

Minutes of September 12, 2017 Curriculum Committee Meeting

Members Present: Bill Barry, David Chiu, Julie Nelson Christoph, Kent Hooper, Chris Kendall, Gary McCall, Eric Orlin, Jennifer Pitonyak, Holly Roberts, Leslie Saucedo, Jonathan T Stockdale, Bryan Thines, Benjamin Tromly, Nila Wiese, Matt Fergoda (ASUPS representative), Michael Pastore, Jason Struna, Martin Jackson

The minutes of 5 September 2017 meeting were approved without objection.

The Curriculum Committee then turned its attention to the second item on the agenda: "Consideration of work flow in coming weeks and working groups."

Chair Ben Tromly offered that this agenda item aimed to find ways to free up time to allow the Curriculum Committee to explore larger curricular issues. One suggestion broached at the last meeting was to delegate more authority to the associate dean to approve core courses. Tromly invited the committee to consider a paragraph summary of procedures he drafted to achieve this end (see Tromly paragraph below). At the heart of the proposal was a process in which a faculty "lead" from a working group would work with the associate dean to determine whether a proposed course satisfied the core guidelines in question.

Various members commented on the Tromly paragraph and made the following points: the associate dean should report back to the committee the courses that had been approved; the approaches core areas should be approved through the same revised process (the Tromly paragraph refers only to the SSI, Connections, and KNOW courses); adoption of this process (which arguably gives more power to the associate dean) should be affirmed at the beginning of each year so that if, god forbid, we have an "evil dean," the Committee could return to the current method of approval whereby all core courses are vetted by working groups and approved by the Curriculum Committee itself; although this revision entails less faculty oversight of the core, it might provide opportunities for consideration of other arguably more important issues concerning the curriculum (such as whether the Curriculum Committee should review, reaffirm, or reconstruct the whole core) ; since the associate deans' office already fully participates in the course approval process, the proposed modification of process will not entail more work for the associate dean; the proposed process still involves faculty review through the participation of the "lead" and provides an opportunity for faculty members to discuss with each other the guidelines and the aims of the core area.

Some concern was raised about reconstituting "working groups" into "advisory groups" of experts. Relying on experts, particularly for KNOW courses which are taught by faculty from different disciplines, may not be appropriate. It was noted that SSIs and Connections courses are similarly taught by a diverse group of faculty. Since Committee members will volunteer for working/advisory groups, the process of self-selection might help to create more diverse working/advisory groups.

Moved/Seconded/Approved to adopt the procedure proposed for approval of Connections, SSI, and KNOW courses as described in the Tromly paragraph. The same revised procedure will also be used to review Approaches courses. Jackson and Tromly will develop the appropriate

language reflecting this revised procedure and will insert it into “The Functions of the Associate Deans’ Office in Curricular Matters.”

The Committee then turned to Item 3 on the agenda, “Senate Charges.” Based on discussions with the Senate Liaison, Tromly composed for Curriculum Committee review the following suggested Senate Charges to be forwarded to the Senate after Curriculum Committee approval.

Suggestions of Senate Charges to Curriculum Committee (draft by BKT)

1. Review the standard workflow of the Curriculum Committee with the goal of considering how the Committee can most effectively engage the curriculum.
2. Consider the Curriculum Committee’s procedures for conducting core area reviews in order to boost their effectiveness and impact on the university.
3. Explore how the Curriculum Committee can more actively facilitate curricular development in the core curriculum.
4. Consider the procedures by which an overall review of the core curriculum would be conducted, pursuant to the committee’s standing charge in the bylaws to “initiate reviews of the Core.”

It was suggested that Charge One be kept even though the committee had already addressed it under item 2 of the agenda.

Tromly and members of the committee clarified that the purpose of Charge Two was to ensure that results of core area reviews actually be used to revise the core itself. (Too often, it was observed, the results of a core area review were forgotten and never used.)

Charge three was clarified to focus more specifically on faculty development of delivery of the curriculum.

Charge 4 was modified in such a way as to charge the Curriculum Committee to recommend whether the whole core itself ought to be reviewed and, if so, what procedures should be used.

Tromly will make the modifications to the charges and will submit them for approval at the next Curriculum Committee meeting.

The CC postponed final discussion of Agenda Item 4 until next week when new language on approving core courses is included in the “Functions of the Associate Deans' Office in Curricular Matters.”

Tromly and Jackson agreed to work out a time for CC meetings (Agenda Item Five), taking into consideration members’ schedules and preferences. (A strong preference for meeting on Fridays at noon was expressed at the end of the meeting.)

The meeting adjourned at 3:55.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Barry

Appendix

Tentative proposal on Curriculum Committee procedure for reviewing core course proposals (draft by BKT)

As a trial procedure this fall, the Curriculum Committee will review core course proposals for the Core Curriculum using a modified procedure. Instead of the procedure by which working groups are assigned review of proposals in distinct core areas with the expectation that all proposals are handled at WG meetings, the committee will form three “advisory groups” devoted to proposals in three curricular areas: Connections, SS1 and SS12, and KNOW. Each incoming course proposal in a given area will be reviewed by the Associate Dean as well as by a “lead” from the corresponding advisory group (leads will rotate). The lead for a specific course will write a short blurb on the proposal and distribute it to other advisory group members (and the Associate Dean) electronically. If other advisory group members do not have further questions, the lead and the Associate Dean can approve the course, after which the lead will communicate accordingly with the faculty member proposing the course. If other advisory group members have questions, the advisory group may choose to discuss the matter further electronically or in person, or to bring the syllabus to the entire Curriculum Committee. Deliberations within the advisory group that are deemed important will be reported to the full committee. If no deliberation is required, the courses are approved without being communicated at meetings of the full Curricular Committee.