University Curriculum Committee  
Minutes  
April 22, 2016

Members Present: Brown, Court, DeBaillie, Green (left at 10:30), Howard, Ingham, Moser (left at 10:30), Smith, Thompson, Wiegmann

Members Absent: Brighouse, Kapust, Wiegmann

The meeting began at: 9:02 am

Summary of actions:
- Proposals 1-4,6-8 and 10 were approved
- Proposals 5 were deferred
- Proposals 3 and 9 were tabled

I. Consent item – Minutes of the April 8, 2016 meeting  
Motion by Ingham, unanimously approved.

II. Course proposal review  
A. Review Agenda  
Motion by Thompson, second by Moser to approve all course proposals. Votes are recorded following each agenda item.

New Proposals

1. Industrial & Systems Engr 412  Fundamentals of Industrial Data Analytics  
   Type: New Course  
   Reviewer: Smith  
   Action: Unanimously Approved

2. Landscape Architecture 321  Environment and Behavior Studio - Designing Health Promoting Environments  
   Type: New Course  
   Reviewer: Ingham  
   Action: Unanimously Approved

3. Medical History and Bioethics 231  Introduction to Social Medicine  
   Type: New Course  
   Reviewer: Moser  
   Action: Tabled
4. Philosophy 701  Reading Seminar  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Brown  
**Action: Unanimously Approved**

5. Political Science 202  Preparation for the Wisconsin in Washington Program  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Wiegmann  
**Action: Deferred – The proposer will be asked to provide more information about the participation and professionalism portion of the grade. The sample syllabus should be updated to include examples of readings; it is recommended that a course calendar be included showing topics, readings, assignments for each week/class session.**

6. Political Science 332  German Politics  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Wiegmann  
**Action: Unanimously Approved**

7. Political Science 402  Wisconsin in Washington Internship Course  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Wiegmann  
**Action: Unanimously Approved**

8. Political Science 602  Wisconsin in Washington Advanced Public Policy Course  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Wiegmann  
**Action: Unanimously Approved**

9. Spanish (Spanish And Portug) 472  Hispanic Screen Studies  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Ingham  
**Action: Tabled**

10. Theatre and Drama 364  Makeup for the Theatre  
Type: New Course  
Reviewer: Ingham  
**Action: Unanimously Approved**

**III. Discussion**

A. Election of vice chair for 2016-2017  
Candidates for the position of vice chair of the committee were discussed.  
Ingham nominated Wiegmann and the nomination was seconded by Green. The vote to elect Wiegmann vice chair for the 2016-2017 academic year was unanimous.

B. Communication with school/college curriculum committees  
The members of the committee were provided with a copy of the notes written by Elaine Klein, assistant dean for academic planning in the College of Letters and Science from a meeting on May 7 with Elaine Klein, Ivy Corfis, chair, Kimbrin Cornelius, curricular administration specialist for the L&S Curriculum Committee, Phil Brown and Michelle Young to discuss opportunities for increasing communication
between the UCC and the school/college curriculum committees and the recent action the UCC has taken in clarifying how course proposers are expected to describe the use of the graduate course attribute and participation as a significant portion of the final grade.

Howard stressed that the clarifications and the requirement that learning outcomes appropriate for graduate and undergraduates be included for courses numbered 300 – 699 that are open to both graduate and undergraduate students should be considered a success story. There is no single, discrete definition of what a graduate course is and implementing the use of the graduate course attribute was an extensive, time consuming and difficult process. Focusing on separate learning outcomes provides proposers with a specific way to describe how the course will serve both student populations.

We are working in an ever changing environment, and in the future it will be necessary to make adjustments and clarifications to existing policies on the fly. The members agreed that UCC will endeavor to seek input from the school/college curriculum committees but it will not always be possible to have future implementation dates for such clarifications as it impacts the quality of the courses being proposed which negatively impacts students. The ideal would be effective communication that makes sure a proposal is well formed from the start. The committee recognizes the need for greater communication with the school/college curriculum committee and will seek ways to consult and inform whenever possible. It should also be recognized that the university will soon be implementing a new course proposal system and all are conscious of looking for ways to improve the proposal form in ways to increase clarity and efficiency for all involved while seeking to improve the quality of proposals.

C. What is most important when reviewing a course proposal? Does the current course proposal form do a good job of addressing this?

This topic was tabled until a future meeting.

IV. New Business
A. Discussion of participation in grading

Discussion about participation as in students grading

Harry Brighouse submitted a statement on participation in the evaluation of student performance:

The UCC uses a rule that when a course makes more than 10% of a student’s grade will be based on participation, the syllabus must include clear guidelines concerning what counts as participation and how it will be graded.

It might be useful to explain our reasoning. Whereas students usually have a reasonably good understanding of what is required from them when writing an essay, taking a test, setting up an experiment, or making a presentation, participation is much vaguer. Does participation mean that they have to talk in class? If they only have to talk, and the quality of what they say is not graded they have an incentive to talk even if they have nothing worth saying. To avoid establishing this incentive, it makes sense to require that they have to say interesting and smart things in order for their participation to get a good grade, as they have to when they write a paper. But participation is different from writing a paper. When students write papers, their social skills are not being graded, and their peers’ lack of social skills are no barrier to their success. But with participation, a student with interesting things to say may be inhibited either by shyness, or (as is often the case) by the conversational space being occupied by a few students who speak a great deal. A teacher who grades the quality of participation in in-class discussions must be skilled at facilitating discussions, which includes being able to ask the right kinds of questions, being able to induce shy students to talk, and being able to prevent overconfident students from dominating discussion. If participation in TA-led
discussions will be graded, the Professor must be confident that the TA has the requisite skills – which, in turn, is only likely if the TA is a veteran, and has a record of high quality instruction.

Other kinds of participation can be graded: online contributions can count as participation for instance. The rule is not that participation should not be more than 10% of the grade, but that when it is students should have clear guidelines concerning exactly what they are expected to do in order to succeed.

In general the committee feels it is important that students should have a good sense of how they will be assessed in an area that is often not well defined. All agreed that attendance is expected and should not be included in the grading scheme. Only under unusual circumstances would a portion of the grade be tied to attendance. It is highly recommended that students be given a variety of ways to participate. For example provide the opportunity to prepare for participation portions of the course with study guide questions. Instructors may want to consider reflective essays, clickers, or having students formulate discussion questions.

Action item: A condensed, new version will be prepared that focuses on concrete ways participation can be described and assessed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 am.