

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, February 5, 2014
2:00 – 4:00
238A Morrill Hall

- Present: Alon McCormick (chair), Gifty Amarteifio, Michael Anderson, Nicola Alexander, Lee-Ann Breuch, Elaine Darst, Charlene Ellingson, Timothy Gearns, Gayle Golden, Janine Grebin, Kenneth Leopold, Keith Mayes, Robert McMaster, Nic McPhee, Thomas Michaels, Kristen Nelson, Moshe Volovik, Susan Wick
- Absent: Erich Beckert, Karla Hemesath, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt
- Guests: Susan VanVoorhis (Academic Support Resources); Professor Peter Hudleston (Chair, Council on Liberal Education); Assistant Vice Provost Suzanne Bardouche (Office of Undergraduate Education)
- Other: Emily Ronning (Office of the Provost), Associate Vice Provost Leslie Schiff (Office of Undergraduate Education), Heather Micek, Amanda Miklik, Kate Sophia, John Vollum (Academic Support Resources), Char Voight (Graduate School)

[In these minutes: (1) Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program; (2) update from the Council on Liberal Education; (3) educational policy clarifications (transfer credits and credits by examination)]

1. Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (ESUP)

Professor McCormick convened the meeting at 2:00 and welcomed Ms. VanVoorhis to provide the Committee with an update on the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (ESUP).

Ms. VanVoorhis began by emphasizing that this is an upgrade, not a new system, and involves upgrading the human resources, student, and financial systems. The student system has not been upgraded in a number of years; everyone who is involved with instruction of students will be affected by the changes. She said she wanted Committee members to think about what systems or tools they go to the most (e.g., EGMS? UMReports?) and which reports they use the most (class lists? major rosters? research spreadsheets?). She also wanted to know who their "go to" people will be once the system upgrades are in place—because they want to be sure that whoever those people are, they have a leg up on the training for the upgrade. Finally, she asked that they tell her of any other concerns that they have.

Ms. VanVoorhis said that extensive plans are being created and implemented to ensure that faculty are well informed and have a system they can use. After the upgrades "go live," they will have "all hands on deck" to provide help, will provide just-in-time communication and resources to assist faculty and others during critical periods (e.g., grading), and will provide "hypercare" after the upgrade goes live, with a focus on customer support, data integrity, and system availability and

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performance. Before the changes go live, they are providing "sneak peeks" (Committee members received one) to show changes in websites and the advantages, they are working with the people faculty members go to for help, are providing quick-start guides and video instructions, and will make visits at departments and colleges as they request to demonstrate capabilities and answer questions.

The current timeline calls for the upgrades to go live early in the fall (2014) or early (2015), during which they will provide all the support Ms. VanVoorhis mentioned. The challenge is to ensure that the users (4,300 full- and part-time faculty) have the information and resources they need. She turned to Ms. Micek and Miklik to provide a live demonstration of the New "Faculty Center" functionality available after the upgrade.

Committee members asked questions during the presentation.

Is the Course Guide going away?

Yes, the course guide is going away. In the new Faculty Center, instructors can put a link for a course web site or other public location to get information on how the course is taught. It will show in the Class Search results under Class Notes for students to see. This will be the replacement for course guide.

In the faculty center, is there any way to restrict instructors from having access to these permission numbers?

Yes, the class can be setup as student specific, so there won't be any permission numbers available and the link on faculty center will be view only.

Committee members were satisfied with the responses, and with the presentation as a whole.

Professor McCormick thanked Ms. VanVoorhis and her colleagues for the presentation.

2. Update from the Council on Liberal Education (CLE)

Professor McCormick welcomed Professor Hudleston, Chair of the Council on Liberal Education, to the meeting to provide an update from the Council (CLE).

Professor Hudleston provided data on liberal education seats by course level during 2012-13 for both cores and themes. He recalled that Laurel Carroll, the long-time staff member who supported the work of the Council, passed away recently, which was a great loss. The members of the Council have kept CLE business going with help from Dr. Schiff, and the Office of Undergraduate Education has hired a new staff member to provide support to the Council.

The main business of CLE at present is the re-certification of courses originally certified in 2008 as qualifying for designation as meeting the (then) new liberal education (LE) requirements that took effect fall 2010, Professor Hudleston reported; these re-certifications are on a four-year cycle. What CLE is looking for is what it sought the first time it certified the courses: to be sure there has been no slippage, it has the appropriate instructors, and the curriculum does what it says it does. It is

largely the case that courses do. The Council is about one-third of the way through the process of re-certification but also continues to receive proposals for new liberal-education courses.

A review of the data on seats available and seats taken in liberal-education courses during 2012-13 demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity, Professor Hudleston observed. In general, 67-90% of the seats in the courses are taken, and the campus is in a good situation because there may be a slight over-capacity (although not too much), which gives flexibility in scheduling and allows students to take the courses they need.

Professor McCormick asked if there are specific areas where there is a lot of student demand that CLE is hearing about. Not to his knowledge, Professor Hudleston replied. He went on to comment that the Committee might be surprised at the number of seats in 5XXX courses, which are supposed to be graduate-level courses; the number of liberal-education seats available at that level is largely an artifact of courses that are offered jointly at the 3XXX and 5XXX levels.

Professor Hudleston said that there is an issue that needs to be addressed: cross-listing courses. Dr. Schiff said that maintaining cross-listing is an entirely manual process, and if a course is cross-listed, updates need to be manually made in each of the cross-listed versions by each of the departments. She has a list of courses that are not accurately cross-listed (including some that have an LE designator and others that do not) because the system does not automatically align all versions of a cross-listed course.

Professor McCormick asked if there are any policy matters the Committee should think about or make recommendations about. There is one, involving a small number of cases, Professor Hudleston said: when the course syllabus has a different title and description than what is in the official catalogue. Those should be the same when the instructor hands out the syllabus. Ms. Golden asked where the breakdown occurs. It could be at the instructor level, Professor Hudleston said; he or she may make up the syllabus and title and it seems to be something the department does not control. It is rare, Dr. Schiff agreed, but when they see the disjuncture in the course titles in the re-certification process, they return the file to the department and ask if it is the same course.

Ms. Golden said the question is whether the policy needs to be changed or if the colleges need to impose policies on departments. Professor Hudleston agreed that a policy change may not be required, but it should be clear to departments that the course title must be the same as the one in the catalogue. When a course comes with a different syllabus, that is fine, because courses are tailored to individual instructors; CLE only wants to be sure that the liberal-education goals are being met, and the concern arises when the syllabus and catalogue have very different titles, suggesting a different focus. That is rare, Dr. Schiff added again, and courses do evolve, but if a course was certified five years ago, they must be sure it is still meeting the LE requirements.

Professor McCormick asked about the time it takes for a response to a new course proposal for LE. Dr. Schiff said that proposals for new courses receive priority; if all the materials are provided, a decision will be made at the next meeting (CLE meets once per month). The next priority is courses that have been returned to departments for clarification; if what was lacking has been provided, CLE will approve them. The last priority is re-certification (because certification is not removed pending re-certification—the course continues as usual). So new and revised courses are taken care of at the next meeting, she concluded, and the meeting docket is then filled with courses up for re-certification.

Professor Nelson commented that the process seems to take a long time and can lapse over semesters. Dr. Schiff said that the good news is that if a course is submitted for re-certification, and CLE believes it needs some beefing up, they do not pull certification in the meantime, as long as the department is working on it. There were occasions when Laurel Carroll would ask for materials for a course and would receive no response after several requests, so CLE is developing a strategy for de-certification if it asks about a course and receives no information after multiple requests. When courses are slated for decertification, the LE certification is removed in a future semester (so that students currently planning on taking it are not put at a disadvantage). The process would also allow a de-certified course to regain certification. Mr. Volovik asked about the process; Dr. Schiff said she communicates with the department and the collegiate associate/assistant dean(s) and selects a semester for removal of certification. This has only happened twice so far, she pointed out.

Professor Nelson recalled that there are now plenty of "Technology and Society" courses—but that hasn't always been the case. Are they concentrated in one college? They are not, Professor Hudleston said; they are spread across the colleges.

Professor Hudleston emphasized that CLE wants to help faculty members get their courses to meet the criteria; it does not take an antagonistic view of proposals. Thus far CLE has reviewed 228 courses for re-certification and denied 2, with 15 returned for clarification and 21 provisionally approved. Many of those returned for clarification now look great, Dr. Schiff said.

Professor McCormick asked if there is anything the Committee should have on its list for next year. Professor Hudleston said he could not think of anything at present.

Vice Provost McMaster reported that he is telling the colleges that the campus does not need a lot of new liberal-education courses, and that if they expect to enroll more students with more LE courses, that doesn't happen. All they do is move students from other liberal-education courses. Dr. Schiff said that while new courses are great, units should think about whether they have "old" liberal-education courses that are getting long in the tooth and could be revitalized or decertified. Professor Mayes said this message is not what he is hearing in CLA, where faculty are urged to develop new courses. Dr. McMaster said he would tell CLA that new LE courses will not bring new students.

Professor McCormick asked if it had helped when the required number of themes a student must take was reduced from 5 of 5 to 4 of 5. It did, Professor Hudleston said, because it allowed students more flexibility in constructing their schedule. Dr. Schiff noted that with the themes unified around current and important issues, there is cross-over between themes, so students are getting the content. She has looked at many courses and concluded that students are not missing major theme content.

Ms. Golden asked, with respect to new versus revitalized liberal-education course, if CLE considers the other courses a department or college offers. They do not, Professor Hudleston said. They consider each course on its merits. Dr. Schiff said that in the early 2000s CLE thought about whether there should be quotas and concluded there should not be, that it would let the free market work.

Dr. McMaster said that one change he would push for, if he could go back in time, is to put a limit on the number of liberal-education courses any one department could offer, rather than allowing them to try to offer almost their entire curriculum as meeting liberal-education requirements. There have been some courses that stretch the boundaries that make him uncomfortable. The perception has been that these courses increase enrollment in a unit, but they do not. What it does, Professor Hudleston agreed, is shift the number of students between courses. The number of students is the same, Dr. McMaster observed; Dr. Schiff added that when there is competition within a college, there is no net effect on finances because the tuition revenue goes to the college.

Professor McCormick thanked Professor Hudleston for his report.

3. Educational Policy Clarifications (Transfer Credits and Credits by Examination)

Professor McCormick turned next to Ms. Bardouche to introduce proposed clarifications to existing educational policies dealing with transfer credits, credits by examination, and credits from AP and other such examinations. He recalled that the Committee had earlier inquired if there were any policy questions related to e-learning; Ms. Bardouche reviewed policies and brings these three for clarification. The Committee will consider them today and take action at the next meeting.

Ms. Bardouche explained that the proposed revisions to the policies are to make clear who is eligible to receive credit through each of these three mechanisms and *in particular when that credit becomes applicable to a U of M degree program*.

- Transfer credits -- become applicable after the student is admitted as a degree-seeking student
- AP, IB, CLEP -- are applicable after the student is admitted as a degree-seeking student
- Departmental Exam Credit -- only currently enrolled, undergrad, degree-seeking students are eligible for credit by exam

She reported that her office receives numerous questions from students and parents and the public regarding the applicability of credits, and having the information in the policy and also in the FAQs will be clearer.

Ms. Bardouche reviewed the changes and began with the policy on Transfer of Undergraduate Credit. In addition to a few additions, a new point was added: "Transfer credits become applicable to a University of Minnesota degree program or certificate program only after the student has been admitted as a degree-seeking student or admitted to the certificate program." Students can apply for admission with transfer credits, but they will not be available at the University until the student enrolls in a degree program. Which means, Professor McCormick commented, that the University is not a place to give credit to people, it is here to grant degrees. Dr. Anderson asked if this change simply clarifies what the University is already doing; it does, Ms. Bardouche said, and there are additional FAQs to further explain the policy.

If a transfer course is to meet a prerequisite requirement, does the system recognize it or is that determined by the college or department, Professor McCormick asked? It is not automatic, Ms. Bardouche said, and does mean additional work for each admissions office.

Ms. Bardouche next noted new language proposed for the policy on Credit for Nationally-Recognized Exams for Undergraduate Students (i.e., AP, IB, and CLEP): "These credits awarded become applicable to a University of Minnesota degree program or certificate program only after the

student has been admitted as a degree-seeking student or admitted to the certificate program." Again, the point is that these credits only count one a student has enrolled in a program.

For the policy on Departmental Exams for Proficiency or Credit for Undergraduate Students, Ms. Bardouche reported these clarifications: "No department is required to offer exams for proficiency or credit" and "Eligibility for such exams is limited to currently enrolled, undergraduate, degree-seeking students. Departments may establish further eligibility criteria for an exam for proficiency or credit." The largest concern is students (not at the University) who may take a MOOC and then come to the University to ask for credit by examination. The policy is now quite clear: One must be an enrolled, degree-seeking undergraduate before credits by examination will be given. Dr. McMaster observed that this policy goes beyond MOOCs and is pertinent to the entire online world.

Ms. Bardouche provided the Committee with data on credits by examination (T credits) for 2012-13; she noted that these were all taken by degree-seeking students.

Twin Cities

- 453 instances of credit by exam being awarded
 - 246 students earned this credit
 - 130 earned credit only once
 - 116 have 2 or more instances (a small # of these received between 15-27 credits)

She explained that the vast majority of the high credit earners received credit for a single term for CHEM, MATH, and PHYS courses. The others awarded were for language proficiency.

Morris, Crookston, Duluth

- Only a handful of T credits were awarded in 2013 for these campuses.
- Morris has a partnership with Shanghai University where Morris- admitted students take Morris coursework prior to their first term of enrollment in Economics. A test is administered and students who pass receive T credits for Principles of Microeconomics, predominantly. These credits are usually posted in the summer.

So, Ms. Bardouche concluded, credit by examination is not a widespread phenomenon.

Professor McCormick observed that the departmental exams could take many different formats, if a department chooses to offer them. He asked why a student who has the option of a placement exam versus an exam for credit would take the latter. Ms. Bardouche said the T credits count toward the 120 credits required for a degree, even though they carry no grade. Are transfer credits accepted if the student transfers to another institution, Professor McCormick asked? Ms. VanVoorhis said that most institutions, including the University, do not accept such credits.

Ms. Golden asked if T credits count toward the major. That is up to the program, Ms. Bardouche said. Most programs do not accept S/N credits in the major, which is what T credits are.

Ms. Golden asked if there are any data suggesting the demand for credits by examination will increase. Ms. VanVoorhis said she has not seen any, and except for institutions that advertise that they give credit by examination, most universities will maintain the status quo and leave the decision up to

departments. Professor McCormick commented that there is discussion among advisers and curriculum committees on this topic, and it might be worthwhile for Vice Provost McMaster's office to communicate about the University's policies so that everyone is aligned. Ms. VanVoorhis reported that there have been a number of groups involved in the discussions and they are all in agreement about the policies.

Professor McCormick said the policies would be voted on at the next meeting and then forwarded to the Faculty Consultative Committee for placement on the docket of the Faculty Senate. He adjourned the meeting at 3:35.

-- Gary Engstrand

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