The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

Minutes

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Attending: Steve Duck; Helena Dettmer; Elena Gavruseva; Kathryn Hall (staff); Lena Hill; Meena Khandelwal; Cornelia Lang; Jerald Moon; Roland Racevskis; Rachel Williams

Absent: James Cremer; Jacob Simpson

1. The minutes from April 13 were approved as written.
2. The following courses were approved for GE status:

* POLI:1050/RELS:1050 *Big Ideas: Introduction to Information, Society, and Culture* as GE Quantitative or Formal Reasoning (QFR).
* MUS:1800/DPA:1800 *World of the Beatles* as GE Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts (LVPA).

The committee expressed its appreciation for a new QFR course that addresses needs of today’s students to understand the source and use of data. Discussion also focused on the importance of understanding that data are not necessarily objective and factual and that bias and discrimination are also part of data collection and interpretation.

1. UEPCC next discussed the Strategy Implementation Team (SIT) 3 recommendations for implementation of the student success pillar within the UI Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The various SI teams are part of the [Path Forward](https://pathforward.uiowa.edu/), which includes the operational teams that will implement the plan while the SI teams “will drive an ongoing, active process to identify, prioritize, and recommend actions on institutional initiatives, generally with timeframes of **one to five years**.” For an overview of the various SITs see this [page](https://pathforward.uiowa.edu/teams/strategy-implementation-team). Helena Dettmer, Jacob Simpson, and Cornelia Lang are on SIT 3, with Professor Lang serving as Chair. The SIT 3 committee has focused on how to encourage strategic changes within the classroom that invite more engaged and inquiry-based learning. A focus on classroom practices is essential for assuring student success. Some of these practices include encouraging faculty to assess their own classes routinely and to integrate existing support structures within the classroom such as Supplemental Learning. Creating more of these support structures and services is also important. Likewise, supporting the new General Education Diversity and Inclusion (DI) requirement in part through the creation of more DI GE courses and through discussions of related topics in many classes is crucial to help create a climate of inclusion on campus. SIT 3 would like all undergraduate colleges to require DI but currently this is not feasible since the other colleges such as Nursing, Education, and Business have a large number of requirements students must fulfill. Perhaps as DI courses expand, the other colleges will consider adopting this requirement. Assessment of the DI category will wait until the area has stabilized. It might be that SERU could help to focus on the DI assessment and other related campus issues as it has done in the past. The group also discussed the BUILD program and how to encourage more faculty to participate.

Cornelia Lang next stressed the importance of identifying large action steps that could make a discernible difference in the classroom for years to come. The [Design Collaboratory](https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/news/otlt-welcomes-new-staff) is such an example of a project that has been allocated “significant University of Iowa resources to improve student academic success through course and curricular design, particularly in large-lecture courses.” Perhaps designating faculty fellows as members of the Center for Teaching would be inspirational. Learning Communities for faculty are also important and help to connect faculty to a community beyond the department.

UEPCC then discussed the difficulty of finding ways to reward this instructional work in the promotion and tenure process since it does not always fall under service or under teaching; additionally, work related to teaching is expected as part of the faculty member’s regular load. Effort allocation, in fact, can seem punitive, implying that the instructor has not done enough research. However, when faculty contribute in a major way to student success this contributes to the overall UI mission and its goals of improving graduation rates and the undergraduate experience. The UI allocation of service, teaching, and research should reflect and not work against these goals. It could be that the [UI Operations Manual](https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/) needs to be revised and that many across UI should begin considering this as an important goal related to undergraduate success. Some work can be done at the departmental level and creating faculty fellows in an area may help create this change. Finding faculty ambassadors who are both in the administrative and research worlds seems crucial since these faculty can help each group better understand the other.

Faculty should be encouraged to apply for UI grants that can be used to enhance the classroom experience; the technology fund is especially important to apply for. The group then discussed the effect of cost shifting that is currently habitual at UI because of budgetary issues, with many costs shifting to students, such as higher tuition and the cost of living in the dorms. Increasing financial aid is also an important goal as is increasing advising tools and perhaps creating more structure for students.

1. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roland Racevskis   
Professor, Department of French and Italian  
Secretary for UEPCC