University Curriculum Committee

Minutes # 15

April 13, 2022

Members Present: Califf, Carlson, Howell, Johnston, Newport, Pence, Kalter, Falbe, Leonard, Kroesch, Hurd, Pierce

Members Absent: Jia, Paolucci, Hunter, Duffy, Myers, Sammons, Sessom

Guests: Ian Gawron – Registrar's Office, Stacy Ramsey – Registrar's Office, Danielle Lindsey – Office of Registrar, Todd Stewart – Department of Philosophy, Christopher Hamaker – Department of Chemistry, Tenley Banik – Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment.

1. Convene: Califf convened the UCC meeting

2. Introductions:

3. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes were briefly explained. The minutes were approved after no objections.

4. Proposed Discussion and Action:

    a.   Final Exam Discussion

Califf introduced the discussion topic as a general inquiry and referenced that Crystal Nourie had provided a document to explain the final exam scheduling process, plus the history of the process. The discussion primarily covered: the recent practice of posting the schedule part-way through the semester versus the previous practice of posting it in the beginning of the semester; the formula for distributing final exam time/day slots; the history of final exam scheduling. This discussion primarily included: Kalter, Califf, Hamaker (guest), Ramsey (guest), Hurd, and Pence. The discussion overall indicated that faculty have a variety of concerns about the negative impacts on students of the current processes, that they would like to work with the Office of Registrar to improve that process, that final exam scheduling can be difficult given the two-hour timeslots, that there are various primetime supply/demand-side concerns, and that perhaps Friday finals need to be implemented to help remedy some of the scheduling concerns. Ramsey indicated that she would look into the concerns raised and that the Office of Registrar will provide additional information on the process where appropriate. Kalter requested that the UCC and/or Office of Registrar look into whether other universities have solved the issues that drove the decision at ISU to schedule part-way through the semester so that we could learn from their practices. Califf invited UCC members to share concerns for future discussion if they have any after reviewing the provided information.

    b.   CAS Curriculum Committee Letter

Califf introduced this discussion topic and prompted Stewart (guest) to begin with comments about the letter that the CAS Curriculum Committee had written, which the Academic Senate's Executive Committee had assigned in part to the UCC. Stewart (guest) indicated that the overall point of the letter of concern about curriculum processes at ISU was a matter of better communication when important changes are made. They, overall, recommended the following: inform lower-level committees on changes made or contemplated, preferably before the vote toward the change occurs so that the lower-level committees may have input as necessary; the Academic Senate should also be informed of and vote on major changes (Stewart is a member of that body's Executive Committee) ; try to officially announce changes as they happen; and try to provide guidance to other committees as changes occur. Along with these discussion topics, additional topics that were discussed/mentioned were: confusion about some specific changes; notification systems; and jurisdiction/communication of UCC concerning policy votes. This discussion included: Stewart (guest), Hamaker (guest), Banik (guest), Hurd, Kalter, Califf, Johnston, Falbe, Newport, Gawron (guest). The discussion overall concluded that: the new curriculum management software should be used where possible to help resolve some of these communication concerns; that communication is beginning to improve to better include associate deans, who are on the college curriculum committees, in discussions about changes that occur; and that an annual training workshop about curriculum changes for curriculum committee chairs is about to be instituted. The members attempted to clarify what happened in regard to 300/400 graduate courses and history around this change. Hurd shared a timeline of activities leading to the implementation of splitting 300/400 level courses.

- 2014: The discussion about changing the process began when the courses increasingly became problematic for students and for curriculum committees.

- 2015: When dual credit courses were discussed with the Director of the Graduate School, it was requested that they be separated if possible. Departments fully complied even though they were not forced to do this. This served as a pilot to see if this could work.

- 2017: Extensive discussions were had with the following to help formalize the process based on lessons learned the past 2 years: graduate coordinators, Graduate Council, Graduate Curriculum Committee, Graduate Student Advisory Committee, Provost Senior staff, and select chairs and directors.

- Late 2018: The GCC voted to separate 300/400 level courses only when a change to the course was made so as not to force any department to do this.

- Early 2019 the information was shared with UCC but no vote was taken as UCC members did not see this as an undergraduate issue and didn't feel they should vote on whether they approved GCC's vote. This was also the initial agreement with Hurd (Director of the Graduate School) and Rosenthal (Associate Provost Undergraduate Education).

- May 23, 2019: The change was shared with associate deans for their communication to their curriculum committees. The curriculum website was updated at that time. After the website was updated, communication was sent to the chairs.

- Fall 2019: Hurd and Selkow met with Senator Nikolau due to his role on the CAS CC, AAC, and the Senate Executive Committee. The conversation centered around how to make the process better for faculty completing the forms. He had written suggestions from the CAS CC which were implemented immediately.

They also discussed the importance of evaluating changes as they are being implemented, and in some cases, pulling back halfway or all the way if a change creates unforeseen pain points. They debated the importance of procedure changes versus policy changes, and the difficulty but importance of defining where the line between low-level procedure and procedure requiring Senate approval lies. Much discussion centered on the importance of identifying major changes in proposals/policy/procedure versus non-major changes given various practical and efficiency concerns. Additional discussion occurred on other methods to potentially improve communication, such as creating a regular check-in between the GCC and UCC, better or more frequent inclusion of department chairs in training and communication, increasing sites of circulation for proposals/policy changes/procedure changes as well as for disseminating minutes or key discussions points within them more widely, a Teams chat with university and college curriculum chairs where notification of changes can occur instantly through the channel as they happen, and frequent, routine check-in with the Senate chair regarding which procedural changes need higher level approvals.

5. Liaison Assignments:

Califf indicated that, given time constraints, any reports should be emailed to the UCC members.

a. Council for General Education – Nothing reported

b. Council for Teacher Education – Nothing reported

c. Academic Affairs Committee – Nothing reported.

6. Staff Report:

Nothing.

7. Miscellaneous:

Nothing

8. Adjournment:

The UCC adjourned approximately 4:35 pm.