The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

**Minutes**

Thursday, October 12, 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

Absent: Rachel Williams

1. The minutes from October 5 were approved with a minor correction.
2. Dr. Mark Harris, Director, Student Disability Services (SDS); Michael Venzon, Assistant Director for Accessibility Services, SDS; and Kimberly Beitz, Exam Services Coordinator, SDS, met with the committee to discuss the current role of Student Disability Services (SDS). The guests began by telling members that enrollment in SDS has recently grown by 117% and this has modified the range of services that the office can offer. UEPCC noted that it has been unclear to many faculty why the changes were being made to the exam proctoring services formerly offered by SDS. Mark Harris clarified that SDS still offers exam proctoring for students needing 100% additional exam time or very specialized services but does not have the room to offer exam services for all SDS students. Instead, the Division for Continuing Education is offering proctored services for these students; arrangements may be made with that office by filling out the online form and sending the materials by the appropriate time. SDS, on the other hand, now must focus most of its resources on meeting with students needing accommodations; screening medical and other documentation for eligibility of services; reviewing accommodation decisions with students; and helping students navigate the UI, the related SDS policies, faculty concerns, and/ or compliance issues.

Best practices remain unchanged. Instructors are still expected to meet with students to discuss their accommodations; to provide the accommodation as required, such as class notes or 50% time for exams; and to fill out the required forms needed for any exams taken outside of the regular class time since faculty members know best when the exam must occur. Each faculty member’s requests are different on needed times and dates for these exams and thus students are not allowed to schedule exams themselves. However, SDS is in the process of creating a form that allows a student’s exams for one course to be scheduled on a single form, a process that should help streamline faculty involvement with scheduling. SDS is also creating additional online tools for SDS students which should increase efficiency. The SDS representatives stressed that if the office does not receive exam materials at the date needed from the instructor, the exams must then be rescheduled, creating more work for all involved. Particular forms and guidelines for accommodations can be found online at the SDS site, which has recently been revised.

UEPCC also wondered exactly what the procedures might be if a student receives SDS accommodations mid-semester. Mark Harris stressed that accommodations are never retroactive and thus faculty should not give accommodations retroactively. He also stressed that accommodations begin only once the student presents the required accommodations letter to the instructor, even if that form was approved by SDS long before. Likewise, faculty should not grant accommodations for reasons not indicated on the student’s SDS form.

Instructors and students should meet together early in the semester in the privacy of the instructor’s office and should discuss the allowed accommodations while collaborating on how to best meet them and making decisions on the exam times and dates. In some cases, students must be very proactive or they may not receive the accommodations they need; for example, books are available in a variety of formats for students but requests must be made as soon as the student knows the reading list. Early ordering of books and early decisions on reading lists are thus essential for these accommodations. Students who do not present their need for accommodations until after an exam has occurred or right before the exam occurs do not need to be accommodated by the instructor.

Procedures can be simplified by remembering that SDS is always the office that decides if an accommodation is reasonable and required; this is the central function of the office. If the student’s letter from SDS does not state the need for an accommodation, instructors should not offer it. Often parents get involved, insisting their student needs an accommodation since it was available in high school. For example, some students have trouble with team work but this is not an area for which accommodations are offered. No accommodation is ever given that disqualifies the intended outcomes of a class; that is, if a student is expected to learn certain skills through participation, discussion, and attendance, accommodations for missed classes are not allowed. This is true of all assignments as well; students are expected to complete the work in order to reach the intended learning outcomes of the class. The point is not to excuse a student from responsibility or effort. If team work is required, the student must participate in it. Attendance is a similar issue; if attendance is required in the class in order for the student to learn the material, then the student is expected to attend.

It is also crucial to remember that the student’s SDS status is protected information and cannot be disclosed, for example, by the SDS office. Only students themselves can disclose this to faculty. Some students choose not to inform faculty of this status or may share it in some situations or courses, but not in all courses or not in every semester. Hence SDS status is not included in the MAUI student record system. If a student claims accommodations, they must thus have the SDS letter showing that these accommodations are indeed granted.

Providing accommodations for students can be challenging, and having a conversation with the student about this is the best way forward. A student generally knows what they particularly need in their own situation in regards to an accommodation, such as notes for a class. This can be a difficult accommodation to provide since if another student is sharing their notes and is absent that can present an immediate challenge. Some instructors try to have two students taking notes for others. SDS is in the process of assessing student progress when accommodations are used and surveying students on their satisfaction with SDS services.

UEPCC had many remaining questions, and SDS will be invited back in order to continue this dialog. Tristan Schmidt, UEPCC and UISG member, suggested that UISG could also play a role in helping to inform students about SDS accommodations, particularly if given brochures to hand out to others on the topic. Students often benefit from information from their peers.

1. The proposal for a new major in Data Science (BS) was presented by Joseph Lang, Professor and Chair, Fellow, American Statistical Association, Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science; and by Alberto Segre, Professor and Chair, Gerard P Weeg Faculty Scholar in Informatics, Department of Computer Science. Implementing majors related to data science has been popular nationally because of the rise in the new field of data analytics with related career opportunities. These data science programs fall into at least two different categories, with some more applied and others more mathematically and statistically based, with each fulfilling different roles. For example, the major recently approved at Iowa State, and supported by UI, is more applied than the one proposed by the CLAS departments of Statistics and Actuarial Science and by Computer Science. The UI proposed major focuses on statistical and computer science skills, requiring a total of 59 s.h. in these two areas. Additionally, 12 s.h. in math prerequisite courses are required. Because of this approach, students will not be allowed to double major in Data Science and Statistics or Computer Science; minors in these areas will also not be allowed. Likewise, students would not be allowed to earn the certificates in Large Data Analysis or Social Science Analytics but could double major in Mathematics or one of the Informatics areas. The administrative home for the program of study will be in Statistics and Actuarial Science, with the major jointly overseen by both departments. Advising will be provided by Statistics and Actuarial Science after the student has earned a minimum of 24 s.h., with the major most likely very attractive to current majors in this department as well. A total of around 75-125 majors are expected. UEPCC voiced support for the proposal, noting it was well written and that its addition as a CLAS major is appropriate. The major was recommended unanimously by UEPCC for approval by CLAS. It will next move to Faculty Assembly for discussion.
2. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Forbes   
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Secretary for UEPCC