The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum CommitteeMinutes NOT SENT YET

February 20, 2020

Attending: Helena Dettmer; Andrew Forbes; Kathryn Hall (staff); Anita Jung; Collin Kepner (student member); Brian Lai; Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez; Jennifer Rogers; David Ryfe; Shaun Vecera

Absent: Eric Gidal; Rebekah Kowal

1. The minutes from February 13 were approved as written.
2. UEPCC recommended the approval of SOC:2830 Race and Ethnicity (3 s.h.) for GE status in Diversity and Inclusion, effective with Fall 2020.
3. Noel Mills, President of UI Student Government (UISG); Regan Smock, Director of the Academic Affairs Committee, UISG; and Collin Kepner, UEPCC member and Senator, UISG, spoke with UEPCC about the current suggestion from the General Education CLAS Core Review Committee to add a Sustainability requirement to the GE CLAS Core. Procedures for approving any new GE requirement were then reviewed at the request of UEPCC members. Helena Dettmer reminded the committee that the existing GE requirements are reviewed by CLAS around every five years. The GE CLAS Core Review Committee is charged with making recommendations about how to keep GE requirements updated and relevant, with both the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) and the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (UEPCC) consulted as GE options are being considered. Generally, these three committees also make a final recommendation on any proposed change. Faculty Assembly then discusses the proposal, with a final decision made by the College after additional consultation with faculty. At this point in time, the GE CLAS Core Review Committee and GECC support adding a GE Sustainability requirement and an experiential learning requirement modeled on Tippie RISE. Any new requirement would be effective for students entering UI Summer 2021 and after; students entering UI before Summer 2021 would not be held to the new requirements. Helena also reminded the committee that CLAS has already decided not to add any additional credit hours to the GE requirements because this would remove student electives. The central question thus under discussion is how to implement new requirements without adding semester hours. The guests agreed that choice was very important to students, allowing them to create a plan of study that was relevant to them, and encouraged the College to consider ways of creating a wider range of choices while implementing the new requirements. The students also noted that having the requirement related to the content of the student’s major might make it more pragmatic while giving it a larger impact, showing students how this knowledge about sustainability could be applied to future studies and to related careers. Additionally, this flexibility could help students appreciate the importance of sustainability. Departments, for example, could be encouraged to infuse sustainability into a current course required for the major or to add a new course for the major while dropping another requirement. If the sustainability course was at the 3000-course level, this would help to ensure that it could serve majors in that area. Members also noted during the discussion that not all programs of study have the instructors to offer such courses for the major nor are all majors naturally aligned with the topic. A second strategy would also be needed, with lower-level courses created by other departments able to teach such GE courses that would be open to all students, with the courses numbered 2999 or below and offered without prerequisites. In this case, Sustainability GE courses could be allowed to count for a second GE area so that the new requirement would not add hours to the program. The current process for applying for GE status would remain in place, with a proposal addressing the two sets of learning outcomes, both those related to sustainability and those of the second GE area. Because students will gravitate toward courses that count for two GE requirements, the College would need to allocate seats by department or program to ensure enrollments were shared across areas and to encourage a wide range of approaches to the topic of sustainability. Transfer credit would also be accepted for the requirement. The students noted that this solution provided both flexibility and choices. The committee thought that this two-prone approach might be interesting and could ensure most if not all departments and programs could participate while helping to create some enrollment stability. It might be logical that some STEM disciplines might want include sustainability in the major while other disciplines might choose to offer sustainability courses from perspectives that would speak to students in the humanities and arts, for example, and would not be required for any particular major. No decision about the issue was made during the meeting and the discussion will continue.
4. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Jung, Professor, Art and Art History  
Secretary for UEPCC *pro tem*