

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES

January 10, 2018

2:00-3:30 pm

****JFF 417****

I. UCOC December 2017 Minutes

- *Attachment: UCOC December 2017 Minutes*

→ **APPROVED**

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Updates to University Policy on Contact Hours (Robin Romans, Associate Vice Provost)
Elizabeth Graddy, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, formulated a faculty Credit Hour Taskforce to update the university's current policy on credit/contact hours and to recommend language for a new policy. The Taskforce was co-chaired by Robin Romans and Registrar Frank Chang. After several meetings and drafts of an updated policy, Graddy requests the final draft be reviewed by UCOC for any suggested changes.

- *Attachment: Contact Hours Memo Dec 2017 Final Draft*

→ **ENDORSED**, with discussion. Romans confirmed that the revised policy does not significantly differ from the existing policy, but is updated with language to 1) address online content, 2) acknowledge the Department of Education's charge to monitor compliance and 3) affirm the Department of Education's support of institutional flexibility. Members agreed with Chair Chi Mak when he noted that the update is indeed needed and timely.

B. Review Standards for Certain Professional Degrees (Judy Garner, HPS Chair)
The curricula for certain professional programs (namely Medicine, Law, and Dentistry) are highly regulated by professional accreditation standards and are not currently reviewed by UCOC as this would be an extra, almost redundant, layer of review. Perhaps not all professional programs must meet such a high standard, but it may be that UCOC could waive curricular review of additional programs if their accreditation standards are of an appropriate caliber.

- *Attachment: ACPE Standards 2016*

DISCUSSED, JANUARY 10, 2018 Garner observed that the programs under discussion tend to be in the health sciences because this area is so highly regulated, owing to mandatory national and professional standards. Like some Law programs and the MD, they also have their own meticulous curriculum committees which are charged with ensuring compliance with the accrediting body. Garner questioned her role in reviewing Pharmacy courses, for example, which were already undergoing an accreditation review process that is of a standard as rigorous as those of the MD and JD.

She wondered if, upon review and confirmation of the accreditation standards and other requirements, such as board exams, UCOC might forgo review of these programs. However, Garner stated that cross-discipline programs such as the dual MD/MPH should automatically not be considered for this exception.

Donna Garcia, Director of Academic Affairs, noted that the University Committee on Academic Review (UCAR) does not review professionally accredited doctoral programs. Chair Chi Mak questioned how the quality of the accreditation standards of such programs is overseen. Robin Romans, Associate Vice Provost, responded that UCOC would be the body to review these standards, but noted that in order for the recommendation for these procedures to be made to the Provost, UCOC would have to consider: 1) should the Provost's Office be comfortable signing off on one of these programs solely because the dean proposed it, even if it will be held to a high accreditation standard, and 2) if there is a scandal or some other serious issue associated with one of these programs, will USC be comfortable claiming that the program (or various programs) aren't reviewed by UCOC. Romans wondered if there might be away to perform a highly streamlined review instead of no review at all.

Mak suggested that the first goal should be to identify and articulate the metrics used to decide whether a program should be reviewed by UCOC. Perhaps if a UCOC representative were to take part in a program's accreditation review process and found that the review performed by the accrediting body meets or exceeds UCOC standards, the program could be waived from normal UCOC review for the duration of the accreditation approval period. Mak asked the committee to contemplate this as well as intermediate review options to be discussed further.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Status of OSP Taskforce and International Partnership Checklist (OSP Taskforce, Robert Morley, Associate Registrar)

POSTPONED UNTIL LATER MEETING

- B. 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 signed-off by affected units if and when they become permanent course offerings.

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.

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.

DISCUSSED, JANUARY 10, 2018 Chair Chi Mak acknowledged Executive Vice Provost Graddy's concerns regarding the preservation of the flexibility and the opportunity for innovation that is currently built into the Special Topics system. Mak wondered if there might be some way to monitor the standards of these offerings without impinging on the school, and/or if an advisory notice could be issued to the academic unit when a Special Topic course content overlaps significantly with content offered by another unit. Currently, only Dornsife College Special Topics are routed through the dean's office for approval in Kuali. It was questioned if all Special Topics should at least be approved by the school dean so that issues of overlap might be more easily addressed should they arise. Mak encouraged the committee think more on this for continued discussion.

Members present

Steven Bucher
Megan Chan (Financial Aid)
John DeMartini (Support Staff)
Donna Garcia
Judy Garner
Brian Head
Chi Mak (Chair)
Robert Morley (Assoc. Registrar)
Robin Romans
Geoffrey Shiflett

Members absent

Diane Badame
Danielle Mihram

Guests

Deborah Romero (Support Staff)