The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

**Minutes**

August 31, 2017

Attending: Steve Duck; Helena Dettmer (Chair); Andrew Forbes; Kathryn Hall (staff); Anita Jung; Meena Khandelwal; Cornelia Lang; Jerald Moon; Mary Noonan; Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez; Tristan Schmidt (student member); Rachel Williams

1. UEPCC members introduced themselves and Helena Dettmer, Chair, welcomed them to the committee, thanking them for their work and time while noting that the committee advises on crucial matters, greatly contributing to the excellence of curricular proposals and related policies.
2. The minutes from May 4 were approved as written.
3. Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez (Spanish and Portuguese), currently serving as the Past Chair to the Faculty Assembly (FA), will be the UEPCC liaison to the FA Agenda Committee. Andrew Forbes (Biology) will serve as the UEPCC secretary. As the chair of the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC), Cornelia Lang (Physics and Astronomy) will be the UEPCC liaison to GECC.
4. Helena Dettmer introduced an important problem related to certificates, with the conversation focused on background information needed for future UEPCC discussions. Certificates have been proliferating in the last five years, in part because departments have been responding to the CLAS call for increased credit hours. Certificates depend on existing courses offered by other units, incurring few new curricular costs. However, this benefit also presents a problem because students can then double- and even triple-count one course for multiple credentials. The College has created the 6 s.h. “double-counting” rule to limit this overlap and to protect the integrity of certificates. Since this rule is not yet reflected in the degree audit, the policy is inconsistently enforced, with advisors doing their best to warn students about the policy and to enforce the rule. Additionally, the CLAS GE Core courses may be counted an unlimited number of times for all CLAS majors, minors, and certificates, and this rule is not currently subject to revision.

For these reasons, Helena Dettmer noted that the double-counting rules are complex, as is any solution. It might be possible, for example, to remove the 6 s.h. rule until the Registrar can program the degree audit to check for double-counting, but this solution is at least three years away.

UEPCC members pointed out that the best solution to these problems was to ask the Registrar to proceed more quickly with updating the degree audit, particularly since the double-counting policy is pedagogically sound and protects the integrity of the undergraduate academic mission. UEPCC members suggested that one way to advance the timeline might be for certificate coordinators to prepare and annually update comprehensive lists of certificate courses.

UEPCC also discussed the reasons that some curricular overlap is helpful for learning and even essential since the purpose of interdisciplinary study is to integrate seemingly disparate topics. Constructive overlap can be important for student learning and should be noted as different from simple duplication.

On the other hand, certificates can place a burden on faculty because they require a coordinator and an advisory board. The coordinator spends time on advising both students who have declared the certificate and those who are just exploring options, resulting in detailed conversations about “overlap.”

No final recommendations were made by UEPCC on the current 6 s.h. double-counting policy or on other aspects of certificates; UEPCC will return to this discussion at its next meeting.

1. Marc Armstrong, Associate Dean for Research & Infrastructure and the Social Sciences and Chair of the ad-hoc CLAS 20/20 Committee, met with UEPCC to discuss the UI 2020 Academic Organizational Structure initiative, announced in a January 2017 [memo](https://provost.uiowa.edu/cod-ad-hoc-committee-ui-2020-academic-organizational-structure) from then Provost Barry Butler. Marc Armstrong reviewed the work of the CLAS 20/20 Committee to date, which was tasked by Dean Djalali with creating a CLAS response to the initiative. Marc Armstrong also noted that Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Susan Curry’s recent [memo](https://provost.uiowa.edu/update-academic-organizational-structure-2020-task-force) updated the procedures for this UI organizational review. These changes include a new 10-12 member steering committee to gather more input from the UI community before a second, more comprehensive report is written. Tom Rice will chair the steering committee, which is also charged with organizing meetings and creating other methods for gathering feedback about the restructuring initiative. The steering committee will submit a final report early in spring 2018.

UEPCC recommended that CLAS faculty and/or administrators seek two or more appointments on the newly formed steering committee, such that the College’s representation is commensurate with its contribution to UI’s academic mission. Tristan Schmidt, student member, advocated that an undergraduate representative from CLAS also serve on the committee since any organizational change could affect students. UEPCC suggested that both a graduate and undergraduate student serve on the 2020 steering committee and that lecturers should, likewise, not be overlooked.

1. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Forbes   
Associate Professor, Department of Biology  
Secretary for UEPCC