

Curricular Affairs Committee
Meeting Minutes for November 11, 2015, 1-2:30 pm

Present: Ken Abramowicz, Casey Byrne, Jennie Carroll, Mike Earnest, Alex Fitts, Catherine Hanks, Cindy Hardy, Eileen Harney, Jayne Harvie, Ginny Kinne (Zoom), Jenny Liu, Rainer Newberry, Patrick Plattet

Absent: Doug Goering, Joan Hornig, Lisa Lunn, Holly Sherouse

1. Approval/Amendment of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as submitted.

2. Approval of minutes from October 28

The minutes were approved as submitted.

3. Old Business

a. Capstone Requirement [Background documents posted online on CAC page.]

The Faculty Senate motion requiring that baccalaureate degrees include a capstone experience was passed in fall of 2014. It goes into effect in fall of 2016. Alex requested that the committee find out which programs already have a capstone experience, and which do not. Per the motion language, copies are supposed to be on file at the deans' offices. Discussion addressed how to verify that capstones are actually in place and by what means copies might be obtained.

The committee then discussed who's responsible for providing guidelines for programs that still need to develop capstone experiences. The motion specifies that it is the responsibility of each department, program, or college / school to create, deliver, evaluate and assess their capstone experience. The motion also contains general suggestions for what might comprise a capstone experience and provides examples. Generally, the committee was not interested in creating more extensive guidelines than those already contained in the motion. They did not think Faculty Senate had the authority to "micro-manage" by attempting to go into further detail, agreeing that could more effectively be done at the department level.

Mike E. noted that for capstones comprised of courses, a designator could be applied in Banner. This would be useful for pulling reports on those courses, and for coding in DegreeWorks. This would not be applicable for non-course capstones (e.g., portfolios, exhibitions).

Cindy H., recapping how Communication plans will be tied to SLOAs and program review, suggested the same could be similarly applied to the capstones. Alex noted that Communication plans, however, will be reviewed by college / school curriculum councils, and then asked to whom departments will show that they have a capstone experience. Mike suggested a degree audit form could be used; and, Ken suggested a statement to that effect on the SLOAs. Jennie noted that capstones are already integrated into some programs.

Discussion followed on who is responsible to see that capstones are in place for degree programs. Is it the dean's office, or are they simply keeping records on file? There was general agreement that the department level would be most effective in terms of reviewing a capstone experience and confirming its adequacy for the program. Should oversight happen at the college / school curriculum councils?

Alex will distribute a request to the deans, asking them to remind their programs that the capstone experience needs to be file by fall 2016 (if it isn't already).

Various means to determine if the capstone requirement is met by graduating students were discussed. If not integrated into a program's coursework, the Registrar's Office needs to be able to verify in some way what the requirement is and that it has been met. And, if not embedded in coursework, it should be specified in the degree requirements listed in the Catalog (and scribed into DegreeWorks).

In some cases, departments require portfolio development throughout a series of courses, and have a final course for evaluating those. (This could be done with a zero-credit course, as well.) Marking capstone requirements with a special designator in the Catalog was discussed.

The first thing to be done is to remind the departments about the requirement. Existing capstones should be identified and could be marked in the Catalog by means of a symbol. Mike thought it would be entirely appropriate if the Registrar took the lead and directly asked each department to identify their capstone experience. He also noted that the requirement should be included on curriculum format forms for programs.

Mike agreed to report back to the committee in about a month, and Alex said she would still provide a reminder to the deans. March is the deadline for getting program changes into the Catalog. Depending upon the results gathered by Mike, they'll address the timeline for programs that don't have a capstone in place.

b. Probation actions based on summer performance (Alex/Mike)

Alex noted that previously they'd discussed not putting students on probation if they'd taken four credits or less (unless their cumulative GPA fell below 2.0). Some problems have since been identified with that approach. For example, a student could take only one class for successive semesters, fail them every time, and not be put on probation. She met with Mike and Holly, and they discussed another strategy. UAA uses a warning semester. If a student has one semester (regardless of the number of credits taken in that semester) where their GPA falls below 2.0, but their cumulative GPA does not fall below 2.0, they are warned. She shared a chart showing what UAA and UAS do in terms of warning semesters.

Mike supported this strategy of a three-tier academic path to probation or disqualification because it's easier to institute in Banner, and it aligns with the other two universities. It also

simplifies transfer of credits. And, it simplifies the cases where a student taking classes at more than one university is on probation at one, but not the other.

Another advantage is that fall, spring and summer semesters are treated alike. Mike clarified that the warnings do appear on transcripts. But, beyond that, it does not restrict the number of credits they can take. Ramifications for degree vs. non-degree seeking students were discussed, along with some of the anomalies that occur in summer, and with high school students taking college courses.

A motion will be needed to make the change to this three-tier system. (It affects page 47 of the Catalog.) Alex will consult with Mike and create the motion. It can be routed electronically for approval by the committee.

There was some discussion about whether or not to differentiate between degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking students. UAA and UAS do not differentiate between them with regard to their probation policy. It was decided not to differentiate between the two, which helps alignment with the other two universities.

c. Minor in Major Motion

The committee agreed on edits to the current language on page 127 of the Catalog concerning Minors. The changes would help clarify the requirement of a Minor with the BA degree, and resolve the issue of double-counting course credits toward the BA and Minor.

Jennie asked if students in programs like Education (where the Minor is embedded in the degree) would need to start declaring their Minor. Alex said that would be the cleanest procedure. But, Rainer noted that this is not a stated requirement anywhere.

Mike noted the Registrar's Office will start reaching out to BA students to declare their Minor; and will also reach out to students pursuing other types of baccalaureate degrees. This way they can be coded into DegreeWorks for the students. They are also adding the declaration of a Minor or a degree concentration to the student application. It can be easily changed during the student's academic career.

Language was proposed for the motion that would require students in a BA program to declare a minor with the Office of Admissions and the Registrar. Some brief discussion followed about a deadline for doing so, but it was agreed that the requirement would be self-policing through DegreeWorks. The entire process for declaring the minor will be electronic and students won't have to gather signatures. (However, students will still need signature approval for the approved elective courses required by some minors.)

Alex agreed to word-smith the motion language and send it out electronically to the committee for voting.

- d. CAC Goals AY 15/16 update [This document is posted online at CAC page.]

For the next meeting, it was decided to discuss the TechPrep issue; the grades appeal policy (which SADAC is done discussing); and the GERs alignment (math and science).

4. New Business

- a. CAC GER Subcommittee Report from November 4 (attached)

The committee continues to work on guidelines for the humanities and social science courses. The report outlines the progress on the guidelines the committee has made so far.

5. Information items

- a. O/W Motion passed by FS 11/9 [copies were provided]
- b. GER Motion passed by FS 11/9 [copies were provided]

Regarding the GER motion, it was noted that the wish at the Faculty Senate was to keep the Ethics requirement at UAF. The motion was amended on the Senate floor to make that clear, though the Ethics requirement is over and above the basic GERs.

After the information items were mentioned, there was brief discussion about the TechPrep program, how it's managed, and how the issue had been raised to Faculty Senate. Alex mentioned that the UA president has instructed UAF to work with the school district on early college programs for high schools. They will need to discuss how teachers in high schools are credentialed to teach college-level courses. In some cases, UAF faculty teach courses for the high schools. Some of the credentials required of UAF adjuncts will carry over to this scenario. The school district wishes to have their faculty teach the college courses; and the other side of the issue is that UAF faculty are not paid to teach at the high schools.

The aroma of fresh-brewed coffee wafted into the room, overpowering everyone's desire to continue discussing the non-trifling minutiae of the day. The meeting was quite hastily adjourned.