

# UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

## MINUTES

*May 1, 2019*

2:00-3:30 pm

\*\*\*\*ACC 312\*\*\*\*

### I. UCOC MINUTES

#### A. March 2019

- *Attachment: UCOC March 2019 Minutes*

➔ **APPROVED**

#### B. April 2019

- *Attachment: UCOC April 2019 Minutes*

➔ **APPROVED**

### II. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Update to the World Bachelor of Business Program (Tyrone Callahan, Vice Dean for Marshall Undergraduate Programs and Professor of Clinical Finance and Business Economics; Sean O'Connell, Manager of Marshall Undergraduate International Programs)

- *Attachment: USC Marshall and Bocconi grade distributions*

**EMAIL FROM VICE DEAN CALLAHAN, 4/22/19** To get credit for courses taken at Bocconi, WBB students are held to a higher standard than, e.g., exchange students: exchange students simply need to pass the class, while WBB students need to earn the equivalent of a USC C-. At Bocconi, students are given course grades (technically exam scores) ranging from 0 to 30. Scores of 0 to 17 are failing and thus equivalent to a USC F. An 18 is the lowest passing grade, equivalent to a USC D-. Initially, when the WBB program was designed, we designated a Bocconi score of 22 as being equivalent to a USC C-. Recently, we compared the grade distributions of Bocconi and USC (particularly at the lower end of the distribution) and determined that equating a Bocconi 22 to a USC C- is not accurate or appropriate.

The attached PDF shows the grade distributions for Bocconi and USC Marshall based on Fall 2018 data. It is not easy to perfectly align the two distributions, but I think we have done a decent job. USC Marshall had the second lowest average course GPA at USC (3.21) and third smallest absolute difference between average course GPA and average student GPA (0.081).

At USC Marshall only 2% of grades are below a C-. At Bocconi 11% of grades are below a 22. Therefore a 22 at Bocconi is a much higher bar to achieve than a C- at USC Marshall. We propose to recalibrate the conversion such that WBB students must earn a minimum course grade of 20 at Bocconi to satisfy the USC C- threshold. This is still higher than the standard for exchange students who just need to earn an 18. It also remains as a slightly higher bar on a percentile basis than a C- at USC Marshall, so it is a conservative adjustment.

Two additional side comments:

- 1) The reason Bocconi has a very small percentage of students getting below an 18 in classes is because students can electively choose not have an exam graded. This would be like allowing USC students to withdraw from a class at any time before final grades are submitted to the registrar. As such, students who know they have performed very poorly on an exam typically retake the exam, rather than have the exam be graded.
- 2) I've based the above on the USC Marshall grade distribution rather than the USC overall grade distribution. I think this is the more relevant distribution, but it is also a conservative approach given that Marshall had the second lowest average course GPA at USC (3.21). Marshall also had the third smallest absolute difference between average course GPA and average student USC GPA (0.081)

➔ **APPROVED** with the understanding that the program will be updated for current and future, but not former, WBB students.

B. USC Iovine and Young UCOG Subcommittee (John DeMartini, CCO, on behalf of Patrick Dent, IYA Assistant Dean of Curriculum)

➔ **DECIDED**, with discussion. Beginning fall 2019 the Academy's "home" subcommittee will be the SES but the Academy should expect input from other subcommittees as well.

C. Online Components at the Undergraduate Level (Brian Head, AHS Chair)

**DISCUSSED MAY 1, 2019** Head asked UCOG members to consider the question of what is appropriate to offer online at the undergraduate level. He suggested that there may be disagreement among campus partners that concerns the interpretation of USC's current stance on online undergraduate courses and programs, and questioned if the understanding was that fully online degree programs are forbidden but perhaps not online courses. He noted the proliferation and advancement in technology that enriches the curriculum, potentially through online delivery. UCOG members noted the success of all-online or hybrid graduate programs. Donna Garcia, Assoc. Director for Academic Affairs and point person for online programs, said that a taskforce is being developed to review undergraduate curriculum. Chair Chi Mak asked what percentage of online content should qualify as online instruction, noting that many courses may already make use of online content to varying degrees. At what point does online content substitute for class content?

Steve Bucher, OSP Chair and Professor of Technical Communication Practice, added that Marshall School of Business offers sections of WRIT 340 using a hybrid model, which might be useful to review. Matt Bemis, Assoc. Registrar of Degree Progress and Curriculum Services, noted that if the quality of instruction is identical, there may not need to be a limitation on online content in a hybrid model. He recommended comparisons of undergraduate curriculum at peer institutions. Mak said that the committee should definitely continue the discussion with a goal to provide guidance for developments in the future.

**UPDATE SINCE MAY 2019 MEETING** Donna Garcia reported increasing interest from campus partners regarding the definitions and criteria for "online" and "hybrid" courses. Garcia has been in touch with Michael Nichol, Associate Vice Provost for Online Education, who may have a stake in UCOG's continued discussion.

### III. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Multiple Undergraduate Degrees, Continued Discussion from Previous Years (Brian Head, AHS Chair and Geoff Shiflett, SES Chair)

**DISCUSSED MARCH 6, 2019** Shiflett explained that the conversation began when Viterbi proposed a major program in Informatics that would be adjunct in the sense that students would also adopt a primary major in addition to the adjunct major.

SES objected to this proposal, and to the idea of adjunct majors in general, holding firm that students should pursue developed and complete majors. Or, perhaps creating a minor was an appropriate solution. As a viable alternative, the department instead worked with Dornsife College to create a combined BA degree that included engineering components and a disciplinary specialization in the college, and which resulted in only one diploma. Following this discussion and subsequent research, Shiflett and Head were motivated to investigate more thoroughly how USC treats multiple majors and degrees as pursued by a single student.

Head added that there are various BAs that are conferred by Dornsife College but reside in the professional schools, and questioned the kinds and number of units involved. He noted that Dornsife College once waived the 'college rule' of minimum units required in Dornsife College for these students, but more recently amended the minimum to 70. He reiterated that the goal is to explore maximal flexibility for students and that there may be value in revisiting these questions. It was noted that the college rule (and potentially others) is specifically governed by Dornsife College and revising it is not necessarily within UCOC's purview. UCOC can, however, explore recommendations that may be proposed to the Provost's office for discussion. Chair Chi Mak asked to continue fact finding for further review.

**DISCUSSED APRIL 3, 2019** Discussion centered on the double major/second bachelor distinction, what constitutes a BA and which academic units offer/confer a BA.

Chair Chi Mak, Professor of Chemistry, discussed his research into the history of his department's BA and BS, which are majors of the same scientific discipline and both in Dornsife, noting that the BA was original to the college and the BS was something of an exception to the initial configuration of the BA. Mak added that clearly USC offers other 'Arts' degrees, particularly BFAs, which incorporate additional applied or studio-based components, but the Chemistry BA and BS both equally incorporate breadth and depth, the hallmark of a liberal arts education at USC.

Mak cited a previous conversation with Associate Registrar Matt Bemis (not present) that led to a better understanding of the pragmatic considerations from Bemis' perspective, the primary foci of which are reporting, peer institution practices, technical limitations, and the algorithm necessary to make degree tracking and posting happen, while never purposefully discounting philosophical considerations.

Associate Vice Provost Robin Romans commented on the history of liberal arts education, in general and at USC. Geoff Shiflett, SES Chair and Professor of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering, returned to what currently constitutes a double major and second bachelor's degree, what degrees and how many diplomas are earned, and how this is represented in the catalogue. He referenced Viterbi's proposal to create BAs in the engineering departments that could be coupled with, for example, the BS in Business Administration if USC's definition of and requirements for multiple degrees/majors could be more flexible. Megan Chan, Financial Aid, Compliance and Training, added a compliance perspective and noted the obligation to observe several distinctions very carefully, primarily related to the timing and the awarding of second bachelor's as opposed to double majors, which may have an impact on funding and aid.

Mak said he would like to explore these questions further and work with Dornsife to identify how their leadership would respond to BAs being offered in other schools, and whether they should continue to be conferred by Dornsife.

**DISCUSSED MAY 1, 2019** Mak reported on a meeting with leaders from Dornsife College, during which he posed the question of whether the college is considered the exclusive BA conferring unit, and if so, whether the college wishes to maintain this position. Members agreed that Jane Cody and Andy Stott of Dornsife College should join a future meeting to discuss.

Brian Head, AHS Co-Chair, wondered if perhaps the distinction that separates the college as a liberal arts entity from the university in general is being considered too strongly, and that such a distinction may be a historical artifact of a younger institution. He added that USC, particularly, is poised to embody the wider interpretation of the liberal arts. He used the example of the GE program, which demonstrates the shared values that are intrinsic to the program, and that come from across the university, not only Dornsife College.

Mak clarified that he did not intend to imply that Dornsife should necessarily maintain exclusivity, but rather that Dornsife leaders will be well suited to help inform the discussion based on their position. Members agreed and recommended that benchmarks and peer institutions be investigated.

#### IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

##### A. Scheduled Special Topics Report

- *Attachment: April 2019-May 2019 Special Topics*

**Members Present**

Diane Badame  
Matt Bemis (Assoc. Registrar)  
Steven Bucher  
Megan Chan (Financial Aid)  
John DeMartini (Support Staff)  
Donna Garcia  
Lawrence Green  
Brian Head  
Chi Mak (Chair)  
Geoffrey Shiflett

**Members Absent**

Judy Garner  
Danielle Mihram  
Robin Romans

**Guests**

Tyrone Callahan  
Eric Kidder  
Shelby King  
Sean O'Connell