

# UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

## MINUTES

*April 6, 2016*

2:00-3:30 pm

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

### I. UCOC January 2016 Minutes

- *Attachment: UCOC January 2016 Minutes*

NOTE: There were no UCOC meetings in February and March due to the curriculum management system integration and influx of proposals.

**→APPROVED**

### II. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Summer Program (Brian Head, Arts and History Subcommittee Chair)

**DISCUSSED**, Brian Head questioned: What oversight do USC schools have of Thematic Options curriculum offerings in their respective subject areas for the Summer Program courses? Further, what are the rigor and parameters for the high school courses given as part of the USC Summer Program for USC credit? Head said that music courses have been offered as Thematic Options courses to high school students in Dornsife's Summer Program. There has been no review of these music courses by Thornton. He questioned the review of the Summer Program courses that may earn student 3 units of credit and be applied to an undergraduate USC degree.

UCOC Members acknowledged that Cinema, Marshall and Viterbi offer courses in the summer, but they do not bear college credit. Members cited articulation as a concern and questioned why Thematic Options courses, if intended for honors students, are being used for the high school Summer Program courses.

Associate Registrar Robert Morley said that he would research the history of Thematic Options courses for the next UCOC meeting.

#### B. GE Process (Brian Head, Arts and History Subcommittee Chair)

**DISCUSSED**, Brian Head suggested that General Education courses be streamlined into the existing curriculum review process on Curriculog for greater workflow transparency. The current Dropbox method does not allow for trackability, reason for request, and discussion back and forth between committee(s) and department(s).

UCOC Chair Tom Cummings said that Richard Fliegel should be invited to the next UCOC meeting to discuss.

C. Articulation Issue (Steve Bucher, Off Studies Panel Chair)

At a future meeting, Steve Bucher would like to review the consistency of OSP criteria, specifically unit value and appropriate class-standing level. What do members of the Articulation Office consider to be appropriate unit value for a course and what criteria determine if a course should be considered be lower or upper division?

D. Advanced Standing (Kristine Moe, Curriculum Coordinator)

What are the rules for Advanced Standing? There are various instances of Advanced Standing illustrated in the Doctor of Education (EdD), the Master of Social Work (MSW), the advanced architectural degrees, etc. The Doctor of Social Work (DSW) was recently approved, without the required 60 unit minimum, because all students entering the program are required to have a Master of Social Work, or Master of Science, Social Work, which totals a good 60 units on its own. Advanced Standing is assumed for ALL students. Most recently the Occupational Therapy, PhD proposal indicated an Advanced Standing option, reducing the 60 unit requirement by approximately 20 units, or a 33% reduction. Sally Pratt questioned, what is the University Advanced Standing policy? It is not stated directly in the *Curriculum Handbook*, nor in the *2015-16 USC Catalogue*.

**DISCUSSED**, Chair of Science and Engineering Subcommittee, Geoff Shiflett, said that there is no one standard for Advanced Standing. It has always been left to the units. Susan Metros said that there are universities that offer competency-based credit for 20 units, but the students must pay for the units to be applicable to the university degree. Brian Head questioned how Advanced Standing is different from Transfer Units.

Tom Cummings requested a recommendation on Advanced Standing from Vice Provost for Graduate Programs, Sally Pratt.

NOTE: Statement of Advanced Standing identified post-meeting at <http://catalogue2015.usc.edu/graduate-2-2/>:

**Doctoral Admission with Advanced Standing**

Some doctoral programs at USC admit students with Advanced Standing (entry with an appropriate completed graduate degree from an accredited institution).

A minimum of 36 units of course work beyond the first graduate degree, exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation preparation, is required for the doctoral degree if students are admitted with Advanced Standing. Additional course work may be required if deemed necessary by the student's faculty. See [the Transfer Credit page](#).

E. Curriculum Review Steps (Kristine Moe, Curriculum Coordinator)

Sally Pratt has asked to review all graduate programs, including revised programs. Previously, the Provost step only acknowledged and authorized new program creation. Provost-level detailed comments now appear before UCOC subcommittee review. Should the Provost step follow UCOC subcommittee review in the future?

**DISCUSSED**, Kristine Moe said that the review process may be out of order currently, with Provost approving a program proposal, prior to UCOC subcommittee review, which is supposed to make its

recommendation to the Provost.

Tom Cummings said that previously the order had been switched, but then units said that UCOC had approved, and questioned why the Provost was stopping an approved program. UCOC Members agreed that the purpose of the Provost review is more “big-picture.” Provost review is more strategic and political. It is more of an acknowledgement that a program may be considered, rather than an approval, and therefore, belongs before UCOC subcommittee review.

Tom Cummings said that Robin Romans should consult with Sally Pratt and Andrea Hodge to be clear of the purpose/intention of the Provost-review step, moving forward.

#### F. IMPACT OF LATE REVISIONS (Kristine Moe, Curriculum Coordinator)

Earlier, defined deadlines benefit all.

**Deferred until May 2.**

### III. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Final Examination Policy

The following questions about the final exam policy have arisen in the past month:

1. “For (a) undergrads and (b) grads, can a final exam or final assignment be due on the 15th week of class? If yes, is the expectation that the class will still meet during exam week? And if so, are there any parameters on the types of activities that can take place in that class meeting during exam week?”
2. “... is it ok not to give a final examination at all? You cannot reschedule it, or substitute an exam given the last day of class, but do you need to have a final exam? This comes up when we orient our new faculty. We’ve been telling them that it is not ok to teach an undergraduate course and not have a final exam, and that they have to meet their students at the appointed final exam time. But this policy is silent about whether a final exam is even necessary. Can a final be skipped entirely?”

The Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) has followed the unwritten rule that has been passed down over time: Undergraduate courses need to have a final (paper, exam, presentation, etc.) on the University-scheduled final exam day and time. Graduate courses may have the final on the scheduled final exam day and time, or week 15 (the last scheduled class). All courses must have some sort of final: exam, paper, presentation, project, etc.

This rule however is nowhere explicitly stated. It is only implied by the omission in Appendix N of the Curriculum Handbook: “Undergraduate courses have a final exam given or project due on the scheduled date of the final exam.”

The above, unwritten rule came under the Registrar’s scrutiny when dealing with an exception to final exam time and date. Registrar Frank Chang said that graduate courses need to follow the same formula as undergraduates, otherwise contact hours are low.

Per Chang:

“Department of Education regulations say that all students (graduate students included) must have instructional contact through the end of the semester as defined on the Academic Calendar page (<http://academics.usc.edu>). If graduate students do not meet with the professor during finals week, the semester is cut one week short, which violates our academic calendar commitment.”

For UCOC’s consideration and discussion.

**DISCUSSED, December 10**, UCOC members agreed that in general professors know that there are to be fifteen weeks of instruction, with an exam, or final summative experience, due on the scheduled final exam date and time.

Kristine Moe mentioned that the issue was driven by Financial Aid concerns. Chair Tom Cummings said that the issue was important not because of Financial Aid concerns, but because professors do not want to short change students on contact time.

Questions arose: Should a mid-term then not considered “instruction time”? What about summer, half-semester, and online courses that do not have a university scheduled final exam? If the final is a paper, may it be handed in before the time of the scheduled final exam? If the final is a paper, must student and instructor meet during the scheduled final exam time? And—should a final or summative experience, be required of every class?

Robin Romans said that all that the Department of Education requires is that the University has, and follows, a consistent policy.

In regard to point 1, Chair Tom Cummings asked that language be drafted by Robert Morley to clarify the requirements of both undergraduate and graduate courses, in terms of instruction time and final exams, for review and vote by UCOC members in January.

**January 13**, A comprehensive Final Examination Policy is submitted by Associate Registrar Robert Morley for UCOC review.

- *Attachment: Final Examination Policy\_January 13 2016*

In regard to point 2, UCOC members generally questioned why the University should dictate if an exam or summative experience is required of a course or not. Moe said that she would review the *Curriculum Handbook* and highlight the current language in regard to final examinations and/or summative experiences for UCOC Members review and consideration at the next UCOC meeting.

**January 13**, The following attached document notes instances where “final examinations” in relation to courses are specifically addressed in the *Curriculum Handbook* and the *2015-16 USC Catalogue*. The document is intended only as a reference for UCOC review and consideration as to whether the University should dictate if an exam or summative experience is required of a course or not.

- *Attachment: Instances of “Final Exam” in Curriculum Handbook and USC Catalogue*

**DISCUSSED, January 13**, UCOC members reviewed the Final Examination Policy submitted by Robert Morley. Financial Aid representative Megan Chan presented the requirements of the Department of Education in regard to semester contact hours. She clarified that for a standard 001 session (used most commonly at the University of Southern California (USC) during the fall and spring semesters) the Department of Education requires fifteen weeks of classes (weekly contact time) and a final, summative

experience on the scheduled final exam day and time. The adherence to this formula for the standard 001 session is especially important in determining the percentage of money not used by a student who withdraws from a course. If a student is incorrectly scheduled in a 001 session, and the course ends on week 15, or earlier, the student will be granted aid for time that s/he was not in the classroom, and USC may be assessed penalties.

The question arose, addressing Point 2: must a final exam be assigned? UCOC members did not feel it was appropriate to say that a professor must have a final exam, presentation, paper, etc. for a course. However, if the standard 001 session is assigned to a course, that course is required to have a final summative experience (whatever that may be) on the scheduled final exam date and time.

Courses not adhering to the 15 week, with the scheduled final exam date and time, standard should not be assigned the 001 session code. This applies to summer, online, and other alternate length courses. Final papers, exams, summative experiences, etc. may be administered on the final class meeting; however, the session code assigned must specify the appropriate contact hours, which are consistent with the course units.

UCOC members agreed that only the standard 001 session should be addressed in the USC Catalogue, the Schedule of Classes and the Memo distributed in the fall and spring semester by Registrar Frank Chang. Other sessions are too variable to address with one standard policy.

UCOC members supported the recommendation that a policy reminder, and the reasons behind it, should be distributed to the school deans from the Provost. They also encouraged the members of the Committee on Academic Policy and Procedure (CAPP) to detail the policy and procedure for dealing with exceptions to the final exam policy. They requested that CAPP members consider having one policy for review to the exceptions for both Undergraduate and Graduate courses. In general, members believed that dean of the school was the most appropriate to review a final examination exception request.

In addition, UCOC Member Brian Head requested that the details of when the student should address the instructor if s/he notes a conflict of exams be noted in the newly drafted Final Examination Policy. Kristine Moe said that she would draft a revision including the policy and procedure, detailed on the Schedule of Classes, for both CAPP and UCOC further review.

(Note: There was no UCOC meeting in February and March.)

**APRIL 2**, *The Grading Handbook* at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/services/grades/gradinghandbook/examinations.html> offers a distinction between undergraduate and graduate courses and in regard to final examinations and submission of graduate final papers. For UCOC member reference and consideration.

Attached is the latest, suggested revision to the Final Examination policy, per the Committee on Academic Policy and Procedure (CAPP).

- *Attachment: Final Examination Policy\_CAPP Edits\_March 24 2016*

**Discussed, APRIL 2**, UCOC members had no objection to CAPP members' latest revision to the final examination policy. Megan Chan of Financial Aid reviewed the Grading Handbook statement distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate courses in regard to final examinations and submission of graduate final papers; she reiterated that a course, undergraduate or undergraduate, if scheduled as a standard fall or spring semester session, is expected to have 15 weeks of instruction, followed by the final summative experience.

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Curriculum and Catalogue Management System Status

B. Bovard College Establishing Curriculum and Catalogue Presence in 2016-17

C. GE Memos – New GE Designation to be Added to Existing and New Courses

- *Attachments:*

- o *UCOC GE Memo, February 2, 2016*
- o *UCOC GE Memo, March 11, 2016*

**Members present**

Steven Bucher  
Thomas Cummings (Chair)  
Brian Head  
Susan Metros  
Kristine Moe (Support Staff)  
Robert Morley  
Geoffrey Shiflett

**Members absent**

Diane Badame  
Judy Garner  
Robin Romans

**Guests**

John DeMartini (Support Staff)