

# UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

## MINUTES

February 6, 2007

2:00-4:00

ACC 205

### I. MINUTES FROM JANUARY UCOC MEETING

➤ **APPROVED.**

### II. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

➤ **APPROVED.**

### III. DECEMBER PANEL AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. ARTS AND HUMANITIES – **ACCEPTED** with clarification to pg 3 concerning one of the terminated MM programs.
- B. HEALTH PROFESSIONS – **ACCEPTED**
- C. OVERSEAS STUDIES – **ACCEPTED** with comment from registrar concerning special topics in an ISP offered by the School of Architecture.
- D. SCIENCE, MATH AND ENGINEERING – **ACCEPTED**
- E. SOCIAL SCIENCE – **ACCEPTED** with clarification to pg 3 concerning revision to undergraduate Business majors and minors.
- F. DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT COMMITTEE – **ACCEPTED**

### IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### **DEFERRED ITEMS:**

#### A. Syllabus template

Proposal to encourage faculty and administrators submitting course requests for curriculum review to attend specialized CET workshops on constructing more effective syllabi.

Desired criteria for an online syllabus template to be developed by CET.

- **12/05/06 UCOC MEETING DISCUSSION:** Problems with the structure and content of syllabi continue to be perceived by the co-chairs of the Social Science Subcommittee, who are fielding the lion's share of the requests this year, especially at the graduate level. In particular, many syllabi lack course objectives *stated in terms of learner outcomes*. Michalle Mor-Barak, graduate co-chair of the SSS, and Terry Seip, undergraduate co-chair, consulted with Danielle Mihram, director of the Center of Excellence in Teaching, and together they propose two specialized workshops designed especially for the faculty and administrators (deans and deans' designees) who are charged with submitting syllabi for curriculum review (the "gatekeepers"). Danielle Mihram provided a number of documents concerning syllabus design which were distributed to UCOC members in advance of the meeting, and attended the first part of the UCOC meeting. CET already uses these documents to run workshops for faculty, both new and experienced, to help them prepare their syllabi, but she proposes two specially focused workshops, one to discuss curriculum design and the second to critique actual syllabi provided

by participants. The intended outcome is to provide these individuals with specific tools they can use to guide those faculty in their own units who are proposing courses. If the missing elements are detected and added by the school's 'gatekeepers,' the subcommittee chairs needn't so vigilantly examine each syllabus. Some UCOC members expressed their understanding that the reorganized curriculum process was supposed to remove the need for subcommittee members and chairs to hold syllabi up to this level of review; and that the current discussion seems to indicate that close review at the UCOC level is still taking place. There was some concern that handing out a syllabus template might discourage the creativity the decentralization was supposed to engender. In some areas of study, such as the humanities and the 'soft' social sciences, the concept of "learner-centered outcomes" may be an alien concept, so these instructions might put these faculty off further. The experience in other areas has been that instruction about what to include in their syllabi is welcomed by faculty. Some deans have not been included in the emails about lacking elements in curriculum submissions; last month UCOC agreed that all emails from the subcommittee chairs and the Curriculum Coordination Office to departments about missing elements would include the proposing dean or dean's designee as a cc, so that they can be advised about these matters and catch them in future submissions. This was only started one month ago.

- **12/05/06 UCOC MEETING: DEFERRED.** The proposal to develop specialized workshops for deans and dean's designees for the purpose of identifying and encouraging more complete syllabi is postponed for the time being, in favor of close examination of the curriculum template that is in the online 2006-07 curriculum handbook. The UCOC will evaluate whether the template is to be a requirement or a set of guidelines, and identify and include the most essential elements of a syllabus, ultimately for the use of the deans and deans' designees as well as those faculty developing syllabi. The current template will be discussed at the January meeting.
- **1/9/07 UCOC MEETING: DISCUSSION:** The syllabus template states the proposals "will contain at least the asterixed items," of which one is "Course objectives, stated in terms of learner outcomes." SSS has received syllabi without any objectives at all, and has returned them to the faculty for objectives. They have, however, accepted objectives not stated in terms of learner outcomes. They have not held up syllabi on the basis of the italicized suggestions listed under the asterixed items. Some faculty members felt that USC, and UCOC, should not require objectives in syllabi, while others felt that they are useful for both faculty and students. WASC wants schools to require learner outcomes as a way of enabling assessment. It was agreed that it would be useful to have model syllabi in various fields. Once the new Schedule of Classes is up, faculty will be able to post their syllabi on the web.
- **1/9/07 UCOC MEETING: DEFERRED:** Tom Cummings and Beth Garrett will review the syllabus template and circulate a revised version to UCOC.
- **DISCUSSED AND APPROVED, revised syllabus template.** The syllabus template with revisions by Tom Cummings and Beth Garrett was circulated to UCOC Jan 17 and again just prior to today's meeting. Further adjustments were made at the meeting concerning language about learning outcomes and attendance vs participation, and offsetting the statement on academic integrity; a new bullet was added stating that changes in course requirements should be communicated clearly to students. The new version will be posted on the website and sent to academic deans and department chairs, asking that department chairs use this template to screen syllabi prior to submitting them to deans.

- B. Subcommittee evaluation of courses and programs delivered via distance learning.  
These issues were referred to UCOC by the chair of SES:

**1/9/07 UCOC MEETING:** 1) Several schools have distance learning models that have been shown to work. However, should we expect to see details on how students are monitored and the degree to which University Faculty are involved? In the program we are looking at (MS and Certificate in Geography) the courses will be delivered on BlackBoard. Here are some of the questions that we might want the proposing unit to answer:

- How is a course delivered on BlackBoard?
- How is satisfactory progress mandated?
- How is integrity assured?
- What are the facilities for video chat, etc.?

- **1/9/07 UCOC MEETING: DISCUSSION:** Suh-Pyng Ku is responsible for the quality of distance learning (DL) offerings at USC. One option would be to leave the review of the DL aspects of courses solely to her. However, the subcommittee felt that review of the modality of instruction cannot be totally divorced from review of the content of courses, and UCOC needs to have some understanding of what the courses will consist of. This cannot be gained solely by reviewing the syllabi. In addition, if the Geography GIS program consists of canned units produced outside USC, this needs careful review. Some schools have experience offering DL, while for others which are new to it, it is important to assure that they have the technological capability.
- **1/9/07 UCOC MEETING: DEFERRED:** Elizabeth Garrett and Tom Cummings will discuss with Suh-Pyng Ku how programs involving distance learning should be evaluated (including whether the Distance Learning Committee should be revived). The Geography GIS proposals will serve as a model. They should be reviewed by SES at its subcommittee meeting (SES is filling in for SSS). If it is possible to fast track the revision of the certificate in order to meet catalogue publication, that would be helpful (if the new masters is not approved in time). Ken Servis will provide to UCOC the guidelines used by the Distance Learning Committee in reviewing programs and courses.
- A second concern is related to the use of non tenure-track faculty in teaching these courses. Here the primary question is whether we should hold to the instructions for filling out the 201 form. Should the subcommittees consider staffing plans for new programs as outlined below? In particular, should the departments provide CV's for non-tenure-track faculty along with a justification of why they are used as well as a plan for student monitoring and technical support?

The instructions for filling out the 201 form include the following requests for information:

“Resources Required

Faculty

- Indicate who will direct and teach in the program, and the extent to which instruction will be provided by tenure track vs. adjunct faculty.
- Who will advise students?
- For large new programs, where relevant, describe faculty hiring plans.
- If adjunct faculty will play a key role, CVs may be appropriate.
- Criteria for review include:
- Are there sufficient regular faculty? If new faculty are needed, what is the plan for recruitment and support?
- If adjunct or part time faculty participate in teaching, who is ultimately responsible for those courses and how is academic quality and consistency with program goals and objectives assured? Explain why it is appropriate for adjunct faculty to be teaching.

Staff

- Is there sufficient staff to provide adequate student advisement?
- Is there sufficient support for technical services?”

There is also a relevant statement in the curriculum handbook, on p. 14, re instructors: "Proposals should state the name of the instructor, who should be a regular or adjunct faculty member. If the instructor is not full-time, the appropriate box should be checked and a justification provided for having the course taught by non-full-time faculty. Subcommittees recognize that different faculty may teach a course at different times. However, they may be concerned if a degree program appears to lack sufficient oversight and participation by full-time faculty, and sufficient resources for advising majors."

- **1/9/07 UCOC MEETING: DISCUSSION:** Deans should be responsible for faculty resources, and UCOC cannot determine the quality of adjuncts from CVs. The Provost’s office is concerned about the ratio of full-time faculty to adjuncts. However, the first two bullets above under “Faculty” are appropriate for UCOC to consider. It could be a red flag if a program depended entirely on adjuncts.
- **1/9/07 UCOC MEETING: DEFERRED:** Elizabeth Garret and Tom Cummings will review the Curriculum Handbook and 201 instructions and provide appropriate verbiage.
- **DISCUSSED and APPROVED,** proposed edits made to the Curriculum Handbook and the 201 form, which have a bearing on distance learning programs. These documents were circulated to UCOC Jan 17 and were sent as attachments to UCOC members prior to today’s meeting. In addition, Suh-Pyng Ku has been informed that both the proposed MS in GIS and the new Master of Academic

Medicine are offered largely or almost exclusively via distance learning. Suh-Pyng Ku attended today's meeting and handed out copies of a document detailing resources and support provided by her office. Jennifer Wolch raised the issue that departmental resources get committed prior to proposals for new programs, and by the time it is sent to the CCO for subcommittee review, the nuts and bolts about Distance Learning details should be well in place. The syllabus template will be amended to include a statement about consulting with Suh-Pyng's office. Tom Cummings, Beth Garrett, and Suh-Pyng Ku will also draft a memo to academic units describing guidelines for creating distance learning courses and programs and explaining how units can obtain help and guidance when they are designing distance learning courses and programs prior to formal proposal.

#### **NEW DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- C. Guidelines for new Certificate programs; application of units from certificates to degree programs.
- **DEFERRED:** The Curriculum handbook attachment describing certificate programs was circulated in advance of today's meeting. Ken Servis explained that the Business School has submitted a request for a new certificate that does not fit one of the three models described in the attachment. Differing interpretations about certificates were expressed; giving a certificate to a student who is already in a graduate program simply because they complete the coursework for the certificate as part of their graduate program was seen by some as a cheapening of the graduate program and USC's standards; another view is that the end result is the same for the existing model that provides for students who complete the requirements for the certificate first and then elect to go on to a more advanced degree. UCOC member Tom Hollihan was asked to draft new language for any changes they would like to see in the guidelines for certificate programs for discussion at the March UCOC meeting.

**Members present**

Hans Bozler  
Thomas Cummings  
Frances Fitzgerald (support staff)  
Alice Gambrell  
Judith Garner  
Elizabeth Garrett (ex-officio)  
Thomas Hollihan  
Shirley Maxey  
Michalle Mor-Barak  
Giulio Ongaro  
Margaret Russett  
Sean Sachdev (student)  
Hilary Schor (ex-officio)  
Terry Seip  
Kenneth Servis (ex-officio)  
Jennifer Wolch

**Members absent**

Ron Alkana  
Peter Beerel  
Eugene Bickers (ex-officio)  
Jean Morrison (ex-officio)  
Katharine Searing (student)

**Guests**

Julena Lind (ex-officio) (for Jean Morrison)