University Curriculum Committee
Minutes
February 12, 2016

Members Present: Brown, Green, Howard, Ingham, Kapust, Smith, Wiegmann

Members Absent: Moser, Brighouse

The meeting began at: 9:09 am

I. Consent item – Minutes of the January 22, 2016 meeting
Motion by Ingham to approve, unanimously approved.

II. Discussion

A. Graduate Course Attribute
   - vote on any changes to existing policy
   The committee reviewed the revised graduate course attribute policy and discussed whether it is possible to actually have a course that adequately serves undergraduate and graduate students in the same course. There is a great deal of variance over the wide spectrum of disciplines across campus in how these courses are structured. The move to CourseLeaf and a new course proposal form we will make sure to ask questions that require a specific justification for having the graduate attribute.

   The revised policy is located in appendix A of the minutes. The KnowledgeBase will be updated and notification sent to the school/college curriculum committees about the policy revisions. The school/colleges will then be asked to work with their departments to make sure they are aware of the changes.

   Kapust moved, Howard seconded and the committee unanimously approved a motion to approve the graduate course attribute policy revisions as discussed during the meeting.

B. Explanation of grading and other items on sample syllabus KB
   - vote on any changes to existing policy

   The committee also reviewed the sample syllabus policy for course proposals. Related to the change to the graduate course attribute policy, course proposals that include a request for a
graduate attribute and are intended for both undergraduate and graduate students should include learning outcomes for each group.

The committee was also interested in proposers providing more information about how students would be evaluated in courses where class participation was a significant part of the final grade. A grading rubric would be helpful but was acknowledged that it may be difficult to develop a specific grading rubric if the proposal is for a new course that hasn’t been taught previously. Including a rubric would clarify expectations for students; they would know what to expect when subjective evaluation is involved. It would also be useful for the instructor in avoiding grade disputes. The policy was updated to include a recommendation but not a requirement that a rubric be included as way to clearly define how class participation will be assessed in courses where it constitutes a significant portion of the final grade.

The revised policy is located in appendix B of the minutes. The KnowledgeBase will be updated and notification sent to the school/college curriculum committees about the policy revisions. The school/colleges will then be asked to work with their departments to make sure they are aware of the changes.

Howard moved Green seconded and the committee unanimously approved a motion to approve the sample syllabus policy revisions as discussed during the meeting.

C. Ongoing discussion about credit hours for distance and other non-classroom based courses
   - review Quality Matters rubric and determine future steps

Section Five of the Quality Matters Rubric for developing and teaching courses in formats that are not classroom based provided the jumping off point for a discussion about how course committees might review and assign credits to courses taught in formats such as flipped classroom, distance, internship, etc. The basis of the credit hour remains the contact between student and instructor, the nature and quality of this interactivity is what is difficult to define. The question was raise, if the learning objectives are met, what does it matter how the material was delivered? There are many traditional, lecture format courses where the student and instructor contact is very limited. What does contact mean? There should be some value added to the instructor and the student interacting. Learner interaction is important when looking at adapting an in-person course to be distance offered. Committee members agreed that the interaction between instructor and student in face-to-face courses is not always meaningful, especially in large lecture courses. There is benefit to the live environment where students hear other students ask questions versus when it is an online environment where a student emails the instructor a question via email that is not seen by any other students.

If you take an in person course and simply put it online exactly the same way it is offered in person is that ok? What if there is there is no interaction? Learning goes beyond the content but is it implicitly present in person?

An example was given where an instructor taught a course both in a face-to-face and online where lectures were recorded for students to view. What was covered in 50 minutes face-to
face took just 35 minutes when recorded. Among the things that were missing were the in
class announcements, questions, tangents etc. Might the students watching the lecture online
pause and take more time to absorb the information?

General observations and questions:
- Are we taking a bad model and making it worse? We need to make it better.
- Need to account for the current state as well as where we want to go in the future.
- We need to have something to contribute and we could do it well. We can’t assume
  that everyone needs to come to Madison to get what we have to offer.
- Already there are the models/examples of MOOCs, tech schools, U of Phoenix etc.
  Part of what we need to think about what we bring that is unique and better. Why
  should a student enroll in an online UW-Madison course? What is the UW-Madison
  value added? In the 21st century we need to take what we have to offer and figure out
  how to deliver it to students in a variety of modalities.
- The unplanned interactive is what makes in person lectures more valuable.
- What are all the possible ways a student will interact with the instructor?
- Are learning outcomes what are important or is instructor/student interaction?
- Flipped classroom works and wouldn’t require 50 minute lectures, there could be 15
  minute lectures and then time for activities.
- Field courses are another issue.
- How much interaction is necessary?
- If the instructor has organized a learning environment that is interactive by design, do
  they need to be in the environment?
- Think about learning environments – how do they differ. What are the pros and cons
  of each?
- If we are thinking so hard about the out of class, how do we think about impacting
  what happens in class?

III. New Business

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.
A series of new Graduate School policies were approved by the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) on October 11, 2013 and the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) on October 24, 2013. Although prompted by the Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) institutional accreditation criteria, these policy changes are one of the many ways in which our campus ensures the integrity of its degrees and the quality of the student experience.

The Minimum Graduate Course Work (50%) Requirement.
This requirement states that at least 50% of credits applied toward the program’s graduate degree credit requirement must be with courses designed for graduate work.

Consistent with Graduate School policy, the graduate course work can include UW-Madison courses (including but not limited to online, thesis/research, independent study, and practicum/internship credits) that satisfy one of the following guidelines:

- numbered 700 and above
- numbered 300-699 that are specifically designed for graduate students in a graduate program
- numbered 300-699 that hold graduate students to higher standards of learning than undergraduate students in the same course

Graduate Course Attribute
The University Curriculum Committee approved a request to create a course attribute to allow programs and students alike to more readily identify the courses eligible to meet this requirement (not only with courses in one’s unit, but with any course on campus) and to facilitate the advising of enrolled students as well as degree audits at the time of graduation.

Standards for Graduate Course Work
To develop and safeguard standards of graduate course work, below is a checklist of criteria for designation of a graduate course work attribute. The checklist is minimal and not intended to be exhaustive. The diversity of programs and courses may necessitate judgments outside of listed criteria due to the unique standards of a specific discipline. However, course proposers are encouraged to offer explanations where their courses deviate from general criteria.

Graduate Course Work Rigor
Graduate course work content should be intellectually challenging to graduate students. Course work which establishes a high standard of learning may be evidenced by:

- requiring students to demonstrate advanced methodology/application of new skills and information to significant tasks or issues in the discipline;
- requiring students to demonstrate an increased depth of knowledge beyond that normally attained by a typical bachelor degree holder in the discipline;
- requiring students to demonstrate higher-order synthesis and analysis in the discipline;
- a strong emphasis on the literature of the discipline and/or active engagement with the latest research and scholarly activity of the discipline.

Graduate course work content should generally build on knowledge or experience previously gained and is mindful of program admission prerequisites. The higher standards set for graduate students are generally reflective of the advanced level of instruction in a graduate course.

**Graduate Course Work Instructors**

Graduate course work instructors must possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established.

Graduate course work instructors teaching at the doctoral level must have a record of recognized scholarship, creative endeavor, or achievement in practice commensurate with doctoral expectations.

**Graduate Course Work Requirements and Assessment**

Graduate course work numbered 300-699 may show evidence of meeting the above criteria by assessing graduate students through examinations, assignments, and the use of grading rubrics and the like which clearly establish a higher standard of performance for graduate students versus undergraduates for the same grade. The additional graduate student work will generally occur outside the common class time.

For courses numbered 300-699, grading graduate students using a narrower scale and/or requiring graduate students to produce lengthier assignments without requiring advanced synthesis or demonstration of knowledge, would not be considered adequate for assignment of the graduate attribute.
Course Proposal - Syllabus

The syllabus must include:

- Proposed course number (not an existing temporary number)
- Proposed course title
- An indication of the time devoted to individual topics together with the hours of instructor-student instruction and/or discussion
- Learning outcomes - Learning goals at the undergraduate and/or graduate level as appropriate. For courses numbered 300-699 which carry the graduate attribute, both undergraduate and graduate learning goals must be included.
- Text(s) or reference(s) to be used
- Representative list of readings
- Any other requirements for the course
- How students will be evaluated:
  - Assignments, papers, exams, etc. and the nature of and weight assigned to these requirements
  - A grading rubric is recommended to clarify expectations for students. When a significant percentage (10% or more) of the grade is tied to participation, attendance, and/or discussion, how this percentage is assessed must be clearly defined.

What constitutes an A, AB, B, BC, C, D, F. Or, if the course will be graded on a curve, describe the standards upon which the curve will be set. All valid grades should be listed. If all grades (for example AB and BC) will not be used this should be noted on the syllabus. A syllabus must be provided for all new course proposals and course change proposals that request any of the following: change in credits, title, Liberal Arts and Sciences designations, and General Education Requirement designations.

Department Responsibility for Maintaining Course Syllabus Files

The Higher Learning Commission’s assumed practice states that instructors communicate course requirements to students through syllabi. In addition the Higher Learning Commission’s Credit Hour Policies, developed to enforce the U.S. Department of Education’s requirement related to credit hour definition, necessitates that a syllabus be available for review for each course taught. Criterion 2B in the HLC Criteria for Accreditation requires that clear and complete information be provided to students including the details of their academic programs.

To meet these accreditation requirements, instructors of record are required to develop a course syllabus for each offering of a course and communicate the syllabus to students.

Departments must also keep syllabus records of courses taught in their department. FPP 5.31(D) Departmental Chair: Duties states “The chair of the department has the following duties: . . . Determines that all necessary records of teaching, research, and public service of the department are properly kept and are always accessible to the proper authorities.” Given
that access to syllabi is a requirement for the university’s accreditation, departments are responsible for keeping syllabi on file.