

**University of Washington  
Faculty Council on Academic Standards**

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

1:30pm – 3:00pm

Gerberding 142

**Meeting Synopsis:**

1. Call to order
  2. Review of the minutes from October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016
  3. SCAP report
  4. Offering an option and major in same area of focus
  5. Good of the order
  6. Adjourn
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**1) Call to order**

Stroup called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**2) Review of the minutes from October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

The minutes from October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 were approved as written.

**3) SCAP report**

***New Routine Business***

**#1 - Civil & Environmental Engineering**

The request is for revised program requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering degree. The department is seeking to replace course HCDE 231 with the new course ENGR 231, approved in Spring 2016.

Brock reported the request is relatively straightforward and SCAP did not have any concerns.

The council approved the request by a majority vote.

**#2 - Electrical Engineering**

The request is for revised program requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering degree.

Similar to the previous item, the EE department is seeking to replace course HCDE 231 with new course ENGR 231.

The council approved the request by a majority vote.

#### **4) Offering an option and major in same area of focus**

Stroup explained the last FCAS meeting included some discussion on a pending question the council has been asked to address. The question comes from a recent 1503 proposal from the Department of Comparative Literature, Cinema & Media; the department would like to offer an Option and a Major in the same area of focus (Cinema Studies).

Some background on the distinctions between Options and Majors was given by a member of the Registrar's Office. It was noted an Option is a "special flavor" of a Major that can be opted for. In this case, Comparative Literature, Cinema & Media would like to create a Major in Cinema Studies, while the Option already exists. The request is unprecedented, and It was noted FCAS' decision would be setting a precedent for this type of request in the future. It was noted Options are transcribed at the UW.

There was some discussion of the rationale for the request. A member noted doing the Option in Cinema Studies seems like a distinct path in the department, as the Option provides some depth in Cinema Studies without having to commit to majoring in the focus.

A member noted that the department may be considering a RCEP for the Option in 5 years' time.

Discussion revealed there is an existing university policy stating that an Option is to be distinct from other Options inside and outside of the host department.

A member explained that Comparative Literature, Cinema & Media is not a large department, and Cinema Studies is popular with students. Discussion centered on possibilities of a "problem circumstance" arising from setting the precedent of allowing Majors and Options to exist in the same area of focus.

It was noted the question might make up another element to be added to a FCAS Policy.

The council did not vote on the issue; Stroup noted she would continue the evaluation and bring back findings to SCAP, and then to the full council.

The council did agree that in this case, the rationale seems reasonable and the request will likely be okayed when brought to FCAS for a vote.

Garrett emphasized detailed documentation of the question both in SCAP and in FCAS, as it is important that future members of FCAS understand what was discussed and decided.

#### **5) Good of the order**

##### *Offering W-credits in language courses*

Stroup explained some courses in Spanish and French are offering credits that count toward the university's W-credit requirement (Additional Writing). She noted Scholastic Regulations makes it clear that the W-credit was designed and intended to be granted for writing in English (to encourage training/practice in writing), and that this is a misuse of the W-credit. She noted she is interested in adding the words "In English" to the listed W-credit policy.

An adviser on the council explained that within the Adviser Information File (a series of detailed memos on academic policies affecting UW undergraduate students), there is a line stating that offering W-credits in a language course is acceptable. It was noted this line was likely designated for removal, and its existence may be an oversight. Roy offered to email the file in question to Stroup.

It was noted writing in other languages is very valuable, but this was not the intent of the W-requirement.

#### *Course overlap*

Stroup explained that the current departmental sign-off process relating to issues of course overlap was set up before the UW implemented Activity-based Budgeting (ABB), and the university climate in relation to course overlap has changed since that time.

She explained that now when department chairs perceive substantial overlap, there should be another mechanism (e.g. an official mediation process) that can be undertaken. Robert Stacey (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences) has set up a process wherein if overlap is perceived, the issue is forwarded to the corresponding Divisional Dean, who evaluates information in an attempt to understand the fiscal ramifications of significant course/program overlap. Stroup explained the new process has been mandated by UW administration.

Stroup explained FCAS has been asked what it considers to be “considerable overlap” in order to weigh in on the development of this process. It was noted a department not signing-off on a proposed new course/program does not preclude that request being approved by FCAS, and has not precluded approval in the past. In other words, chairs cannot veto other chairs’ proposals for new curriculum or programs.

Miller clarified the current mediation process, including how it was designed to function: if a unit has concerns with another department’s proposal, the two are supposed to consult and come to an agreement. If no solution is found, the objecting department is to contact the UW’s Registrar’s Office, who will determine whether or not to send the issue to FCAS. A member explained that currently departmental sign-off is occurring in high numbers, when actually, substantial concerns might be present. This has led to issues of course overlap not being surfaced at the Registrar’s Office.

It was noted the ideal solution for issues of course overlap is for academic units to work together to mediate concerns, however, some departments simply “sit” on requests for sign-off in an effort to stall them going forward.

Issues of equivalencies were raised, as departments desiring not to grant course equivalencies creates issues for students.

It was noted course overlap concerns must be thought through properly by the involved parties. Roy asked if there would be any retroactive recourse for proposals that may have not had proper, robust review. The answer was not known.

Garrett explained many other institutions are working through the same issues, and that consulting/collaborating with other institutions may be of use in this work.

Stroup explained she believes over-50% overlap needs to be evaluated, and that this is not limited to introductory courses.

Zhou brought up access to popular courses as a legitimate reason for overlap to exist. Members agreed that this reason, and some others, constitute a legitimate need for overlap to exist. However, only a certain level of overlap should be allowed.

Discussion revealed there is no data on mediated levels of overlap available in the Registrar's Office. Miller explained members of the Registrar's Office are not always qualified to judge degrees of overlap between courses/programs, as this often requires a specialized knowledge of the content.

It was noted steps must be taken to keep the mediation process collegial. [I don't think we should have this here]

Brock reminded the council that last year, FCAS was worried it would become inundated with instances of course overlap. DeCosmo explained the "justification of need" is another element to be considered in making overlap decisions.

Stroup clarified that 45-50% duplication is her initial idea for designating a threshold that constitutes a problem.

#### *Proposition for competitive minors*

Brock explained the UW Information School is considering making large changes to Minors, including offering interdisciplinary Minors, competitive Minors, and minimum requirements for Minors. It was noted these policies are not in the current spirit of Minors at the UW, which are designed to offer another realm of focus for students that does not necessarily relate to their major. The item was brought for discussion to FCAS.

The council held some discussion. Zhou suggested that with the curving of grades, even the GPA element of minimum requirements are competitive, in that you must compete with other students for your GPA. Community college equivalencies were brought up as another related issue.

Ratner explained there could be truly capacity-constrained Minors, as this relates to the ability of a unit to offer the Minor to a large influx of students.

After discussion, some members expressed they did not want this new type of minor, mostly because it would include additional admission caveats for students. A member noted that students compete increasingly simply to receive admission to the UW, and then, for many, it is a continuing contest to obtain their desired degree.

Stroup explained the council would return to the subject.

## **6) Adjourn**

The council adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

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*Minutes by Joey Burgess, jmbg@uw.edu, council support analyst*

**Present:**                   **Faculty:** Phil Brock, Dan Ratner, Sarah Stroup (chair), Lynn Dietrich, John Sahr, Matthew Taylor  
**Ex-officio reps:** Jennifer Payne, Peter Digre, Conor Casey, Kaitlyn Zhou, Donna Sharpe, Meera Roy  
**Guests:** Janice DeCosmo, Robert Corbett, Helen Garrett, Emily Leggio, Tina Miller

**Absent:**                   **Faculty:** Mark Johnson, Patricia Kramer, D. Shores, Daniel Enquobahrie, Champak Chatterjee, Ann Huppert  
**Ex-officio reps:** N/A  
**President's designee:** Philip Ballinger

## **Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs (SCAP) Report**

1:30-3:00 p.m.

October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, Gerberding 026

### **New Routine Business:**

**Civil & Environmental Engineering-** ([CIVE-20160829](#)) Revised program requirements for Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering degree.

Background: The Department is seeking to replace HCDE 231 with the new ENGR 231 which was approved Spring 2016.

**Action Taken 10/21/2016: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.**

**Electrical Engineering-** ([EE-20160829](#)) Revised program requirements for Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering degree.

Background: The Department is seeking to replace HCDE 231 with the new ENGR 231 which was approved Spring 2016.

**Action Taken 10/21/2016: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.**