

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES

December 5, 2006

2:00-4:00

ACC 312

I. MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER UCOC MEETING

- **APPROVED**

II. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

- **APPROVED**

III. NOVEMBER PANEL AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. ARTS AND HUMANITIES - **ACCEPTED**
- B. HEALTH PROFESSIONS – *no items for review*
- C. OVERSEAS STUDIES - **ACCEPTED**
- D. SCIENCE, MATH AND ENGINEERING - *no items for review*
- E. SOCIAL SCIENCE - **ACCEPTED**
- F. DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT COMMITTEE - **ACCEPTED**

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. 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.
 - **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.

- **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.

B. Subcommittee workload imbalance

- **DISCUSSION:** A spreadsheet prepared by the CCO was provided, showing a comparison between the number of per month requests received last year and thus far this year, broken down by subcommittee. (Last year's GPSC panels were not divided by subject area, so the graduate requests from last year were organized into this year's subcommittee structure.) The data provided showed that the Social Science Panel/ Subcommittee routinely handles far more requests than the other subcommittees, but that this year the number of requests, especially at the graduate level, far exceeds that of last year, and far exceeds that of other subcommittees so far this year. When a subcommittee chair has received more requests than can be handled within a ten-day period, the overage will be sent to another subcommittee chair who has received few or no requests (selected by Tom Cummings or Dean Servis). If the request is for a program, that subcommittee chair will ask two of his/her own subcommittee members to review it, and if the three can't agree and a meeting is required, that subcommittee will consider it at their monthly meeting. If the new subcommittee would like input from other UCOC members, Tom Cummings will appoint someone to help. In some cases, one subcommittee might have far more graduate than undergraduate requests, for example, and in that case it might be best for the undergraduate subcommittee chair to take over.
- At the end of the year, UCOC will review the distribution of proposals to the subcommittees and determine whether they need to be restructured (eg, by splitting SSS into two subcommittees). The excess of proposals to SSS may not continue, or may be a one-year aberration.
- Michalle Morbarak also reported that SSS plans to meet to discuss some proposals informally, just to get decisions made in person rather than via email (as the workload has been so great). There were not necessarily concerns about these proposals. In this case, it is not necessary (although it is acceptable) to invite a departmental representative.

C. Extension of Ph.D. POSTs in POSC and IR through 2010

- **APPROVED**

Members present

Ron Alkana
Peter Beerel
Nelson Eugene Bickers (ex-officio)
Hans Bozler
Thomas Cummings (chair)
Frances M. Fitzgerald (support staff)
Judith Garner
Thomas Hollihan
Michalle Mor-Barak
Jean Morrison (ex-officio)
Giulio Ongaro2
Terry Seip
Kenneth L. Servis (ex-officio)

Members absent

Alice Gambrell (Writing Committee)
Elizabeth Garrett (ex-officio)
Thomas Habinek
Sally Handmaker (undergraduate student)
Norman Hollyn
Shirley Maxey (DRC liaison)
Hilary Schor (General Education)
Katherine Searing (graduate student)
Jennifer Wolch (ex-officio)

Guests

Jane Cody (for Hilary Schor)
Danielle Mihram (CET)
Edwenna Werner