

Curriculum Committee Minutes of February 16, 2018

In attendance: Chris Kendall, Matt Fergoda, Jason Struna , Kent Hooper, Holly Roberts, Ben Tromly (CC Chair), Eric Orlin (minutes), David Chiu, Bill Barry, Julia Looper, Peggy Burge, Leslie Saucedo, Julie Christoph, Martin Jackson, Jonathan Stockdale

The meeting was called to order by Tromly at 3:01 pm.

The minutes of Feb 2, 2018 were approved without objection.

Jackson announced that the course deadline for Fall 2018 was imminent and that course proposals would shortly be coming in for review. Departmental Reviews and information on how to approach a departmental review was available on Soundnet for those involved with these reviews

Two courses (CONN 300 and STS 100) recommended for approval by advisory groups were accepted by the full committee with no objection.

Discussion returned to the proposal to create a “Humanities Interdisciplinary Emphasis,” which was revised and resubmitted following conversations between Tromly and the proposers. Tromly turned the conversation to the number of courses in an Interdisciplinary Emphasis and noted that historical reasons for why seven courses were required - based on Asian Studies experience transitioning to an Interdisciplinary Emphasis - no longer held, since Asian Studies was now a minor.

Stockdale moved (Looper seconded) that the Curriculum Committee accept a proposal (attached) to reduce the number of courses for an Interdisciplinary Emphasis from seven to five.

Barry asked what the differences between an Interdisciplinary Emphasis and an Interdisciplinary Minor were. The ensuing conversation indicated there was substantial confusion among committee members about what constituted an Interdisciplinary Emphasis or an Interdisciplinary Minor, despite the hard work of the 2014-15 CC to develop clear guidelines. Part of the confusion stemmed from the fact that Bioethics is currently listed as Interdisciplinary Emphasis even though it appeared to several committee members as fitting the rubric for an Interdisciplinary Minor. After discussion, the following elements appeared to most members to signify the differences between an Interdisciplinary Emphasis and an Interdisciplinary Minor: focused on a theme (rather than a recognized discipline) and built around a breadth of classes (rather than a vertical integration, with requirements to take lower and upper level courses in some sequence). **The committee voted (with one abstention) to accept the proposal and lower the number of required courses in an Interdisciplinary Emphasis to five units.**

The committee then returned to its consideration of the Humanities proposal itself (see attached for revised proposal), which now meets the criteria for an Interdisciplinary Emphasis.

Stockdale noted that Guideline #4 for an Interdisciplinary Emphasis indicates that “the program offering an Interdisciplinary Emphasis will establish a mechanism to ensure that students reflect carefully on the relationship between the Interdisciplinary Emphasis and their educational goals” and that the current proposal didn’t establish a clear mechanism. The committee discussed possible models for achieving such reflection, including contracts or e-portfolios, and whether the full Humanities Advisory Board would approve these documents or the team in charge of the particular pathway. Ultimately it was decided that it was the prerogative of the proposers to choose the exact mechanism for enrolling in the Emphasis, and that the Committee would ask the proposers to indicate such a mechanism.

Looper asked about the revised language indicating that “No more than two of the five courses may fulfill the requirements for a single major or a minor,” suggesting that it caused confusion about double-counting with majors. The committee believed that the intent of this clause is to ensure that an Interdisciplinary Emphasis is truly interdisciplinary, and that if so the proposers should work with the registrar to settle upon language for the Academic Handbook that clearly conveys that intent.

Christoph asked about the clause suggesting that the Humanities board would approve new pathways, which seemed to place authority for approval of new curricular modules outside the Curriculum Committee, something the Committee was loathe to do with the recent ELFAB proposal. Other Committee members concurred, suggesting that the language ought to be changed to require new pathways to come before the Curriculum Committee in the same way that changes to a major or minor would. Kendall asked about the processing of reviewing an Interdisciplinary Emphasis and was assured that it worked in a similar fashion to departmental reviews.

The Committee continues to be favorably inclined toward the proposal and some thought was given to approving the proposal pending the few small changes outlined above. As the hour was late, however, it was decided to ask Tromly to confer one more time with the proposers, especially as Jackson assured the Committee further consideration would not harm the prospects of having the HIE approved in time for Fall 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.