The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
The Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

Minutes
240 SH
February 8, 2024

Attending: Cornelia Lang (chair), Jill Beckman, Asha Bhandary, Jean-François Charles, Anita Jung, Liz Lundberg (staff), Emilie Maurel-Destruel, Cinda Coggins Mosher, Amira Qidwai, Amy Strathman

Absent: Rodica Curtu, Christine Shea

1. The committee reviewed the minutes from the February 1, 2024 meeting and approved them with minor edits.

2. The committee reviewed the minutes from the November 16, 2023 meeting. More detail was needed in the description of the discussion that week. Some text was drafted during the meeting and will be circulated over the next week; the November 16 minutes will be approved in the February 15 meeting.

3. Next the committee welcomed three student presenters to discuss UIGrades: Amira Qidwai (Undergraduate Student Government and Student Representative to UEPCC), Quinn Eldridge (Undergraduate Student Government, creator of UIGrades), and Addison Eckard, (Undergraduate Student Government, Speaker for the Senate).

   Quinn, Addison, and Amira reviewed for the committee the inception of UIGrades, how it compares to similar tools available to students at some other universities, student reception and feedback about UIGrades so far, some concerns that have been raised, and a request for faculty advice as they begin to write some talking points to accompany the data UIGrades displays.

   This tool came out of a desire to help students make long-term planning decisions based on better information than they currently use. Sites like RateMyProfessor are not reliable, and syllabi posted to MyUI are not always current. Some other schools disclose information about grade distributions of courses, sometimes even integrated into their versions of MyUI. The hope is that this information, in context with other information about courses, would help students gauge courses' difficulty levels and make informed decisions about when and in what combinations to take their most challenging courses. USG hopes to begin working with ITS directly and to integrate UIGrades into MyUI.

   So far, students have responded very positively to the site. Concerns that came up from faculty and staff before and during this meeting include:
   - Privacy issues, FERPA compliance, and data security
   - How grades are attributed to specific instructors and course supervisors, especially in cases of team teaching and TAs; how labs and discussions are

broken out from/aggregated with lectures; the value of displaying grading done by TAs who teach for a limited time and rotate frequently

- Context that is necessary to make sense of grade data but missing from this interface, such as:
    - The possibility that a distribution of largely high grades could be connected to an ineffective instructor or ineffective teaching practices in a course; conversely, a wide distribution of grades given for a course may indicate a level of very effective teaching, with students distinguishing themselves through their engagement and effort in the course
    - The level of the course, where all A's might indicate that only advanced students are enrolled in the course
    - Plans of study recommended by departments and academic advisors, which balance manageable workloads with timely progress to degree, and which sometimes combine challenging courses in the same semester for curricular reasons
    - Inequities in instructor vulnerabilities and pressures, where graduate students, adjuncts, instructors still on probationary status, instructors from underrepresented backgrounds, and instructors from departments facing budgetary and other pressures might be more affected by students basing decisions on grades than instructors in more secure positions would be
    - Student cohorts: fall and spring grades can look quite different for a course not because of the instructor, but because of when in their overall plan of study students take a course and what that timing indicates about their preparation for the course
    - The facts that education is a dynamic process and instructors and students each adapt in response to each other over the course of a semester; instructors challenge students in important and meaningful ways; grades do not indicate workloads; and CLAS's policies and guidance on grading do not support grading systems that pit students against each other (so the grades displayed in UIGrades should not be understood as fitting into curves or proscriptive distributions)

The students appreciated hearing the committee's thoughts, concerns, and suggestions, and they will incorporate them into the documentation they write to accompany UIGrades.

4. Next the committee reviewed the proposal recommended by the GE Curriculum Committee (GECC) to grant World Language and Cultural Exploration status to ASL:1500 *Exploring the Deaf World* effective Fall 2024. This course was formerly called *Introduction to Deaf Studies*; it has been renamed and adjusted to fit the learning outcomes of the WLCE category. The committee was enthusiastic about this course and agreed with GECC that it should be approved for WLCE status.

5. The committee then reviewed the proposal recommended by the GE Curriculum Committee (GECC) to grant Social Sciences status to LAW:1010 *Introduction to the Legal System and Practice* effective Fall 2024. This course is newly designed by the College of Law. The committee discussed how it is distinct from MGMT:2000

Introduction to Law, offered by Tippie as a Business Core course, and they approved it for Social Sciences status.

6. Finally, the committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the December 7, 2023 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Emilie Maurel-Destruel
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Secretary, UEPCC