



PROGRAMS COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, January 25, 2013

Attended: Darden, Ganser, Gruben, Hamm, Johnson, Kelley, McShane-Hellenbrand, Wambold for Rosenthal, Berland for Steinkuehler, Zulick

Absent: Gerloff, Shaffer, Valdez

Guests:

Approval of the Minutes: December 14, 2012 Passed

Adoption of the Agenda: January 25, 2013. Adopted with the addition of Art 108.

Regular Business

New Course: COM ARTS 547 Digital Game Cultures

Committee was asked to review for possible overlap with School of Education courses. Letter from School faculty in the games and learning area indicated no overlap and encouraged our support of the class. This class is part of a larger campus wide effort to increase gaming/learning courses. There were no objections or questions regarding this course. PASSED

New Course: ED PSYCH 326 Mind, Brain and Education

This is a key course in the School's new Education and Educational Services Certificate Program. There was concern expressed that no faculty were present to address questions. Issues and questions identified by the committee included the course number (300 level), the "Elementary" level designation, and the lack of prerequisites. Jeff Hamm will contact the author to note these concerns. TABLED

Course Change: ART 100 Introduction to Art

Course Change: ART 108 Foundations of Contemporary Art

Course Change: ART 208 Current Directions in Art

Julie Ganser moved that these courses be addressed as a block given their relation to each other and the common change requested (LAS designation). These courses are basically Art History courses with limited studio time. They differ mainly by the periods of time/art movements studied; for example, 208 addresses post-modernism to current trends in art. All the courses are included in the Art Studio Certificate. The LAS designation will allow L&S students to count these courses toward specific requirements and for degree credit, probably increasing enrollments. The committee felt a clearer justification was needed in the LAS designation criteria, especially since that item had been turned down for this designation previously. Jeff Hamm volunteered to assist in the correction/clarification of those justifications. The committee also requested that a class-outline, a grading rubric, and a cover letter be added. With those changes these items are PASSED.

Pass/Fail Policy (Hamm)

Jeff noted that pass/fail policies differed, sometimes dramatically, between campus schools and colleges. To facilitate student understanding of the policies and to simplify the pass/fail process for everyone on campus, a subcommittee of the campus Crossroads Committee worked to consolidate and streamline these different policies. Although relatively few School of Education students choose to take courses on a

pass/fail basis, Jeff argued that this kind of streamlining would be valuable for students and staff alike. Jeff pointed out the main outlines of the new policy:

- Students must be in “Good Standing” to take a course pass/fail. In the School that means a 2.5 semester and cumulative GPA; for most other schools/colleges that will mean 2.0 GPA.
- The maximum number of pass/fail courses a student can take is one per semester.
- SoE students are limited to taking only those courses that are an “elective.” What constitutes an “elective” can vary by major, degree program, and school/college.

Historically, SoE students cannot take courses pass/fail if those courses are in their major area of study--even if the major requirements have already been fulfilled. Jeff noted that the policy above varied somewhat from the current SoE pass/fail policies, but certainly reflected the

The Committee shared at length their thoughts about the policy in particular and pass/fail courses in general. Some members worried that there might be too many students choosing pass/fail courses for the wrong reasons, sometimes negatively impacting the class climate and instruction. Other members argued that pass/fail options should be strongly supported, given students’ tendency to fear the potential reduction in GPA that went with taking an interesting course outside their comfort zone. Representatives from the arts departments noted the significant number of students who took their courses pass/fail to “protect” their GPAs. One member noted that he attended an undergraduate institution that encouraged pass/fail courses and ultimately did graduate work in an area that grew from his taking a course on a pass/fail basis. This faculty member expressed concern about the possibility that a student might take a course pass/fail, fall in love with the academic area, and then need the course to complete the major. Jeff agreed that this was an interesting and important consideration that he would take back to the Crossroads group.

Directed/Independent Study Policy (Hamm)

The committee is being asked to provide feedback on a proposed campus-level policy on *undergraduate* directed study/independent study courses. This policy was drafted by staff in the Provost’s Office in response to concerns about a few faculty serving dozens and dozens of students on directed and independent study each semester. Brad Zulick ran numbers for directed/independent study courses and the data suggested that the School of Education does not have a problem in this area. Reviewing practices and policies around these courses has raised concerns for some students about inequities in workload and expectations across these courses, especially related to work for directed/independent study credit in science labs and field experiences. The two major policy changes (1) limit the number of credits of directed/independent that an individual faculty member can offer in a semester and (2) require a written study plan for all such courses.

The committee had questions and feedback regarding certain aspects of this plan. Some faculty members expressed concern about restraints on faculty autonomy. Jeff noted that the campus is subject to federal definitions of what constitutes a “credit” of work, and that “teaching” dozens of directed/independent study course students in a semester would clearly constitute a violation of that definition. At the same time, members of the committee wondered how these experiences could be construed as “independent” if the same hours of instructional meeting time were required as for a group instruction course. Some faculty wondered how the campus would accommodate a faculty member who was working with a small group of students, all of whom were working independently. Jeff noted that directed/independent study was, by definition, understood as individualized instruction, and that even a group of students working independently (much like a graduate seminar) might be better designated as a group instruction course. It was asked how these new rules—especially those around the required study plans—would be monitored. Jeff said that the Provost’s Office would monitor the number of directed/independent study students

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taught per faculty, but he was not sure how the study plan requirement would be monitored. There was no formal vote on the proposal, since it was presented for feedback only to the Provost's Office.

Adjourned

Next Meeting: February 15, 2013 12:30-2:00 pm in Rm 198 (Ed Bldg)

Minutes submitted by Tammi PM

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