UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES (Amended)

February 6, 2019

2:00-3:30 pm

****ACC 312****

I.   UCOC NOVEMBER 2018 MINUTES
    (Note that December and January meetings were not held.)

    - *Attachment: UCOC November 2018 Minutes*

    ➔ **APPROVED,** with minor edits.

II. OLD BUSINESS

    A. USC Attendance Policy and Documentation (Ginger Clark, Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET))

    DISCUSSED SEPTEMBER, 2018 Clark reported that instructional designers who work in the CET regularly find that instructors award course points for attendance. Efforts to guide the instructors effectively are hindered because the materials that refer to attendance on the Curriculum Office website are neither definitive nor entirely clear. Clark noted that, as an instructional design best practice, points that count toward completion of a course should be attached to an assignment or activity – not for attendance – though there may be a struggle to conform within some of the professional schools that teach their own best practices related to attendance and participation as part of their curriculum. Brian Head, AHS co-chair, noted that the policy is understood to mean attendance may not count as a basic assessable component of the grade, but that non-attendance may be used as basis for docking the overall grade when stated in the syllabus. He pointed out the a justification and potential value for docking a grade for attendance relates to an effort to cultivate a community setting and to secure the benefits thereof, while not necessarily considering attendance an assessable component as strictly.

    Robin Romans, Associate Vice Provost, pointed out that the confusion, especially concerning CET's work and perspective, may result from USC simultaneously disallowing attendance to be a graded component while also allowing a final grade to be docked for non-attendance. He contended that this is appropriate, however, to support cases in which the instructor needs the flexibility to lower the overall grade beyond a grade reduction in any one assignment – for instance, when a course is set up such that if the final exam is missed then the student will not be allowed to pass. Romans explained that in his experience, such attendance policies as stated in the syllabus may well never be called on to be enforced, but being present in the syllabus does act to promote the notion of community participation and to convey most clearly what is expected of the student.

    Additional points were discussed, such as attendance considerations related to the contact hour policy, excused versus unexcused absences, and variations among USC's uniquely diverse range of disciplines and needs.

Ultimately, Clark maintained that, whether or not UCOC and CET will take a closer look at USC's position on grading attendance, in the meantime a necessary first step would be to establish consistency across all posted materials and documents. John DeMartini, Curriculum Coordination Office, agreed and noted that there has been an uptick in academic units asking for a policy that is stated in a definitive and accessible way.

Mak thanked the committee for the thorough input and agreed that the initial step will be to work to make materials and documentation consistent. He asked DeMartini to research previous instances of attendance policy language and present the findings at a future meeting for further review.

DISCUSSED NOVEMBER 7, 2018 Members reviewed the previous instances of attendance policy language that was compiled by the Curriculum Office. Chair Chi Mak suggested that the committee finalize a baseline policy, which could then be adopted and published where appropriate. A member pointed out the usage of "generally not" and wondered if stronger language may be suitable, but other members responded that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary for justified cases. Mak questioned whether limits or guidelines should be devised for when instructors choose to enforce a non-attendance policy. Members agreed that the instructor should have autonomy in this regard in order to accommodate a greater variety of innovative course configurations. The baseline participation and attendance policy will be voted on at the next meeting.

PROPOSED FEBRUARY, 2019 Per previous discussion, the updated participation and attendance policy will read (amended to reflect version provided by Associate Vice Provost Robin Romans):

> Guidelines on course participation and attendance: In general, participation should MUST not exceed 15% of the total course grade. Where it does, the syllabus should clearly indicate what is expected to earn full credit. No portion of the grade should be awarded for class attendance but non-attendance can be the basis for lowering the grade, when clearly stated on the syllabus.

➔ **APPROVED PRELIMINARILY**, pending clarifying edits.

B. International Partnership/Joint Programs (UCOC/OSP, Provost's Office, Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office)

DISCUSSED NOVEMBER, 2018 Chair Chi Mak acknowledged the ongoing discussion surrounding these issues. Megan Chan, Financial Aid and Compliance, mentioned that her office is updating their review process to include tracking OSP program reviews in the pipeline so that her team is kept aware of continuing off-campus programs. Chan said the Globalization Working Group (which is a subcommittee of the university's Compliance and Ethics Committee) is going to continue meeting under the leadership of Harper Wells in the Office of Compliance, and one of their goals is essentially to develop a partnership checklist. Mak noted that previous MOUs written for partnership programs may not have been specific enough to encompass the needs of university-level review. Chan agreed, noting that at least the presence of an MOU would indicate when such a checklist would be relevant. Chan offered to report back as the Globalization Working Group meetings continue.

POSTPONED until the Globalization Working Group has met. Megan Chan will keep UCOC updated.

C. Inconsistent Treatment of Degree/Major Credit and GPA (Matt Bemis, Associate Registrar, Degree Progress and Curriculum Services)

DISCUSSED NOVEMBER, 2018 At the call for additional business, Bemis mentioned an inconsistency and lack of clarification in some instances where courses are labeled as *not for major credit*, or *not for degree credit*. He explained that, at the undergraduate level, the practice has been to remove from the GPA courses labeled as not for degree credit, when the notation specifically applies to student matriculated to certain programs. He cited ACCT 410, which is not available for degree credit to business majors. However, students in multiple bachelor's programs are allowed to retain the credit in the cumulative GPA calculation, based on a long-standing application of the rule in the Registrar's Office. He said that because this course is at the 400 level, it was suggested that, while the course would not apply to the total hour requirement in the program referenced, it should perhaps be always included it in the cumulative GPA.

The other instance referenced was at the graduate level, in particular a graduate statistics course specifically labeled as not available for graduate credit for certain majors. Bemis noted that, as it is a graduate-level course, and the course would also not have been removed from the cumulative GPA had the student had an additional master's program whereby the course could apply, it seems the same standard should apply here. He suggested that it might be a good idea to review the definitions of not available for major credit, and not available for degree credit, and their impact on students enrolled in those courses.

DECIDED FEBRUARY, 2019 UCOC supported the efforts to standardize the treatment of these courses and their affect on the GPA. Given that there is no language advertising that coursework not applicable to the major/degree will be removed from the GPA in the first place, Degree Progress intends to discontinue the practice internally and will monitor for pushback that warrants further review by UCOC.

D. Bovard College Master's Programs (Chi Mak, Chair, on behalf of Viterbi School of Engineering)

DISCUSSED FEBRUARY, 2019 In December, the Viterbi School of Engineering contacted a member of UCOC expressing concerns that master's programs offered by the Bovard College include content that appears to have significant overlap with those offered in other programs, including Viterbi's, and the quality of the Bovard College's programs appear to be disparate from existing programs that pre-dated Bovard's. Mak reported on a meeting, which was also attended by SES Chair Geoff Shiflett and CCO staff John DeMartini, with a Viterbi representative.

Mak recognized that UCOC does not customarily call for the re-review of university-approved curricula. Associate Vice Provost Robin Romans suggested that academic reviews are under the purview of UCAR, and Bovard College programs should be and will be reviewed as part of the regular UCAR cycle.

Associate Vice Provost Robin Romans also noted that Bovard College's mission was uniquely designed to boost access to higher education, improve and uphold the surrounding community and underserved populations, and to grow additional scholarships and funding. He said the programs he reviewed for WSCUC purposes were crafted in consultation with other units where there might be overlap in the relevant fields, and that the proposals were carefully presented and well described. He added that, as online programs, accreditors are interested to know what kind of objectives, learning outcomes and assessments are involved, so in this sense the programs have an additional layer of oversight compared to many on-campus programs.

SSS Chair Diane Badame noted that Bovard proposals – including those in question – were approved by the Social Science Subcommittee and when applicable, inputs from affected departments were sought, and the proposal were held to the same standards as other programs. Due to changes of leadership on campus, it wasn't completely clear if Viterbi had been properly made aware of Bovard's intentions for every program they proposed. Mak wondered if the compressed timeframe for Bovard proposed proposals to be approved may have contributed to Viterbi's perception.

Steve Bucher, OSP Chair, suggested that UCOC might view this as an opportunity to bring Bovard, a relatively new academic unit, into the conversation in the spirit of collegiality and to share information and strategies that might help strengthen their curriculum as well as the curriculum in other units.

III.   INFORMATION ITEMS

A. GE Memos

- *Attachments: UCOC GE Memo 12-6-18*
              UCOC GE Memo 1-8-19
              UCOC GE Memo 1-29-19

B. Scheduled Special Topics Report

- *Attachment: November 2018-February 2019 Special Topics*

Members Present	Members Absent	Guests
Diane Badame		
Matt Bemis (Assoc. Registrar)		
Steven Bucher		
Megan Chan (Financial Aid)		
John DeMartini (Support Staff)		
Donna Garcia		
Judy Garner		
Lawrence Green		
Brian Head		
Chi Mak (Chair)		
Danielle Mihram		
Robin Romans		
Geoffrey Shiflett		