EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Friday, September 21, 2012

2:00-4:00 pm

**CBS Dean’s Conference Room, 123 Snyder Hall**

**St. Paul Campus**

AGENDA

**Present:** Jean Underwood, Rogene Schnell, John Ward, Stuart Goldstein (Chair), Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Robin Wright, Martha Flanders, Paul Siliciano, Leslie Schiff, Sue Wick, Jane Phillips, James Cortner, Stefanie Wiesneski, Nicole Waxmonsky, Carly Dahl, Beau Miller, Meaghan Thule, David Kirkpatrick

**Absent:**

Adam Harvey

1. **Approve minutes from May 18, 2012 Meeting**

The minutes from May 18th, 2012 were approved.

* It was suggested that we create a Moodle site for EPC. It would provide easy access to documents of upcoming meetings. It would also allow minor revisions of the minutes on the Moodle site before meetings, which would streamline the approval process during meetings.
* The Committee members voted to create a Moodle site. They also agreed to archive the minutes on both the web database and the Moodle site.
* **Elect EPC Chair for 2012-2013**
* Stu Goldstein was elected chair for 2012-2013.
* **Old Business**
* No old business

1. **New Business**

*A. Proposed course BIOL 3310 Research Seminars in Biology (previously taught under Biol*

*3700 Undergraduate Seminar designator) (John)*

The course has been offered as a section of Biol 3700 (Undergraduate Seminar). It is becoming lost under that designator; there was little student interest last year when the course was offered; the instructors want to continue the course, with a distinct course number.

The proposed course is a 1-credit course that will allow students to select seminars they want to attend, from a list of biology seminars offered within CBS and other units. There will be both classroom and online components, with preparation for upcoming seminars, plus student presentations of major topics in seminars they had attended.

A number of issues and questions were raised during the discussion, including the pros and cons of S/N and A-F grading. Among the questions and suggestions were:

* Offer multiple sections of this course, with different Biology seminars.
* This course would be good for honors students.
* In the past, it was graded as pass/fail but there was far too much make-up work included in this grading system.
* An A-F grading system might make it easier to grade students who don’t complete every activity.
* How you grade “sufficient vs. insufficient” with an S/N system? Is there a rubric to follow?
* How will this course count for majors?
* The syllabus should contain exactly what is expected for each grade if A-F is used.
* Bring the seminar speakers into class, so students are able to ask questions,
* Perhaps a seminar component could be added to other classes, as well as having a seminar class, so all students would be able to get a variety of speakers/seminars.

The course was approved unanimously. All the DUGSs thought their major will accept this course. John will report about grading at the following meeting.

*B. Transferring useful background information to DUGSs (Nikki and Stu)*

The formal duties of DUGSs seem to have been increasing in recent years, suggesting that it would be useful to formalize information about these duties.

It was noted that progress has already been made in making information available to new DUGs, including a list of generic duties and responsibilities on the CBS Website. (It is under Resources for CBS Faculty & Staff. On the left hand side click on Undergraduate teaching resources and DUGs will be under College committees & Department leadership.) It was noted that this and other links are not as obviously accessible as they should be; at this point the CBS home page doesn’t have a direct search of the website.

In addition to this information source, DUGs have started meeting independently.

*C. Non-CBS students awarded CBS degrees (Nikki)*

The first CBS BS degree was awarded to a non-CBS student last year. It was then thought to be unusual, but two or three more non-CBS students are requesting a CBS degree this year. It may become a popular “back door” to a CBS degree for students who have not managed to get accepted to CBS. Among the concerns about this route to a degree were:

* There are serious concerns about giving a degree to anyone who simply completes the required courses. They miss the guidance and social interactions unique to CBS. It also has budgetary implications.
* If a student completes the required coursework for a degree, the U entitles that student to that degree; we probably do not have legal authority to deny them a CBS degree if they have completed the required coursework.
* Students may try to get around a lot of Foundations/freshmen requirements, in turn decreasing the value of a CBS degree.
* We will be looking at what this means for transfer requirements and how it will play into Foundations requirements.
* We don’t want students taking non-major version of courses and graduating with a major.

Various ways of discouraging or prohibiting this route were discussed:

* + Make one or more core courses unavailable to non-CBS students
  + Review our admissions standards. Make a plan similar to CSOM: manage enrollment and the number of transfer students. Do a holistic review of the applicants when making admissions decisions.
  + Review each individual case and grant permission numbers by individual.
* Review the transfer requirements; to assure that both internal and external transfer students have the same requirements.
* Wait to see whether this becomes a continuing issue, because only a few students have done this so far.

No policy was enacted.

*D. Why Biol 3407, 3409, and 3411 are not considered lab/field courses (Sue, Jim)*

Although the corresponding courses offered at Itasca have a clear field/lab component, these UMTC courses have not been thought to have a large enough lab/field component to qualify as lab/field courses. Points made during the discussion were:

* Though students meet for 30 hours in a “lab”, they are not actually doing what we would consider lab or field work.
* Some of these courses spend time in lab/field work but the rest of that time is used for discussion, and don’t attain the required 30 hours of lab/fieldwork.
* Looking further into these courses online during the meeting, they appeared to be genuine lab courses, with the exception of BIOL 3407. We need to reconsider these courses as lab/field courses.
* EEB doesn’t accept these courses as lab/field because they want their students to have an authentic field experience.
* Maybe these courses can be made acceptable for one of the two lab/field work requirements?
* If they become lab/field requirement courses, does this impact other courses? Yes, some other courses (such as Plant Biology and Microbiology) would be affected.
* To implement changes, APAS reports must be modified.

No vote was taken.

1. **Announcements**

*A. Upcoming accreditation review (Robin)*

The U will undergo a periodic accreditation process Summer, 2014, and the EPC will need to review all courses that have not been approved since the current learning objectives have been part of the approval process. This means that:

* We will need learning outcomes stated for all these courses, so we will need to review syllabi.
* The instructors will need to decide which area of assessment they are most interested in, e.g. Writing or Scientific thinking.
* We must start doing this in the spring.
* We should use this as an opportunity to decide which priorities we want to establish.

*B. Uncoupling BIOL 3002 (Plant Biology: Function) and 3005W (Plant Biology Function Lab), to allow BIOL 3005 as a separate lab (John)*

This was done to increase availability of the lab to students who have not taken the lecture course.

*C. Designator change:*

* *PBIO 5309 (Molecular Ecology and Ecological Genomics) to BIOL 5309 (John)*
* Micb 1421 (Microbial Ecology and Applied Microbiology) is to be changed to Biol 4121

*D. (Robin) The Guild system is doing some useful things for students.*

Although we don’t often realize it, the U has students who are hungry. We are not sure how prevalent problem is. There were comments, questions and suggestions about providing food to these students:

* Would we make this food open to all students? If it’s open to everyone it makes students feel more comfortable, but would some students take unwarranted advantage of this?
* Collaborate with the Student Board -- ask how students would feel the most comfortable and least embarrassed about accepting food.
* To prevent unwarranted use of free food stores, we might have students fill out a form or pick up just, say, three items each day.
* Students could donate extra meals they have left on their food plan from the dining halls.
* *E. UM Rochester update (Stu)*

Claudia Neuhauser holds a periodic meeting to give updates on the UMR programs. Among the updates at the meeting in June were:

* The first freshman class admitted is now entering its senior year, and will graduate next spring.
* 156 incoming freshmen were registered this June; the goal was 150.
* The retention rate is very good.
* The faculty and staff numbers have been stable.
* They anticipate accreditation of the UMR campus by Sept 2014; before that, students will graduate with UM accreditation. (All U of M graduates officially receive their degrees from the U, not individual campuses, but the U expects each campus to achieve accreditation.)

The UMR programs are on schedule and going well.