

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES

September 7, 2006

2:00-4:00 pm

HOH 601-K

Tom Cummings welcomed committee members to the first meeting of the newly formed committee. Members, guests and staff introduced themselves.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

- **APPROVED.**

II. INFORMATION ITEM

GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

Req. by Chloe Reid

A. Add 4 new courses:

Effective Fall 2006

1. LAW 720 TOPICS IN CORPORATE LAW (1-4, max 8, FaSp)

Executive malfeasance, shareholder rights, securities class actions, asset securitizations, hedge fund regulation and corporate social responsibility from a theoretical and corporate finance framework. Open to Law students only.

2. LAW 746 CRITICAL RACE THEORY (2-4)

Intersectionality, destruction and critical historiography; specifically affirmative action in education, hate speech and immigration reform. Open to Law students only.

3. LAW 793 LAW AND ECONOMICS SEMINAR (1-4, max 8)

Key concepts and cutting-edge research in law and economics. Workshops with leading scholars from around the country. Open to Law students only.

4. LAW 863 INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND MEDIATION (2-4)

Introduction to negotiation and mediation from an international perspective. Development of essential skills for effective client representation in negotiation and mediation. Open to Law students only.

B. Revise 2 courses:

1. NEW: LAW 715 LAW AND POLICY OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (2-4)

Exploration of the origin, development, and practice of mediation, arbitration and other forms of ADR, emphasizing the policies underlying these increasingly significant and evolving areas. Open to Law students only.

OLD: LAW 715 MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION (2-4)

Mediation is an alternative to litigation, that shade off into abstraction in one dimension and into negotiation in the other. This seminar will emphasize the lawyering skills useful in these processes for alternative dispute resolution. Open to Law students only.

2. NEW: LAW 792 TOPICS IN LAW AND PHILOSOPHY (2-4, max 8)

Examination of the best scholarly work currently done by legal, moral and political philosophers in the country. Open to Law students only.

OLD: LAW 792 LEGAL PHILOSOPHY (2-3, max 3)

Advanced study of selected schools of jurisprudential thought.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

CURRICULUM COORDINATION PROCESS

During the summer, staff in the Curriculum Coordination office and others in the Registrar's office worked to implement the policies developed and approved last year by the UCCPC. That process is ongoing, and some questions have arisen as proposals have been readied for subcommittee chair review. The discussions provided helpful guidance to the CCO and the staff reviewers (Meredith Lewis, Robert Morley, and Edwenna Werner).

1. Approvals: department chair

Should the CCO check for department approval when the dean sends us a curriculum request? The guidelines call for departments to prepare the proposals and forward them to the dean with the dean's approval. Two requests were received that lack the department chair's approval and in both cases the dean was asked by the CCO to forward to the CCO the department chair's (or dept. chair designee) submission memo; in both cases they were provided without delay.

- Faculty concern was shared about a lack of interaction between deans and faculty about curriculum matters, but by and large, the committee had the sense that if the dean has forwarded the request to the CCO, the CCO should take that to mean that the faculty review process included the approval of the chair, and hard evidence of that was not necessary. However, next year, when the Curriculum Management System (CMS) is operating, requests should be routed from the DCC to the department chair, then the dean. Since in some schools, or for some proposals, the relevant faculty approver is not the department chair (but, perhaps, the chair of a faculty committee), CMS should have the option to designate someone other than the department chair as the faculty approver. Also, if the CCO notes that in some schools, there is a consistent lack of provision of the faculty chair approval, this fact should be noted to UCOC.

2. Approvals: other departments

If the subcommittee chairs want the CCO to check for and obtain department faculty approval, do subcommittee chairs want the CCO to include that approval as a document for them to review? Similarly, if the department indicates that there is an affected department, and that approval is provided as an email from the affected department chair, do the subcommittee chairs want us to provide that approval?

- The CCO should provide to the chair a list of who has approved the proposal, and provide any comments (other than “approved”) that were made.
3. Affected department approvals
Should the CCO ask for an affected department signature? In the past, if a proposal contains information about affected departments and they have not provided the acknowledgement of the request by the departments, the CCO has pursued it. Similarly, in cases when the course is a prerequisite for another unit’s course, and if the proposal does not contain that information, the CCO has followed up on it
- In these cases, the CCO is expected to solicit the affected department signature.
4. Alternate subcommittee chair review
This year, requests that are submitted by department of the pertinent subcommittee chair, are reviewed instead by the other subcommittee chair to avoid conflict of interest. The CCO wondered if the same guidelines would apply if the request is cross-listed with that subcommittee chair’s department.
- The UCOC consensus was that a subcommittee chair may approve a course that is cross-listed with his or her own department, unless the chair feels that there is a conflict of interest.
5. Subcommittee website security
What should be the policy on subcommittee urls? Will subcommittee chairs want to give it out freely, say, to a department that’s affected, or will they want the documents sent as email attachments? Next year, with CMS, it’ll be different, but for this year a plan is needed.
- The dean of Academic Records and Registrar agreed to look into an approach allowing for single password access. Those present were not comfortable with making the website more open and providing urls only. They were especially concerned about having syllabi accessible to those outside the university. A number of faculty have access to protected university sites on their home computers. If the subcommittee chair wishes to solicit a review by an affected department, for example, the CCO would send the proposal to the affected department as an email with attachments.
6. Charge to subcommittees regarding academic rigor
The extent to which UCOC subcommittees are expected to consider the academic quality and rigor of courses and programs is not clear. In the past, this has always been a key function of UCC and GPSC, but under the new system, the departments and deans are supposed to be primarily in charge of this.
- The expectation is that the main responsibility for academic rigor resides in the unit proposing the request; however, academic rigor should not be ignored by the subcommittees. Proposals that are very poorly prepared and inconsistent should be sent back to the department/dean to be corrected. Any overarching question of policy should be discussed by UCOC. Beth Garrett and Tom Cummings agreed to review the language in the Curriculum Handbook about the subcommittee’s role in order to encourage subcommittees to avoid micromanaging syllabi, while being alert to any serious problems. The UCOC should play the role of “firefighter” (responding to severe problems), but not “police officer” (trying to prevent relatively trivial issues). The UCOC will review situations when frequent unusual requests from a unit are received. Also, once we get experience using the new process we can explore the possibility of suggesting regular curriculum evaluation within units, as curricular review has not in the past been done by UCAR. It is

expected that department chairs should be in charge and report to their deans. It is recognized that such an exercise would be less necessary for those schools required to go through that sort of process as part of their accreditation process (Engineering, Music).

7. Content of monthly subcommittee reports

Every month the CCO will prepare a record of all the subcommittee decisions made by the chair alone, the chair plus two subcommittee members, and the entire subcommittee (when relevant). That record will be compiled as of the date of the scheduled monthly subcommittee meeting, and is the report of record for the following month's UCOC meeting. When the subcommittee chair informs the CCO of the identity of the two faculty (when that applies, as for programs), that will be part of the record. The email notification sent to the proposing unit of the outcome of the request will include an excerpt from that report, however brief.

- The above approach is appropriate. Transparency in decision-making is valuable.

8. Subcommittee chair questions

The definition of "affected department" is unclear. What is a subcommittee chair to do when it is unclear whether all interested parties have been contacted? Also, how should a subcommittee chair go about selecting the two subcommittee members to confer with regarding any particular proposal? And finally, if a subcommittee chair has concerns about syllabi that are not significant enough to keep from approving the course, should such comments be shared with the department in any way as helpful suggestions, and if so, how (put them on the monthly report, or email department directly)?

- These details will be worked out as part of the new process. It is possible that when these issues arise they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Choice of how to contact departments with areas of concern about proposals will be the subcommittee chair's call. Some may take it upon him or herself to contact the department directly, others may go through the CCO. The fact that academic units reviewed their curriculum process last year is likely to result in clearer and better developed proposals. It is important that the departmental curriculum coordinator (DCC) be well trained. Elizabeth Garret reported that academic and associate deans have been coached about the way the process is supposed to work. But if a school constantly produces unacceptable proposals, Tom Cummings and Beth Garrett would address the issue with the academic unit's dean. While it can be a challenge to inspire faculty to rise to the challenge of revitalizing their curriculum, some see this as an opportunity to do just that. The UCOC hopes that departments will review their curriculum, clear out obsolete offerings, and propose new and creative courses—which, it is hoped, will be able to be approved quickly and efficiently. The subcommittee chair's role is to make decisions based not on whether or not the chair agrees with the proposal, but whether or not the argument is convincingly argued and well-prepared.

ALSO DISCUSSED

- At Elizabeth Garrett's request, Ken Servis briefly described the features of the current project to enhance the online schedule of classes and catalogue. The schedule of classes should be ready first, and the catalogue after that.
- A question was raised about how distance learning requests should be handled this year, since there is no Distance Learning Committee. It is expected that the distance learning component of a curriculum proposal would be reviewed as part of the overall curriculum review process. WASC categories have been modified so we anticipate that USC can offer distance learning courses and programs without the need to present the proposals to WASC.

Members present

Ron Alkana
Peter Beerel
Nelson Eugene Bickers (ex-officio)
Hans Bozler
Thomas Cummings (chair)
Frances M. Fitzgerald (support staff)
Alice Gambrell (Writing Committee)
Judith Garner
Elizabeth Garrett (ex-officio)
Thomas Habinek
Thomas Hollihan
Norman Hollyn
Sally Handmaker (undergraduate student)
Michalle Mor-Barak
Jean Morrison (ex-officio)
Giulio Ongaro
Hilary Schor (General Education)
Terry Seip
Kenneth L. Servis (ex-officio)

Members absent

Katherine Searing (graduate student)
Jennifer Wolch (ex-officio)

Guests

Meredith Lewis (AR&R)
Robert Morley (AR&R)
Edwenna Werner (AR&R)