

Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the April 14, 2017 Meeting

Present: Rob Beezer (Secretary), Peggy Burge, Kent Hooper, Chris Kendall, Alan Krause, Elise Richman (Chair), Leslie Saucedo, Jason Struna, Brad Tomhave, Nila Wiese.

RICHMAN called the meeting to order at 3:00 in the McCormick Room, with seven members present. The minutes of the April 14, 2017 meeting were approved with no changes.

Announcements RICHMAN announced that the due date of her final report to the Faculty Senate will only accommodate two more meetings.

RICHMAN informed HOOPER that Working Group end-of-the-year reports only need to be a “comprehensive summary.”

In anticipation of some celebratory acknowledgment of the impending retirement of TOMHAVE, a query from HOOPER about favorite liquid refreshments allowed the committee to learn that the Florida orange juice at the visitor center on the Georgia–Florida state line, served from fountains, is some of the best TOMHAVE has ever had.

Working Group 1 Report STRUNA reported that committee members have been away from campus attending conferences and so have not met. They will have an opportunity to meet next week.

Working Group 2 Report No member of this working group was present to report.

Working Group 3 Report WIESE reported that their meeting of faculty interested in the Social Scientific Approaches core had occurred earlier in the day. Nobody came. Their data-collection for this core area review is now complete.

Working Group 4 Report HOOPER brought to the committee’s attention that his working group was fully represented at this meeting, though they had no new business to bring to the full committee. He then broached the necessity of their assigned curriculum review of the Special Interdisciplinary Major. It was decided that (a) there was not enough time to accomplish this before the end of the year, and (b) it might best be placed into the new seven-year cycle. KRAUSE hypothesized that there were no real pressing problems in this area due to the quality of the previous review.

Unit Limits on Majors and Minors RICHMAN summarized and reiterated some of the previous meeting's discussion of this topic, in part due to her absence. She then advocated that the suggestion that a major be one-third of a student's academic program would be 10 units, after deducting 2 activity units from the 32 units needed for graduation. TOMHAVE offered that with the clarified definition there would be "a number of 10-unit majors."

Given the Faculty Senate's charge to "Create guidelines for unit limits for majors to fit existing practices, core curriculum, and educational goals," it was felt that movement to a 10-unit limit on courses from the major field would be appropriate, bearing in mind the coarseness of describing educational goals by simply using "crass numbers" as limits.

There was extended discussion, including a discussion of the 8 unit minimum, and that majors would not be required to move to 10 units. HOOPER repeated his contention that 9 (or 10) units did not allow for obtaining "disciplinary expertise." In an attempt to assuage the hurt feelings of the quantitative disciplines represented, SAUCEDO proffered that "numbers are awesome."

In conjunction with last week's changes to the committee's own processes, the committee will communicate to the Faculty Senate

1. A strong recommendation for change to a 10 unit limit on courses in the major field.
2. Enforcement of an absolute limit of a total 16 units for the requirements of a major, with existing majors over this limit not being required to reduce their requirements.

Experiential Learning Course Designation RICHMAN brought before the committee again the "Experiential Learning Definition" for discussion, and in order to provide some clarity around identifying courses that would be designated as experiential learning. HOOPER again asked if not every course could meet this definition. STRUNA, WIESE, RICHMAN and BURGE all offered examples of courses and activities that would, or would not, meet the definition. STRUNA suggested that the definition could be improved with qualifiers such as "self-directed" and "un-mediated." RICHMAN wanted to be certain that it was understood that courses in the humanities are not meant to be excluded.

The designation would be informational, likely searchable as part of the course schedule, and would not appear on a student's transcript. It was reported that the Office of Admission says prospective students are very interested in courses of this nature, so there is a marketing aspect to the Administration's interest in including this as part of their "High Impact Practices." KENDALL wondered what the role of the committee would be given that a list of designated experiential courses might be made available to students prior to any agreed curricular definition. There was more discussion, carried over from earlier in the semester, of exactly which group might decide which courses met the definition, and how directly involved the committee would be.

No action was taken.

RICHMAN, Professor of Art, decisively adjourned the meeting at 3:59 P.M. The next meeting will be on April 21 at 3 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Beezer