

MINUTES

Meeting Date: December 7, 2011

Time: 1:30-3:00pm

Place: BUSN 321

Voting Members and Alternates in Attendance: Tom Meyer, Ramesh Sankaranarayanan, Laura Burton, Eric Donkor, Richard Rockwell, Michael Bradford, David Grant, Peter Kaminsky, Larry Gramling.

Ex Officio Members and Alternates in Attendance: Margaret Lamb, Maria Martinez, David Ouimette, Eric Schultz.

Meeting called to order at 1:33pm.

1. Welcome.

2. Minutes of the November 16, 2011 meeting.

Dr. Eric Donkor moved that the minutes of November 16, 2011 be approved as presented. Dr. Tom Meyer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

3. Announcements

3.1. The three courses approved at the last meeting – UNIV-type INTD 2XXX PA2SS Program, Mentoring African American Students, UNIV-type INTD 2XXX Tutoring Principles for Quantitative Learning, and INTD 1998 Variable Topics Seminar: The Holster First Year Project -- were approved by Senate C&CC. They will be reported at the next Senate meeting.

3.2. Senate C&CC also reviewed the *Definitional Matters* document approved by the UICC at the previous UICC meeting. The draft will now go to Senate Scholastic Standards for their review. The document will be widely disseminated once it is approved.

4. Old Business

4.1. Program Reports

INTD 1800 University Learning Skills, First Year Programs

A question was raised at the last meeting regarding the practice of non-faculty assigning grades. Chair Hedley Freake reported the information he obtained.

- “Who has standing to teach courses at UConn?”
 - The University By-Laws treat everyone all employees as staff; this includes all faculty. The By-Laws are silent on the issue of who has authority to teach.
 - Human Resources has nothing to say on the matter.
 - University agreements with the unions also have nothing to say on the subject. AAUP has no problem with the current practice of staff teaching FYE courses.
- Other relevant points of information:
 - 25% of general education courses in Storrs are taught by GAs.

- In the Freshman English Program, having an M.A. is not a prerequisite for teaching Freshman English. Beginner GAs in the ENGL department are likely to be assigned to teach a Freshman English section.
- GAs teaching in the program are given instruction and support. The Freshman English program has solved the issue of providing sufficient instructors to meet student volume by ensuring that novice TAs are well-trained and well-supported for their teaching role.
- The Assistant Director of the program, Dr. Lisa Blansett, reviews grades for all Freshman English sections halfway through the semester to ensure consistency. She also reviews assignments (not products) at regular points through the semester.

Discussion:

- While the UICC cannot dictate how programs train their instructors, it may wish to recommend that GAs assigned to teach go through ITL to provide a centralized system of training.
- Chair Hedley Freake noted that the UICC could make a review of a programs' instructor training part of the program review process. The UICC will want to understand how programs vet the suitability of their instructors.
- Dr. Maria Martinez recommended that proposers and department representatives come to the UICC to make a presentation that would allow for the evaluation of the whole process, including the training of instructors.
- The UICC will want to make sure that it asks the relevant questions about teaching, training, and instruction. The wording in Question 8 of the Program Report template can be clarified to more clearly note what the UICC wishes to know about their training instructors.

Brief Overview of INTD 1800 Program Report Discussion to Date:

- Letter-grading for INTD 1800 is based on research that has been done about the most effective way to engage students in these kinds of courses.
- The course is by definition a UNIV-type course as it resides outside of the schools and colleges.
- The program report has provided information about their instructors and how they are trained.

Continued Discussion:

- 80% of the colleges and universities offer similar courses in letter-graded format. The research supports that students are not motivated when a letter-grade is not attached to the work.
- INTD 1800 sections are small 19 student courses. A student's response to assignments is a barometer of how well the student has transitioned to college. This allows instructors to get an early sense of how students are doing and can open up a dialogue if problems exist. Personal contact early in college is important to get students connected to university life and to be better students in their other classes.
- Dr. Richard Rockwell suggested that the UICC should be looking at peer and aspirant institutions to see what they are doing with these kinds of courses.
- Dr. Steve Zinn pointed out that UConn overwhelmingly evaluates students through the assignment of grades. When students do work, the grade is the reward that is earned. This is valuable for students to learn early in their first year.
- The FYE oversight committee, a faculty committee, has already approved the course unanimously as letter-graded.

- Dr. Margaret Lamb described the circumstances in which S/U grading is typically used: largely internship and field work where the quantity of work can be evaluated. The work is generally external and evaluated separately from the academic aspects of the course. Letter-grading allows instructors to evaluate the degree of engagement. The more relevant question is whether the academic work is set in a way that allows for clear discrimination between grades by instructors trained to assess work. In this sense, the INTD 1800 class seems more suited to letter-grading.

Dr. Tom Meyer moved to accept the INTD1800 report as presented. Dr. Michael Bradford seconded the motion.

Motion carried with six in favor and one opposed.

5. New Business

5.1. Scheduling Program Reports for Remainder of Academic Year

The assumption is that the UICC will meet four times during the Spring semester, with a 3-4 week gap between meetings. A proposed program report schedule is below:

- JAN/early FEB: Honors or SYE?
- Late FEB- IMJR Program
- MAR- INTD 1810 Learning Communities
- APR- INTD 1820 Faculty/Student Seminar

The UICC also needs to decide how it will want to review those courses without a clear home, like INTD 1985, 3985, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anabel Perez
IISP Administrator