

# UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

## MINUTES

*October 1, 2014*

2:00-3:30 pm

\*\*\*\*HOH 706\*\*\*\*

### I. WELCOME (Tom Cummings, Chair, University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC))

- *Attachment: UCOC 2014-15 Roster*

### II. UCOC MAY 5, 2014, Minutes and JULY 2014 Minutes

- *Attachment: UCOC May 5 Minutes and UCOC July 2014 Minutes*

**→APPROVED**

### III. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Provost Approved UCOC 2014 Recommendation and UCOC's Charge 2014-15

- *Attachment: The University Committee on Curriculum Proposal 2014*

UCOC Chair Tom Cummings reminded the group that last year the Provost had asked UCOC to consider new ways of advising units on curriculum. Cummings and Mark Todd summarized the findings and presented the attached recommendation to Michael Quick. Quick reviewed and approved UCOC's recommendation.

Cummings explained that a new curriculum (and catalogue) management system is being considered. The subcommittees have been streamlined. The chair has the final decision and can decide how reviews are handled within his, or her, own subcommittee. Proposals are to be reviewed within ten working days at CCO and ten working days at subcommittee. Once the subcommittee signs off, the proposal is sent directly to SIS and *Catalogue*. More proposals are being standardized and approved administratively. Last year more than 60% of proposals were approved administratively. This year Cummings believes even more proposals will be reviewed without subcommittee review. This will free up the subcommittee chairs' time to consider larger curricular issues at the university.

In 2014-15 academic year, the Provost wants to encourage deans to create more interdisciplinary programs. During the Provost's Retreat, Elizabeth Garrett announced increased enrollments as incentives for schools and academic units to create interdisciplinary undergraduate programs. For graduate programs, no incentive was announced, except the implied increased revenue. President Nikias wants USC to increase online masters' offerings. Susan Metros will be on UCOC to offer her expertise in this area.

The 2014-15 charges for UCOC, therefore, are as follow:

1. UCOC chairs will engage with units directly from the beginning of the year.
  - a. Mark Todd will arrange for the UCOC chair to present the newly re-envisioned UCOC to the Provost's Council.
  - b. Tom Cummings, Mark Todd, and Kristine Moe will create a timeline for UCOC chairs to reach out to the Designated Deans of the schools included in their subject area.
  - c. UCOC chairs will reach out first to the designated deans of each school in their subject area. They will investigate what signature programs, in the vein of the World Bachelor of Business (WBB) and the Iovine and Young Academy, are being considered? Do any of the programs have merit? Are the programs worth moving forward? If so, UCOC chairs will help units bring their ideas forward.

The concern of UCOC chairs is only curricular issues. Money, advisement, admissions, implementation are areas outside of their realm. UCOC chairs will work with school contacts on how to best get curriculum through, make connections to various schools, and/or institutions, and share best practices.
2. UCOC members need to be familiar with the curriculum and decide what redundancies or opportunities exists to improve efficiency, within and across schools.
3. UCOC needs to capture and share curriculum data with units. The optimal form of communication to do so is yet to be decided. Memos have been used in the past.
4. The new General Education program will need UCOC's help to be implemented. (Gene Bickers will present the state of the new GEs at the next meeting.)
5. Issues that affect curriculum university-wide (as exemplified in III, B-G) should be brought before UCOC for review and advisement to the Provost.

#### B. Special Topics Units: 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).

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

**→APPROVED** (Note: the question of whether to implement this option universally across all 499s and 599s, or to leave it up school and department was left unanswered, as was the question of how this change should most effectively be communicated university-wide moving forward.)

#### C. Special Topics 598 Credit/No Credit Option

Under the current Student Information System (SIS), all sections offered under one course ID must be assigned the same grading type. Therefore, all Special Topics (499s and 599s) can only be offered for letter grade, as they were originally designated university-wide. Marshall proposes to create a shell course for university-reviewed, Special Topics that could be graded Credit/No Credit under the

department prefix and the number 598.

→**APPROVED** UCOG approved the creation of university-reviewed 598 Special Topics for Credit/No Credit, per Marshall's request.

If this option is offered to Marshall, it should be offered to the university. In a brief review of *Catalogue* course offerings, ten courses would have to be renumbered to accommodate the request.

If 598s are offered, than 498s should be offered as well. From a brief review of *Catalogue* course offerings, eleven courses would have to be renumbered to accommodate a 498 request as well.

**DISCUSSED** UCOG felt it should be communicated to all schools, via the Designated Deans, that the opportunity has presented itself to offer university-reviewed Special Topics for Credit/No Credit under the number 4/598, or another number, if the school does not want to drop a course that is already numbered that number. (UCOG members agreed that ideally a universal number, such as 4/598 would be used, but it was not necessary.)

Kristine Moe will send out an email announcing the possibility to Designated Deans once the Provost has approved the minutes.

#### D. Directed Research (590/790)

Currently, university-wide, all directed research courses numbered 590 and 790 are offered for Credit/No Credit. Gerontology, as an exception, would like students, who are enrolled in directed research, to receive a letter grade. Gerontology faculty members believe that a letter grade will motivate students to excel rather than to do the minimum to pass a course.

In the *Curriculum Handbook*, the course type is detailed as such:

##### Directed Research (590, 790)

"590 [or 790] Directed Research (1-12) Research leading to the master's [or doctoral] degree. Maximum units which may be applied to the degree to be determined by the department. Graded CR/NC."

Please note, the course ID under one prefix can only be offered for one grading type or another. Sections created under GERO-790, if changed to letter grade, would all need to have that option. Faculty could not choose by section what grading type is desired.

Should this request be approved for Gerontology as a one-time exception? Should the letter-grade option for Directed Research 590 and 790 be made available to all departments, upon their request?

→**DENIED** UCOG members felt that research courses lend themselves to Credit/No Credit grading. Research is hard to quantify. If professors would like to motivate students and raise the bar academically, they should make the level for obtaining "Credit" higher. Currently, Credit is considered "B" or higher.

UCOG members asked that it be clarified if this is one professor's request, or if all Gerontology faculty, are united in requesting this change for Directed Research courses to be letter-graded.

#### E. Repeatable Seminar Topic Courses

Geoff Shiflett would like to raise the question of how future seminar topics should be treated. Should departments be allowed to add them, with variable Section Titles, to the Schedule of Classes with no

central, university review? Should seminar courses be treated in a manner similar to 499/599s? Should a brief description (like the one accompanying the NSCI-540 course proposal) and, perhaps, a list of learning objectives be submitted to the Registrar before the section number is approved?

**DISCUSSED** 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 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.

#### F. Overseas Courses Taken at Unaccredited Institutions

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.

**DISCUSSION postponed until November.**

#### G. 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 UCOC 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

**DISCUSSION postponed until November.**

#### IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

##### A. Revised Curriculum Review Process and Timeline: Effect on Schools, Curriculum Coordination Office and Subcommittee Procedures

- Attachment: Revised Curriculum Review Process and Timeline 2014-15

##### B. Catalogue 2015/16 Preview

Department representatives are encouraged to review their pages of the read-only, shibboleth-protected, *Catalogue 2015/16 Preview*, <http://catalogue2015.usc.edu>, throughout the year and to request appropriate changes. All program, minor and course-related requests must be submitted via CMS.

- Attachment: Catalogue Posting Schedule 2014-15

##### C. Provost-Mandated Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems for Syllabi and Websites

- Attachments: Statement for Syllabi and Websites  
Syllabus Template 2014-15

SES Chair Geoff Shiflett asked that the statements be embedded into Blackboard, as statements on

syllabi tend to be altered. Kristine Moe will contact Blackboard administrators to see what is possible.

#### D. Curriculum Coordination Office Website and Attached Documents Edits

Please review the updated website content at [www.usc.edu/curriculum](http://www.usc.edu/curriculum) and the attached updated documents.

1. Are there edits, or additions, that you would recommend?
2. *The Curriculum Handbook* is currently being edited with the revised curriculum review process.
3. *Professional Development Guidelines* will be added to the Resources page of the curriculum website. Should they be reviewed by the Provost's Office to make sure that they are in line with the Provost's initiatives?
4. Number nine, regarding Diversity courses, of the *ChecklistTop10SyllabusErrorstoAvoid* document has been removed. What other reminder would serve well for the "Top Ten" reminders?

- *Attachments: The Curriculum Handbook 2013-14, Professional Development Guidelines (Approved March '13 UCOC), ChecklistTop10SyllabusErrorstoAvoid*

#### E. Curriculum Management System Recommendation Delivered to Provost

- *Attachment: UCOC Course and Catalog Management System Report\_CMS Project (4)*

A meeting is scheduled to discuss alternate, integrated curriculum and catalogue management systems at the end of October. Michael Quick, Tom Cummings, Mark Todd, Doug Shook and Robert Morley will attend.

**Members present**

Diane Badame  
Gene Bickers  
Steven Bucher  
Thomas Cummings (Chair)  
Judy Garner  
Brian Head  
Kristine Moe  
Robert Morley  
Geoffrey Shiflett  
Mark Todd

**Members absent**

Susan Metros