commitments for the academic year and decided he would not be able to continue as chair or co-chair.)

### 2. Approval / modification of agenda (both items on agenda and order of discussion items).

The agenda was approved as submitted.

### 3. Time/dates/locations of future CAC meetings.

It was determined that Wednesday, 1-2 PM would be a good meeting time for everyone present. Future dates and locations will be determined and shared via email.

### 4. Update on general education requirements and attached resolution. (Rainer will lead the discussion of this item.)

#### **RESOLUTION PASSED BY FACULTY SENATE AT THE MAY 2015 MEETING**

WHEREAS, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Faculty Senate recognizes the need to revise the Core Curriculum; and

WHEREAS, the Senate wishes to widen student choice in the university's general education; and

WHEREAS, the General Education Revitalization Committee has proposed a "classification list" system (lists of approved courses which fulfill arts, humanities, and social science general education requirements) to replace the current Perspectives on the Human Condition (PHC) courses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that during the 2015-2016 academic year the UAF Faculty Senate will adopt a classification list system that will meet general education requirements in arts, humanities, and social sciences in lieu of the currently-mandated PHC courses, with the new system to take full effect as of the 2016-17 Course Catalog.

Rainer recapped the resolution passed last May, which puts both Faculty Senate and Curricular Affairs Committee on the hook for taking action to develop "bucket lists" of courses to fulfill the GERs, and replace the PHC system UAF has been using as part of its Core Curriculum.

The work needs to be done within a tight timeline: by March for both the Catalog deadline, and so students are able to register for courses for the following fall semester.

Rainer also recapped the current system-wide situation with the existing General Education Requirements contained in the UA Regulations. Changes to the GERs in current regulation that were recommended by a system-wide committee over a year ago, have stalled mainly because UAA is satisfied with the regulations as they exist. (And all three Faculty Senates have to approve the proposed changes before they can take place.) UAA will discuss the proposed changes at their September meeting, so we hope to learn more in the coming weeks.

Pending decisions about whether or not to change the GERs regulation will influence how UAF can proceed with the courses it proposes to fulfill the GERs requirements.

One of the current sticking points is that the current GERs define History as *humanities*, while the UAF History Department sees it as *social science*. This has implications on transfer policy. Another sticking point is that UAF supports using Art courses which include skills acquisition, believing that that the majority of these cover art theory as well. UAA disagrees and only supports using Art theory courses to fulfill the GERs.

The consensus in the committee was to move forward with the intent stated in the resolution.

The committee discussed the proposed discussion item (copied below) and agreed to bring it forward to the September Faculty Senate meeting.

#### **PROPOSED DISCUSSION ITEM FOR FAC SENATE SEPT 2015 MEETING**

The Faculty Senate moves to replace the upper division Oral (O) and Written (W) requirement with the requirement that each degree program must satisfy the following Communications Learning Outcomes within the degree program:

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.

Each baccalaureate degree program must submit a Communications Plan that demonstrates how students will achieve each of the learning outcomes as part of the requirements of the major or degree program. Not all courses or requirements need to support every outcome; however, all the outcomes must be met by the completion of the degree.

EFFECTIVE: Fall 2016

RATIONALE: The GERC committee and Curricular Affairs, as part of their work to revise UAF's core requirements, propose replacing the current W/O designators with a requirement that students achieve the Communications Learning Outcomes that are integrated into each baccalaureate degree program and major.

1. The responsibility for ensuring that students achieve these Communications Learning Outcomes is being moved from the University level (via specific O and W courses) to the department level (via the requirements of the degree programs), and from a specific degree requirement (taking two Ws and one

O) to a requirement that is achieved by the student completing the degree requirements associated with their program.

2. To ensure student achievement of these Communications Learning Outcomes, each department will demonstrate how their program addresses these learning outcomes by developing a Communications Plan that integrates communication into each degree or program, typically via a collection of lower and/or upper level courses and/or non-curricular degree requirements chosen to meet the needs of the particular program. This should be done in such a way that all the outcomes are met somewhere in the courses required for the completion of a degree. The Communications Plan for each degree will describe the collection of courses (both in and possibly out of the department) and other requirements (if any) and how they contribute to meeting these outcomes.

3. Departments will submit the Communications Plan for each degree program as part of their SLOA plans, and subsequently, submit a short summary report addressing how the plan is working (and revising the plan as necessary). Once a department has submitted a plan, which will include a required path/collection of paths through the degree wherein students will achieve the Communications Learning Outcomes, then all students in that degree will achieve the Communications Learning Outcomes by virtue of satisfying the degree requirements of that program.

4. Committees will be formed within each school or college (and made up of at least 1 member) to regularly review communications plans submitted by programs.

5. An additional checkbox will be added to Major/Minor course change forms asking “Does this change affect Communications Outcomes Plans?”, so that departments are aware of the impact of potential changes.

6. Existing O and W designators will remain in place (if appropriate) for a period of 2 years from Fall 2016 to facilitate students under catalogs with O/W requirements.

7. Departments should submit as part of their Communications Plans a clarification for how they will handle the transition away from O/W designators for students who fall under a catalog prior to Fall 2016.

8. A web page (similar to the SLOA) will be established where communications plans are collected and disseminated across the university.

The sticky points of the proposal above have included (in past discussions):

- It nowhere states that students will be able to write or speak as an outcome.
- Translating disciplinary content to audiences outside the discipline was another point of contention (3rd bullet point).
- Integrate feedback from others (2nd bullet point).

Whether or not the O and W designators should or will disappear (eventually) with this proposal was discussed at great length. There would be implications on departments that rely upon courses from other departments to fulfill the oral and written requirements. Vice Provost Fitts described the assessment team proposal she is bringing forward and the possibility of that group looking at Communication plans from the units.

The timeline and process for making changes at the department / school and college level was discussed.

The committee agreed to move the proposal forward to Faculty Senate as a discussion item only.

5. Update on UA academic calendar changes.

Mike Earnest provided a summary about the work of the common system calendar committee. He talked about the draft straw-man common calendar for AY17 (a handout at the meeting). The spring semester will start much earlier than it has in the past, but that won't happen every calendar year. Length of the semester and the credit hour was discussed. The calendar committee still needs to discuss commencement. Timing of spring break was discussed, and Mike noted that Saichi Oba has reached out to the school districts.

Mike will take feedback from CAC back to the calendar committee, and he mentioned Saichi will take emails and is willing to talk to the committee.

The role of Faculty Senate policy in the calendar was briefly talked about.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2: 15 PM.