

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES

November 5, 2014

2:00-3:30 pm

****HOH 706****

I. UCOC OCTOBER Minutes

- Attachment: UCOC October 1Minutes

→APPROVED

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Overseas Courses Taken at Unaccredited Institutions (Steve Bucher, OSP Chair)

Steve Bucher provides the following background:

A student took a French language course at a school called *Cours de Civilisation Française de la Sorbonne*. It is associated with the Sorbonne but is not part of it. The school is not accredited in France. When the student transferred to USC, she requested transfer credits and was told that, due to the accreditation issue, the credits wouldn't be accepted.

The student brought up the point that other USC students were in the class at that school. Those students were part of a long-running Dornsife Paris program and, indeed, they did receive credit for the same *Cours de Civilisation Française* course. They did have about 24 hours of supplemental instruction with a USC faculty.

It is unclear how many overseas courses are taken at unaccredited institutions. This has been decided at the department level and not by OSP.

The questions are:

1. If USC has programs granting credit from such institutions, shouldn't we be consistent? Or is this a case-by-case situation? It is unclear how often this happens.
2. How should OSP review such issues in the future? Steve Bucher's inclination is that these types of decisions should be at the school/department level, but he also believes that OSP and UCOC should be made aware of such arrangements. It may be that more than one class in an overseas program is from an unaccredited institution, and that may be too much.

DISCUSSED, NOVEMBER 5, Steve Bucher explained that since the above summary had been presented, the College has made the case that the institution is accredited by the French government as an extension of the Sorbonne. Degree Progress outsources articulation review and that company said that *Cours de Civilisation Française* was not a credit-granting institution. A student from the Sorbonne would not get credit for that class. The French department has made the case that USC students, as part

of the Paris program, receive supplemental instruction from a tutor hired by USC.

Bucher said that he is fine with the course, if the College is okay with it. However, he wonders at the role of articulation? Is this an anomaly? And what do we do with such anomalies?

Chair Tom Cummings questioned how many times this issue had come up this year. Bucher conjectured twice. Cummings asked Bucher his opinion of the program as a whole. He responded in the positive. Cummings said then contact the French department and ask should a transfer student, who has taken the French language course at the *Cours de Civilisation Francaise*, without supplemental USC instruction, get credit for the French language course?

B. Special Topics Units: Request to Increase Upper Limit of Special Topics from 4 to 6 Units

DISCUSSED, October 1, Add 1.5 Units to Acceptable Unit Range

Marshall requests that 1.5 units be added to the range of acceptable Special Topics unit values to accommodate their half-semester, 1.5 unit course offerings. Currently all Special Topics units are listed as (2-4, max 8).

APPROVED, A motion was made and approved to allow all Special Topics courses topics to be offered for 1-4 units, max 8, including .5 unit increments.

DISCUSSED, NOVEMBER 5, After UCOG members approved a motion to allow all Special Topics courses topics to be offered for 1-4 units, max 8, including .5 unit increments, CCO received a request to allow a 6-unit special topics course. Will UCOG allow Special Topics 499 and 599 to be offered up to 6 units? The current Special Topics (2-4, max 8) would be edited to Special Topics (1-6, max 8) including .5 unit increments.

→APPROVED A motion was made and approved to allow all Special Topics courses topics to be offered for 1-8 units, max 8, including .5 unit increments. UCOG members believed it was best to give schools a large range of unit choices to choose from, dependent on the individual school's needs.

Special Topics 499 and 599 course units will now read (1-8, max. 8). The schools control the unit values for which they would like to offer the course.

C. Unit Requirements for Minors: *Curriculum Handbook* Shows Further Discrepancies

In making the revision to remove the criteria of 16 *upper-division* units for a minor from "Appendix F: Guidelines for Minors" from the *Curriculum Handbook* to make it consistent with the *USC Catalogue*, <http://catalogue.usc.edu/undergraduate/grad-req/#minors>, further inconsistencies were found in the language. The language states "Four 3-4 unit courses are mandatory." This statement contradicts that 16-units are mandatory. Also, Number 3 states, "All new and revised minors will be reviewed after five years." This review has not occurred in the past three years.

The Curriculum Coordination Office would like UCOG members' response as to how this section should be further edited:

1. A minor should have no less than 16 nor more than 32 units, including pre-requisites of required courses.
2. ~~Sixteen units of upper division courses and~~ four 3-4 unit courses are mandatory.

3. All new and revised minors will be reviewed after five years. If no undergraduates have enrolled in the minor, the contact unit will be required to demonstrate why the minor should not be removed from the list of approved minors.
4. No specific limit will be imposed on the number of submissions from any unit. However, the committee reminds units of its conceptual commitment to approve only coherent, rigorous, distinctive, and non-redundant minors.
5. The following Rules of Four apply:
 - a. At least four courses (16 units) unique to the minor (i.e., required neither by G.E. nor the student's major).
 - b. Majors may take a minor in which their unit participates so long as four courses (16 units) required for the minor are taken outside the major department.

- Attachment: Minor Guidelines Published in 2014-15 Catalogue

MINOR SECTION EDITED, UCOC members responded:

1. The “should” in Number 1 implies that there may be exceptions, as there are in Engineering, which offers 3-unit courses. The line should remain unchanged.
2. Number 2 should be deleted completely, as the 16 units of upper-division courses have already been removed and the reference to “four 3-4 unit courses” is potentially contradictory and addressed in Number 1.
3. A five-year review of minors implies conditional approval, which UCOC’s approval is not. The line should be omitted. UCOC members said that the Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) should offer departments data yearly as to how many students have taken the minor in the past three years, just as is done with courses. This data should be offered to each school at the time of the fall UCOC-school outreach, with the encouragement to remove programs, minors and courses that are no longer used. The goal is to have the *USC Catalogue* represent accurately the offerings of each school to students.
4. Number 4 remains unchanged.
5. In addressing the potential discrepancy posed by stating “four courses” and “16 units,” UCOC members voted to remove the reference to “four courses” and only state “16 units” in both 5a and 5b. The two lines were edited in the following way (They said that Catalogue should be edited in the same way.):
 5. The following Rules of ~~Four~~ apply:
 - c. At least ~~four courses~~ (16 units) **must be** unique to the minor (i.e., required neither by G.E. nor the student's major). ***If the minor comprises fewer than 16 units, the courses must be unique to the minor.**
 - d. Majors may take a minor in which their unit participates so long as ~~four courses~~ (16 units) required for the minor are taken outside the major department.

- Attachment: Minor Guidelines Published in 2014-15 Catalogue

B. Repeatable Seminar Topic Courses

DISCUSSED on October 1 Geoff Shiflett presented the concern that current topics courses are being created that are repeatable, some with section titles, with no oversight as to what is taught beyond the initial topic. Kristine Moe said that allowing of section titles to repeatable courses may have encouraged this movement. A good number of these courses have been created in the past few years, and some to very good use, i.e., current topics in stem cell biology, where students gather to discuss the latest topics in the field. To review every new section of these courses would overwhelm the Curriculum Coordination Office.

UCOC members agreed that the current practice should be maintained. A general course structure should be presented for the repeatable seminar topics course; subsequent changes would be just to the current topic that will be taught. The department and faculty, who are ultimately responsible for content, will be responsible for subsequent renditions of the repeatable seminar topics course.

The attached *September 9, 1974 Minutes* detail the creation of university –reviewed Special Topics courses. They were the solution to the proliferation of courses, such as “Current Topics, Current Problems, Current Issues,” etc.

Allowing courses to have section titles in the past few years may have led to more departments offering such courses, that act essentially as special topics courses at the department level, for example IR-307.

The university-wide Special Topics and the department-level Current Topics, Current Problems, Current Issues, etc. are now parallel courses: one is centrally reviewed and the other not. Should there be one and not the other? If special topic-like courses are allowed at the department level, then why have the special topics courses and central review of those courses?

- Attachment: *September 9 1974 Minutes detailing Creation of Special Topics*

→ **POSTPONED UNTIL DECEMBER.**

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. WASC Special Visit on Wednesday, November 19, 3:30-4:15 p.m. at Biltmore (Robin Romans, Associate Provost)

DISCUSSED, Robin Romans said that WASC’s last visit was in 2010. This 2014 visit is a follow up to the previous comprehensive review in which the following three areas were focused on: undergraduate review, learning assessments and student success—retention and graduation. At the last visit, WASC evaluators felt that the General Education program was light. They felt that the program should be more robust, especially for students who may not have time for minors, due to the larger number of units required for their majors.

WASC representatives specifically requested to meet with members of the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC). Romans said that they will most like address the committee’s role in General Education implementation and academic governance. WASC representatives requested that UCOC members meet them at the Biltmore in downtown on Wednesday, November 19, 3:30-4:15 pm.

B. Contact Hour Exception (Robin Romans, Associate Provost)

The 4 unit for 3-contact hour exception stated in the *Contact Hour Reference*, and used by various schools at the university, has been questioned. What is the history of the exception; does it violate Carnegie Standards; is it an issue for WASC accreditation?

- Attachment: *Contact Hour Reference*

DISCUSSED, Robin Romans offered background to the concern over contact hours for accreditors and the Department of Education (DOE). Problems arose with the increase of for-profit schools and loans. There was increased concern with online education and fraud. Romans presented the DOE memo, dated March 18, 2011. He said that the DOE states that conventions, and exceptions, must be established within the institution's academic community. The institution itself may decide upon these conventions. If USC has a policy (with exceptions stated) that are adhered to throughout the University, then it is in compliance.

Romans said the accreditors will ask: Do you have a policy? Do you have a process to monitor your current offerings? He said a policy about online contact hours and workload should be posted as well. Kristine Moe said that the policy, with the 4 unit for 3-contact hour exception, was addressed in the *Curriculum Handbook* and noted in the *Syllabus Template*. It was suggested that the policy about online contact hours and workload should be inserted into *Contact Hours Reference* as well.

C. New GE Status Report (Gene Bickers, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and Robert Morley, Associate Registrar)

DISCUSSED, Robert Morley said that he had met with GE chairs, Gene Bickers and Steve Lamy, and Richard Fliegel. They are in the midst of reviews and more GE proposals are needed. There is a concern about having enough space for the amount of classes needed and the expanded, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule. The first term of implementation for the new GE requirement continues to be 20153. The Curriculum Management System (CMS) is ready to accept new GE proposals.

D. Should Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Degrees be Conferred Outside of the College and Graduate School? (Robert Morley, Associate Registrar)

Robert Morley will introduce the topic to be further discussed at the December UCOG meeting.

DISCUSSED, Robert Morley said that the Bachelor of Arts (BA) has typically been owned by the school itself and conferred by the College; the Master of Arts (MA) has been owned by the school and conferred by the Graduate School. The foreign language requirement has differentiated these degrees. If professional schools have a foreign language requirement for the BA or the MA, must the degree be conferred by the College or the Graduate School respectively? This is how the programs have traditionally been designated. Should this practice continue?

→ TO BE DISCUSSED FURTHER IN DECEMBER.

E. PSYC-290 (Diane Badame, SSS Chair)

Should a request for a 200-level course for directed research studies, a type of course typically reserved for upper-level undergraduates, be allowed? Per the *2014-15 Catalogue*, "490x Directed Research (1-8, max 12) Courses numbered 490x are open to students who have demonstrated the ability to do independent work in the discipline..." (<http://catalogue.usc.edu/academic/registration/>)

DISCUSSED, Diane Badame presented the proposal, saying that per the Registrar's Office, independent research has typically been reserved for juniors and seniors. No other 290 research courses are offered by other schools.

Geoff Shiflett and Tom Cummings said that it could be good to involve students in research in earlier years. There are high-level students who could benefit from the one-on-one, unstructured research course.

Chair Tom Cummings asked Kristine Moe to reach out to the department and find out the intent of PSYC-290. Why can't 490 be used? Can a freshman or sophomore not take 490? Diane Badame will decide to approve the course based on the department's response. UCOG members agreed that no more than a combined total of 12 units of directed research (290 and 490) should be allowed per student.

D. UCOG Outreach Meetings Updates (Diane Badame, SSS Chair, and Brian Head, AHS Chair)

DISCUSSED, Diane Badame and Kristine Moe met with four school representatives (Annenberg, Marshall (undergraduate), Rossier and Social Work) over the past two weeks. Brian Head, Doug Burleson and Kristine Moe met with representatives from the School of Architecture. They agreed that the meetings were worthwhile and a positive experience. Schools had questions about the new General Education approvals and deadlines, contact hour guidelines and extended scheduling hours. They had specific questions related to curriculum additions and revisions that they were proposing. A few schools had made curricular changes in the past two years and did not have anything new planned, however, the meetings were good way to establish a personal relationship.

E. Curricular Improvements to Address

How are the issues that the UCOG taskforces identified last year to be dealt with? For example, how is shared revenue identified across schools and how are faculty load issues dealt with for joint programs? What are the possible incentives to create programs? How do we better deal with affected sign-offs, schools focusing on a similar topic from a slightly different angle? How can the communication of UCOG decisions be improved? What forums already exist for best practices: online, partnering with other national and international schools, etc.? Can they be partnered with to address issues identified by UCOG as well? Etc.

→ POSTPONED UNTIL DECEMBER.

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Curriculum Management System Recommendation Delivered to Provost

Members present

Diane Badame
Steven Bucher
Thomas Cummings (Chair)
Judy Garner
Brian Head
Susan Metros
Kristine Moe (Support Staff)
Robert Morley
Geoffrey Shiflett
Mark Todd

Members absent

Gene Bickers

Guests

Douglas Burlison
Robin Romans