

Committee on Educational Policy
Minutes
Wednesday, October 24, 2012
Kerr Hall Room 307, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Present: Mark Anderson, Max Hufft (SUA Rep.), Pam Hunt-Carter (Registrar, *ex-officio*), Olof Einarsdottir, Tracy Larrabee (Chair), Ronnie Lipschutz (Provost Rep.), Ted Warburton, James Wilson, Susanna Wrangell (staff), and Jim Zachos.

Absent: Lora Bartlett, Maria Jennings (SUA Rep.), Barbara Love (Articulation Officer), Michael McCawley (Director of Admissions), Stephen Sweat (NSTF Rep.).

Guests: Cher Bergeon (Academic Preceptor Designee), Margie Claxton (Associate Registrar), Richard Hughey (VPDUE).

Executive Session

Members discussed the proposed Open Access Policy that is being reviewed by senate committees and was written by UCOLASC. Chair Larrabee updated agenda items from this week's SEC meeting where members discussed a new composite rate for UC employees, Rebenching funding, Proposition 30, negotiated salaries, and financial aid. Chair Larrabee will be submitting a response to UCEP on the WASC draft handbook of guidelines, members agreed with the VPAA's assessment for research institutions and did not offer additional comments.

I. Announcements and Updates:

Chair Larrabee explained how a consent agenda works based on parliamentary procedures in the rule book by Sturgis. A new student representative joined the committee today, Max Hufft and was welcomed before the executive session began and joined the committee with the guests at 11:30.

Chair Larrabee changed the order of the agenda and moved points four and five to the top of the agenda.

II. External Review discussions (10 minutes each)

Stage 1:

History of Art and Visual Culture (HAVC)

HAVC has addressed issues to their program and curricula based on the last external review from 2008. Faculty addressed the issue of bottlenecked curricula based on their methods course HAVC 100A by increasing enrollment from 15 to 44 students and allowing a summer session offering. The major requirements were reduced from 15 courses to 13 to address teaching of core courses by faculty, reducing the need for Lecturers. Having access to smart classrooms helped resolved other curricular needs. The department faculty was reduced to nine and is currently back to 10 ladder rank and two SOE lecturers. HAVC graduate students requested a TA training day and the department created a one day workshop which provided a positive response with the undergraduate population.

Additional questions for the draft charge letter:

1. How is the department assessing the effects of new "experiments in teaching?"

2. What is the experience of faculty, graduate TAs, and undergraduate students with the TA program, especially in light of the department's revised TA training? How have ongoing experiments in teaching impacted or anticipated the potential for increased TA workload and responsibilities?
3. What has been the effect of the new undergraduate GE requirements on the department's mission and curricular offerings? What has been the experience of conversion to new GEs on students and faculty?
4. What is the current relationship of the department to the Center of Visual and Performance Studies (CVPS)? In what ways does CVPS serve as an extracurricular opportunity for undergraduate students to interact with University faculty and guest lecturers?

Environmental Studies

The overall department profile has weathered the resource reduction reasonable well by increasing the number in their department thru FTE transfers, new hires and donations to teach their small courses. The loss of TA and Lecturer support effected the undergraduates response survey, many felt less supported and disappointed with the quality of the undergraduate course experience.

Additional questions for the draft charge letter:

- Phenomenal internship program based on the number of students served and poster events that the department regularly sponsors.
- Previous survey stated increased availability of undergrad advising, which has now gone down in quality and availability since last year.
- Course availability, what concrete steps will the department take to address undergraduate course satisfaction?
- What measures are in place to assure quality TA instructors instruction and lower division course instruction?
- Integration of majors seems to have improved from the last ERC.
- Diversity was an issue in the last review and has not been addressed in the self-study this year, why has the profile of the student body not changed much, how will the department address diversity in the future?
- During the time the self-study was written the department had a disqualification policy and the course in question was taken by 80% of the students in their junior year, what was the outcome? How many students completed the major?
- What is the satisfaction percentage rate, it is stated here at 65% and is this considered to be highly satisfied?

Physics—Physics Education B.S.

CEP's general impression is that the Department is doing a good job teaching General Physics courses for the physical and biological sciences and providing a good education for their four majors, Physics, Astrophysics, Applied Physics and Physics Education, the last of which was implemented in 2009. Members commend the department for revamping their physics laboratory, for accommodating community college transfer students and for efforts to limit their overall undergraduate education to four years. Despite considerable success, Physics notes particular concerns in its self-study. These include advising, capacity in lower division courses, availability of a sufficient range of upper division courses and adequate opportunities for undergraduate research leading to a thesis.

Additional questions for the draft charge letter:

- One of the primary areas of concern, reflected by the student surveys, is the recent decline in the advising of Physics undergraduates. The ERC should address this concern, which appears to be related to the establishment of Divisional advising services rather than individual advisors. How can the department increase the effectiveness of their advising?
- The ERC should assess whether limited resources and increased enrollment in service courses have affected the ability of the department to maintain and enhance its undergraduate curriculum.
- The Physics 7 series, which did not require calculus, is no longer being offered, and Physics 6 now includes majors of programs previously requiring Physics 7. Has the elimination of Physics 7 diluted the standards and quality of Physics 6?
- The Physics courses no longer include discussion sections, but instead offer “open labs” where students can drop in for help. Has the new format affected the success of students in completing course requirements?
- Sufficient space for teaching upper division Physics courses is still a concern, because renovation of teaching laboratories in Thimann has been delayed. The ERC should comment on whether the delay is affecting the quality of upper-division laboratory courses in Physics.

What is the status of efforts to provide “more uniform training in ethics and safety,” an issue raised by the last external review committee, and emphasized in both the Dean's letter in 2005 and the follow-up report.

- A critical issue raised in the self-study (and in the 2004-2005 self-study and external review committee report) is the small size of the experimental condensed matter physics group. How does this issue as well as the small size of the Applied Physics group (only one FTE) affect the ability of the department to maintain and advance its curriculum, particularly upper-division courses, and provide adequate thesis opportunities in these areas?
- The review committee should evaluate the administration, advising and academic quality of the new Physics Education major.

III. Pre – Consultation on Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies Tyrus Miller

CEP members held a brief discussion and agreed on the following questions to send before our consultation at our next meeting:

- 1. The overarching concern in all our questions is that the rebenching funds not be used to the detriment of undergraduate education. Sometimes it seems that all the money has been allocated to graduate education at the expense of undergraduates. Sometimes it seems that we are committing now to a change in our educational structure that will be locked in at the end of five years, whether or not our student population changes according to aspirations. CEP has many variations on this worry.
- 2. We are concerned that all the aspirational growth funds will go to fellowships or FTE. In the past few years, TAS funds have been cut substantially, and this has degraded the

undergraduate experience. Are any funds going to go to TAships? Whether or not they do, is there any way to add accountability to divisions with respect to TA funds and how they are used? For example, we know of situations where the number of TAships has fallen dramatically, and yet temporary lecturers and Graduate Student Instructors are common. This means that students sometimes are well into their upper-division education before they have contact with ladder-rank faculty. Additionally, for some divisions with newly added graduate programs and low research funds, professors must, of necessity, take the time they previously spent on undergraduates in order to interact with graduate students. Increased TAships could help undergraduates two ways in those situations.

IV. Adding Course Syllabi to the Student Portal

GC and CEP received a request from the Commissioner of Academic Affairs from the Student Union Assembly (SUA) to consider adding course syllabi to the student portal so students can better assess courses before enrolling in them. Syllabi are driven by the support offered or available to the instructor. But an extended course description is a more general document than a syllabus, and could be very beneficial for students to decide if the course meets their career path. Members expressed concerns with staff and faculty work load, and many faculty and staff would not necessarily have the time to do this. Students can benefit before signing up for the course, they would get a more in depth look at what the course entails, what the workload really is. Having a sample syllabus to get some idea what the course is going to look like would be helpful, but it is not certain how to accomplish this. Members suggested using a previous year's syllabus but it is dependent on the individual instructor's teaching style. eCommons maybe a possible solution as summer session does post the course syllabus so students can see what the classwork will actually be. Members will continue this discussion at a future meeting.

V. Course Objectives and Guidelines from VPAA Lee

Due to lack of time, this item was moved to the next meeting agenda. The review team from WASC requires certain criteria centered around core topics and student preparation to learn the skills to complete the course objectives. Is the content and syllabi of the courses designed to serve the goal and learn the core topics? Members would like to create criteria to evaluate the efficiencies of our GE requirements, for example, textual analysis (TA) is important for both Politics and Psychology students. CEP is interested in when the students complete the course, in the sophomore, junior, or senior year, and what, if any, data are statistically possible to show when the student took the course and how this affected their success rate in the course or major. Were the sophomores more successful than junior or senior year students? CEP members will finalize their response for VPAA Lee at a future meeting and have a discussion on strategy and course of action to take in measuring the effectiveness of learning outcomes in departments and programs.

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