The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

**Minutes**

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Attending: 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)

Absent: Steve Duck; Rachel Williams

1. UEPCC will not meet on September 14; the next meeting is Thursday, September 21.
2. The minutes from August 31 were approved as written.
3. The discussion from August 31 concerning the 6 s.h. double-counting policy and certificates was briefly summarized. UEPCC recommended that the 6 s.h. policy continue as now stated. That is, a maximum of 6 s.h. of courses from any other program of study earned by the student may overlap with the completed certificate. GE CLAS Core courses do not count in this 6 s.h. limit and may be counted by the student multiple times for any major, minor, or certificate. The Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum will approach the Registrar to see if that office might expedite automatic auditing of certificate requirements. The committee next recommended that any proposed certificate offer a unique course of study not yet available at UI, also helping to solve issues of duplication. Helena Dettmer reminded the committee that certificates are reviewed by UEPCC three years after implementation. For the review, certificate coordinators are invited to talk with UEPCC; these meetings have significantly helped to deepen the conversation about certificates.
4. Helena Dettmer updated the committee about the current CLAS Undergraduate Teaching Assistant (UTA) policy, explaining that several departments had recently requested to use UTAs as the instructor of record, leading discussion sections or labs and assigning grades, which is a significant departure from current CLAS UTA policy. Other Big Ten institutions were then consulted by CLAS about their UTA policies. Generally, most have very small UTAs programs and never allow the UTA to be the instructor of record, to assign grades, or to be in the classroom unsupervised. However, both Maryland and Indiana have large UTA programs, with Maryland allowing UTAs to lead discussions or labs and to assign grades. Indiana, on the other hand, does not allow grades to be given by a UTA or for the UTA to be in the classroom without supervision. Likewise, Indiana students are never listed as the instructor of record since this would violate accreditation standards.

Faculty on UEPCC shared their own experiences with undergraduate teaching assistants, with two types of UTAs generally used by CLAS departments. Peer mentors tend to earn credit by enrolling in a practicum course. They help with discussions and activities in the classroom and offer additional study opportunities or tutoring during office hours. Some other departments hire undergraduates to provide classroom assistance, particularly when the TILE rooms are used, with departmental funds covering this expense. These students help with class activities and discussions, for example. Both types of UTA opportunities, whether for credit or pay, focus on this as an academic experience for the UTA.

The committee next discussed other UTA programs at UI, noting that each area defines them differently. UI Honors, for example, hires [peer mentors](https://honors.uiowa.edu/honors-peer-mentors) to advise Honors’ students but also offers [teaching practicums](https://honors.uiowa.edu/forms/teaching-practicum) in the classroom. The UC Academic Resource Center organizes group tutoring by peers through its [Supplemental Instruction Program](https://uc.uiowa.edu/student-success/arc). It might be helpful if CLAS used the term UTA whether or not the experience was offered for academic credit or for pay to help avoid confusion with other such experiences.

Conversation also focused on the rationale for using UTAs. UEPCC members stressed that the purpose should be to provide the UTA with a significant academic experience rather than to reduce the workload of the instructor. This should be true whether the student is paid or earns credit. As part of the learning experience, the student should be trained (including on FERPA and sexual harassment) and should spend significant time with the course instructor, learning about course pedagogy, classroom management, and the course content. Students should be encouraged to reflect on this experience, integrating it into their education. It might be helpful to include learning outcomes in the UTA guidelines. UEPCC members agreed that a report should be submitted annually to CLAS by departments using UTAs.

1. The committee suggested future topics of discussion, including accommodations for students with SDS exceptions.
2. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Forbes   
Associate Professor, Department of Biology  
Secretary for UEPCC