Educational Policies Committee Minutes, December 2, 2004

Utah State University

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I. Minutes of the 4 November 2004 meeting

A J Rounds moved to approve the minutes of the 4 November 2004 meeting. Stan Allen seconded; motion carried.

II. Subcommittee Reports

A. Curriculum Subcommittee
Todd Crowl reviewed the Curriculum Subcommittee business. He reported that all the course changes were approved with the correction of FRWS 5860 being listed as FRWS/ADVS 5860.

The request to approve the grading of 6970 and 7970 thesis and dissertation courses as Pass/Fail only, was approved. A grade of “I” will be submitted until successful completion of the project or termination of the program, starting Summer 2005. After Faculty Senate’s approval, a formal policy will be written by the School of Graduate Studies.

The report on requiring a breadth course for each student’s major was tabled.

The request to delete the approval of the composite majors of Secondary Education/Special Education-Mild/Moderate and Secondary Education/Special Education-Severe from the College of Education and Human Services, which were approved on October 7, 2004, was tabled until the January 13, 2005 meeting. These will be dual majors.

Due to the Banner conversion, to ensure the enforcement of prerequisites, restrictions, contingencies, requirements, and academic regulations for existing and new courses, the descriptions for all of the above must be included on the Course Approval Forms in their entirety.

The following items were brought up for discussion concerning the General Catalog. Should all approved courses be listed in the General Catalog? It was proposed that inactive courses be noted as inactive, and courses for which these inactive courses are prerequisites, should have a course approval form with a prerequisite change or deletion of the inactive course. It was suggested that inactivation and reactivation of courses should be requested on a Course Approval Form and submitted through EPC. The course approval form will need to be revised. It was proposed that the semester in which courses are taught be eliminated from the General Catalog. The Schedule of Classes lists which courses are being taught during each semester. This discussion will be continued at the January 13, 2005 meeting.

The deadline for submissions for the January 13, 2005 meeting is December 13, 2004.

Richard Cutler moved to approve the business of the Curriculum Subcommittee. AJ Rounds seconded; motion carried.

B. Academic Standards Subcommittee

The Academic Standards Subcommittee (ASC) met on November 8, 2004. The following issue was considered at this meeting:

**Simultaneous Awarding of Multiple Bachelor’s Degrees.** There are currently three defined modes by which students may pursue a bachelor’s degree or degrees in more than one academic program: 1) a *dual major* involves working on two bachelor’s programs, fulfilling all of the requirements of each of them, and graduating with two majors simultaneously, but receiving only one diploma; 2) a *composite major* involves completing all the requirements for a defined composite of two distinct programs that does not entail fulfilling all of the requirements of each of them and receiving a single composite degree; 3) a *second bachelor’s degree* involves completing the required credits to receive an additional bachelor’s degree after the first one has been awarded (the University requires a minimum of 30 credits beyond those applied to the first bachelor’s degree in a second bachelor’s degree program).
The Registrar’s Office notified the ASC that when a student has completed a dual major in two programs that award different bachelor’s degrees (e.g., a BA and a BS), it is not possible to award a single diploma as intended by the dual major designation, but that two separate diplomas must be awarded. There have also been requests from students that they be awarded two diplomas when they have completed a dual major, even when a single diploma is feasible.

After extended discussion of this matter, the ASC adopted two motions expressing its intent. The first motion declares that the following sentence should be stricken from the existing USU Second Bachelor’s Degree policy (catalog, p.52): “A second bachelor’s degree is available only to those on whom a first bachelor’s degree has been conferred.”

The second motion states that “Students who simultaneously complete the requirements for two bachelor’s degree programs with distinct degree designations (e.g., BA, BS, etc.) should be awarded two diplomas.” The ASC has a further related motion pending and it is still investigating the implications of the implementation of all proposed actions on this issue.

Richard Cutler moved to approve the business of the Academic Standards Committee. Stan Allen seconded; motion carried.

C. General Education Subcommittee

A meeting of the General Education Subcommittee was held on 9 November. The following items were discussed:

I. Course Approvals

COMD 5100 for CI
Has not officially been approved but has been used as CI; Norm will be in touch with the department head of the Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education Department to confer.
** Norm conferred with the department, and they would like to have CI removed.
CHEM 1110 for BPS
Recommendation to accept as BPS; this brings it in parallel with other institutions in the state. It was approved.
USU 1300 – New instructors, Mark Welsh and Bruce Nye
Tyler Bowles sent a report recommending approval. The committee voted on this electronically after the meeting and approved both instructors.
USU 1330 – New instructor, Eric Smigel
Tom Peterson noted that this is a new instructor for an existing course, and the committee recommended approval. It was approved.
BIOL 4750H – CI
Recommended for approval by Rhonda Miller’s CI Committee. Because this is a “topics” course, this cannot have a continuing CI designation. The committee suggested that students could apply this on individual basis, based on waiver. Richard Mueller will investigate further and report back.

II. Two USU-course requirement
Currently, in order to graduate, a student must have completed two USU-prefix courses of the six required. Some problems have arisen due to transfer students and major requirements. Also, students feel that these can be difficult to enroll in.

The USU-prefix courses are a hallmark of the University Studies program.

Interdisciplinary courses offer students a wide breadth of experiences, not just a narrow course (e.g., 1330 covers all fine arts, as opposed to Introduction to Music or Introduction to Theatre Arts, which give a narrower approach).

A principle for transfer students would be that, if an additional course is required, it can be petitioned for waiver. For instance, a student transfers to USU with 5 of the 6 breadth areas completed, and the degree requires a breadth course that is not a USU-prefix course. Advisors should provide an analysis to students at point of entry outlining the requirements and either noting USU-prefix requirements at that time OR requesting a waiver.

The committee is recommending a reconvening of each subcommittee to look at syllabi and test them with the matrix of goals. The committees will look first at the USU-prefix courses.

Norm and Richard pointed out that the USU-prefix courses often are new creations and are not only interesting in themselves, but the faculty teaching them enjoys them enormously, too.

Joyce requested that bottleneck issues for USU-prefix courses be addressed through curriculum management.

The subcommittees will be convened to analyze USU-prefix syllabi and provide an evaluation of their efficacy and adherence to goals.

III. 6th breadth course (implemented in fall 2000)

This requirement stipulates that students complete a breadth course within the field of study. Thus, a major in political science would take a BSS course; a physics major would take a BPS course. This 6th requirement also helps USU have a higher number of courses dedicated to general education. It’s also easier to track electronically. For almost all majors this is a moot point, as the introductory class qualifies as breadth. Departments that currently do not have breadth designation for their introductory classes will be asked to do so. HPER and Music may be two departments of concern. The College of Natural Resources may also have a problem.

John Mortensen recommended that students who have taken a higher course in the area be allowed to waive the breadth course.

Heidi Beck noted that it must be programmed in Degree Audit as a waiver, so it can be tracked along with students.

ACTION: John Mortensen will draft some language on appropriate waivers. Norm will follow up with departments that do not currently have a breadth introductory course.
Todd Crowl moved to approve the business of the General Education Subcommittee. Gary Straquadine seconded; motion carried.

D. Distance and Electronic Education Subcommittee

This is an information-only item.

It is recommend that the Distance Education and Electronic Delivery (DEED) Subcommittee of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) be dissolved.

In 1997, the Faculty Senate appointed a task force to examine the subject of distance education. The task force was created in light of the rapid evolution of mechanisms for distance education and electronic delivery. Concerns included the University’s commitment to distance, electronic, and continuing education, including the quality and administrative responsibility for these courses.

A result of the Faculty Senate task force was the creation of the DEED Subcommittee in March 1999, with the charge to make recommendations “… on matters pertaining to distance and electronic education. It will also assist the faculty and administration in identifying problems, trends, and opportunities for USU in these areas.” The subcommittee identified intellectual property rights as a priority for its initial efforts. An Intellectual Property Policy was developed and subsequently adopted by the University. The subcommittee’s consideration of other issues was slowed because of “… an impasse regarding the lack of perceived University commitment to, and direction for, distance education…” (Minutes of the March 1, 2001 meeting of the Subcommittee)

After a period of little activity, the subcommittee took up the issue of standards for the development of time-enhanced (online) courses. A standards draft document was submitted as a progress report to the EPC in March 2003. However, additional work on this and other projects was suspended because of pending changes in administrative responsibilities concerning Distance Education. Also, questions had arisen concerning the need for the subcommittee in light of historical changes in distance education and electronic delivery, including the establishment of activities such as the Faculty Assistance Center for Teaching (FACT).

With the passage of time since the organization of the subcommittee in 1997, as indicated above, there have been several important developments that have impacted the work of the subcommittee. First, the commitment to distance and time-enhanced learning has been solidified, as indicated by administrative changes formalized in the Memorandum of Understanding, “The Division of Responsibilities between the Provost and the Dean of Continuing Education” dated March 2004. Second, the technology and the methodologies for quality course development and effective course delivery have matured, including assistance for faculty through mechanisms such as the FACT Lab. Finally, the processes for curriculum and course development, approval, and monitoring have been clarified within existing administrative units. That is, the functions once envisioned for the subcommittee are now handled within routine department and college curriculum development, course approval, and quality monitoring processes. Additional evidence of the impact of these historical changes is the fact that the Board of Regents has clarified its requirement that off-campus delivery of approved programs need not go through the “Section 401” approval process if these programs have been approved for main-campus delivery.
In summary, with the passage of time, many of the original concerns and needs associated with distance and electronic delivery have been lessened or have been assumed by departments, colleges, or Distance Education. The feeling is that “… problems, trends, and opportunities …” concerning distance education and electronic delivery are now best handled at the department and college level through well-established processes for curriculum development and course delivery. A separate University-level function is not needed.

III. Other Items of Business

Todd Crowl will communicate with the chair of the Budget and Faculty Welfare (BFW) Committee concerning the limitations, guidelines, and responsibilities of the BFW.

Meeting adjourned 4:10 p.m.
Joyce Kinkead conducted the meeting.
Cathy Gerber recorded the minutes.