

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES

December 6, 2017

2:00-3:30 pm

****HOH 706****

I. UCOC November 2017 Minutes

- *Attachment: UCOC November 2017 Minutes*

→ **APPROVED**

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Last Year's (2016-2017) Unresolved Business – Dornsife Unit Minimum, Conferring Unit, Who Can Offer a BA (Jane Cody, Dornsife Associate Dean for Academic Programs; Andrew Stott, Dornsife Dean of Undergraduate Education)

DISCUSSED, NOVEMBER 1, 2017 Chair Chi Mak introduced guests Jane Cody, Dornsife Associate Dean for Academic Programs, and Andrew Stott, Dornsife Dean of Undergraduate Education, and asked them to speak about the language they are proposing for the catalogue. Stott mentioned that he has recently joined the Dornsife Dean's Office, and has been investigating this issue at USC as well as at peer institutions. He explained that the goal is to establish a justifiable and reasonable minimum unit requirement from within the college for students also pursuing a BA outside the college in order to ensure a solid liberal arts education while also taking timely completion of the degrees into consideration.

Cody described a USC liberal arts education, which prescribes that a student's major field is pursued with depth of critical thinking within the discipline, as well as with breadth across many fields in the college, such that students maximize on self-development in their individual ways. This is opposed to professional school degree requirements, which are often more or less set according to the discipline being studied. She noted that the college has always had a liberal arts unit requirement to help ensure this. Traditionally, of the 128-unit minimum required for an undergraduate degree, 104 are required to be completed in the college. If a student pursues a second major, the minimum is reduced to 96 units to allow greater flexibility and exploration beyond the college. Further, if a student also pursues a degree that's administered outside the college, but conferred by Dornsife, the minimum college unit requirement is waived.

Cody said that over time, the rationale for this has eroded, and a minimum unit requirement for students pursuing outside degrees should be established. She claimed that to maintain the integrity of a liberal arts degree, over half of the units should be earned within the liberal arts college, which for a 128-unit degree would be 64. Marginally more, 70, should really be the bare minimum number of units required in the college.

Mak questioned what degrees are under consideration – the BAs administered outside Dornsife but conferred by Dornsife – and whether there are BAs that are not conferred by Dornsife. Robert Morley, Assoc. Registrar, Curriculum, cited the example of a BA administered by Annenberg even though historically Dornsife has always conferred it. It is set up in the college but the diploma says Annenberg. He added that, from his operational perspective, a BA is always associated with the college.

It was questioned what it means for degrees to be “conferred,” especially as policy and procedures evolve. Robin Romans claimed the BA in Annenberg is evidence of a change to these traditional underpinnings. At some point the Provost allowed a BA in Annenberg, but in keeping with Morley’s remarks, history is preserved in certain operations and record keeping. Romans returned to Dornsife’s request and questioned how it might affect other units.

Mak responded that if there is no basic agreement about which jurisdiction these populations of students are under, deciding what “confer” means could potentially have a real impact. Cody clarified that their goal is not to cause any impact on degrees across the university, but only to clearly and reasonably define what a liberal arts degree means when earned from Dornsife. Stott wondered if 70 is the proper number of units – more than half – but keeping time to degree in mind.

Brian Head, AHS, questioned if there should be such a difference in policy when considering a BA in Dornsife and, for example, a BFA in a professional school. What explains the difference in “collegeness” under one circumstance but not the other?

Mak and Cody summarized the global issue, which is that if each unit were able to define what a BA or BS is, the problem would be resolved. But if each unit were asked to translate their BS or BA into Dornsife College parameters, various schools would not agree because of the vast unit differentials. Mak said that the committee can understand the justification for Dornsife’s request, but added that further investigation into potential effects is required and that future discussion of any such effects would be further enhanced with input from Assoc. Registrar Matt Bemis, Degree Progress.

UPDATE FOLLOWING NOVEMBER MEETING Cody and Stott sent Chair Chi Mak the following language to be considered for inclusion in the catalogue:

For students who are earning a degree in USC Dornsife and also a degree conferred by Dornsife but administered by a professional school, this minimum is reduced to 70 units. Other exceptions will be considered by the Dornsife College Dean for Undergraduate Education.

➔ **APPROVED, DECEMBER 6, 2017, with discussion** Matt Bemis, Assoc. Registrar, Degree Progress, presented figures related to the number of units completed in Dornsife College for the last 17 students to graduate with a BA in Dornsife and a BA in a professional school. In all cases, even if subtracting foreign language requirement units (which are often waived by passing a placement/AP exam), the student met or exceeded the proposed 70-unit minimum in Dornsife. Chair Chi Mak reiterated from prior discussion that the policy in question is solely geared toward Dornsife students and the proposed language would make it eminently clear what is required of them. Bemis concurred and confirmed that aside from a slight uptick in overhead for the Degree Progress office, he would not be opposed to the policy if it accomplishes a Dornsife goal. UCOG members agreed, noting that the questions of what constitutes a BA and what conferring a degree means will need to be revisited at a later meeting.

B. Potential Overlap between New Proposals and Existing Curriculum Offerings (Chi Mak, Chair of UCOC)

DISCUSSED, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017 Chair Chi Mak acknowledged the issue and noted the potential for proliferation going forward, which suggests that policy should be developed or revised. Recently approved ACAD 309 - Dreams and Madness: The Art of Japan's Golden Age of Animation overlaps content from within the School of Cinematic Arts as well as Dornsife College. Mak read the response SCA Dean Renov provided when asked to sign off, emphasizing the second paragraph that specifically pertained to content duplication. Mak then read Dornsife Dean Jane Cody's response, which seconded Renov's comments and added that:

"We should be careful or the result will be divergence in presenting and studying subjects of mutual interest. This is quite the opposite of the university-wide mandate for convergence and, even worse, may well result in trade school-like curricula in a significant number of units."

Mak said this course captures the current issue, noting the similar issue of affected department sign-off for Special Topic courses. Steve Bucher questioned what percentage of the issue is a result from Special Topics versus regular courses. Robert Morley described the affected department policy in its most recent form, citing that by nature of their temporary and expedited offerings, sign-offs were not expected until that course be made a real course. Diane Badame disagreed, stating that this process should be done up front. Judy Garner noted the general lack of a consistent sign-off procedure and questioned logistics: What are repercussions when the result isn't collegial? How does potential overlap get identified?

Brian Head agreed and added that syllabi are encouraged to be posted in the online Schedule of Classes, which is clearly a beneficial update from the print version format. Head expressed interest in the idea of posting every syllabus in a searchable way. Steve Bucher noted the constructive – not punitive – motivation for this. Geoff Shiflett suggested the online USC Catalogue. Morley returned to the idea adding each syllabus to the Schedule of Classes.

Robin Romans questioned if such procedures are really necessary and noted the groundwork required for all syllabi to be posted. Mak expressed favor for the idea and offered to investigate options, then returned to the issue of overlap. He noted the potentially punitive nature of sign-off procedures and emphasized that the focus should be on encouraging a collaborative atmosphere. Bucher brought up the issue of terminology and the committee recommended it be known as an acknowledgment more than a "sign-off."

Morley questioned the CCO's role in enforcing this procedure. Garner concurred and added that proposals involving very specialized areas may not be received by the appropriate party anyway. Shiflett claimed that occasionally the same content does deserve to be taught in differing formats and focus, perhaps one course with huge sections and one with small. Garner stated the crux of the issue is when a department really does hold supreme prowess over an area in the eyes of the university, but added that if there's another department that merely 'dabbles' then what's the harm. Mak said arguments can be made for both sides but that UCOC shouldn't say pass or no pass for a proposal. Shiflett expressed concern over misuse of resources in inappropriate instances of overlap.

Mak encouraged a more thoughtful process and questioned if it could be built into the proposal in a preemptive way. Head concurred and referenced CCO outreach, a process that often starts just as Mak described. Mak reiterated that the procedure should be in place and done right for positive results, and potentially a change of language in the proposal form would help this effort. The committee agreed, wrapping up with discussion emphasizing the importance of collaboration.

DISCUSSED, OCTOBER 4, 2017 Chi Mak confirmed that the question of content overlap is a larger issue than originally thought, reiterating that improvements could be made to the proposal forms to encourage early stage consideration. Committee discussion returned to the idea of an approved syllabi archive, which would help record approved content and make it accessible to the academic units. The catalogue is searchable but the title and description of a course are obviously not as complete as a syllabus. Geoff Shiflett noted that it would be useful to be able to refer to the syllabi of existing courses when said courses are referenced in new proposals.

Several members questioned how it would be determined if an archived syllabus is up to date and if the units would have to submit updated versions – an unrealistic expectation. Steve Bucher also wondered if a course is approved and syllabus posted, but then subsequently changed by new faculty or leadership, would it create conflict. Diane Badame questioned if the archive would be public or private?

Mak asked Morley if the syllabi could be posted on the Registrar website. Morley supported posting the syllabi in general but expressed concern that the overhead involved to use the Registrar site would be too great. Shiflett noted that Curriculumlog currently houses all approved syllabi proposed in the system and that it's searchable. He also questioned the use of the term "syllabus" when proposing new courses, noting the material that is required for a syllabus but not for course review, such as Statements on Academic Conduct and Support Systems. Shiflett and Morley discussed the idea of using blackboard to house the typical 'boilerplate' information, but only 60-70% of courses have an active blackboard site. The sites are set up but not in use, which was suggested to be a faculty issue.

Morley and Badame voiced support of the current syllabus requirements, noting that inclusion of certain components in a "syllabus" is a standard, and that while seasoned faculty might understand this standard, adjunct faculty might not.

Mak asked the committee to consider the current content overlap language in the proposal forms and described potential additional language to be added to the new program and new course form, reiterating that UCOC should shift focus toward encouraging collaboration and innovation not obstruction. He offered to draft the new language and to have it approved at a subsequent meeting, and expressed interest in inviting guest speakers who might provide examples of successful collaboration

DISCUSSED, NOVEMBER 1, 2017 Chi Mak presented the proposed language to be included in the new proposal forms and questioned if the Provost should review and approve. Robin Romans suggested that Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy should review it. Mak asked the committee to think on it and suggest any edits, noting that the goal is for the units to formulate their programs and courses with affected departments considered in advance.

FOR APPROVAL, DECEMBER 6, 2017 Mak worked with John DeMartini to enter the following language into the new course proposal form, noting that now that it's in place, it can be easily updated without the vendor's intervention. The new program form contains the same language, modified appropriately.

USC strives to deliver a uniquely diverse and strongly innovative curriculum to all our students. Describe, if applicable, any crossover between the proposed course with existing USC curriculum offerings, any synergistic efforts with other units that may enhance the innovation of the proposal, and how the proposed course increases the diversity of USC's curriculum offerings.

→ **APPROVED** Following UCOC member discussion at the December 6 meeting, Executive Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy sent Chair Chi Mak an approval of this language by email and applauded UCOC's efforts.

C. **Sign-Offs for Special Topics** (Robert Morley, Associate Registrar)

Robert Morley contends that no sign-off should be required for special topics courses, as they are meant to fast track and test new and innovative offerings. The content will be reviewed and sign-offed on by affected units if and when they become permanent course offerings.

From the MAY 3, 2017 Minutes:

The Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) performs a cursory review of the temporary course offerings, Special Topics, via Kualii, and then schedules the courses for various departments. Attention has not been paid necessarily to getting "sign-offs" from potentially affected departments. The priority is an expedited review for new ideas to be tested.

Recently Sol Price proposed a course, "Social Marketing," which was approved without request for sign-off from Marshall. Marshall objected. The curriculum staff member then questioned if the following Marshall courses that were approved should have had sign-offs as well:

Course	Title
MKT 499	The Art and Science of Creating and Marketing Blockbuster Entertainment Franchise
BUAD 499	The Mixed-Use Development Process
BUCO 499	Crisis Communication
BAEP 599	Entrepreneurship in the Media and Entertainment Industry

Members of CCO question if a proposal should have a sign-off or two multiple times a day. For regular review, we insist on it. For the cursory review of Special Topics, which are supposed to be a fast-tracked approval to try out new ideas, should sign-offs be required as well?

Separate, but related, would the transparency of Curriculog assist this process by making departments more apt to communicate with potentially affected departments that may see the review in process on Curriculog?

→ **DECIDED, MAY 3, 2017**, UCOC members felt that Special Topics offerings should also get affected school sign-offs. Units should be encouraged to collaborate. More and more special topics are being offered that impinge on content offered by another school. Sign offs for special topics would help mitigate this.

Members of CCO request that a memo be sent from the Provost stating this change to process and procedure for special topics offered by schools and departments, effective spring 2018.

REVISITED, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017 Discussion about content overlap touched on the issue of requiring sign-offs for Special Topics. If the May 3, 2017 decision stands, the members of the CCO request a Provost memo, as above.

DISCUSSED, OCTOBER 4, 2017 Chair Chi Mak referenced prior Provost discussion and wondered if requiring affected sign-offs for special topics is stifling innovation. He requested input from Associate Registrar Robert Morley, who had contended at previous meetings that no sign-off should be required for special topics courses, as they are meant to fast track and test new and innovative offerings. Morley read an email from a prominent coordinator in Marshall School of Business that described a situation wherein an instructor who Marshall would not endorse to teach business topics was subsequently hired by another school to teach the material via a special topics course; this example heavily underscored the need for sign-offs.

Morley discussed the process by which special topics get approved, and noted the expectation of a quick turnaround. The Curriculum Office staff become the obstructors when a legitimate sign-off is requested. The CCO will continue to enforce this policy but requests the full support of UCOC and Provost backing, in particular a memo sent to the community to inform them of what will surely be interpreted as a new policy.

Mak acknowledged that that there hasn't been a formal process in place and one needs to be carefully developed – not to stifle innovation but to address egregious issues ahead of a special topic being offered. Mak asked the committee to think a little more on this topic for future discussion.

FOR REVIEW, DECEMBER 6, 2017 The CCO requests that, per UCOC's decision regarding sign-offs for special topics, a memo be issued by either UCOC or the Provost.

- *Attachment: Draft of Special Topics Policy Memo*

DISCUSSED, DECEMBER 6, 2017 Members saw value in the proposed memo but asked for the opportunity to make edits to the language. Discussion turned to the logistics and theoretical underpinnings of special topics offerings, in particular that without oversight at the school dean level, the issue of affected departments is difficult to address. Members questioned the procedures for special topics review and approval, and wondered if a better system might be devised. Chair Chi Mak said he would investigate these questions for future discussion.

UPDATE FOLLOWING DECEMBER 6 MEETING In an email to Chair Chi Mak, Executive Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy expressed concern about sign-offs for special topics as discussed in the September minutes, and questioned the nature and extent of the problem UCOC is trying to solve. She suggested that the flexibility of special topic offerings should only be reduced if it's necessary to solve a significant problem. Mak agreed, noting that the discussion is ongoing and more fact finding is required.

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. GE Memos

- *Attachments: UCOC GE Memo 11-1-17
UCOC GE Memo 11-10-17
UCOC GE Memo 11-20-17*

Members present

Diane Badame
Steven Bucher
John DeMartini (Support Staff)
Judy Garner
Brian Head
Chi Mak (Chair)
Robert Morley (Assoc. Registrar)
Robin Romans
Geoffrey Shiflett

Members absent

Megan Chan (Financial Aid)
Donna Garcia
Danielle Mihram

Guests

Matt Bemis (Assoc. Registrar DP)