

General Studies Council
November 3, 2022 @ 3:30 pm
Warner Conference Room or via Zoom
**** Approved Via Email ****

Present: Joel Berrier, Noelle Bohaty, Joan Blauwkamp, Jeremy Dillon, Sherri Harms, Toni Hill, Miechelle McKelvey, Tim Obermier, Rochelle Reeves, Sri Seshadri, Rebecca Umland, Nita Unruh, Greg Brown, Mark Ellis, Lisa Neal, Jessie Bialas, Joel Cardenas, Amy Rundstrom, Tristan Larson

Guests: David Rozema, James Vaux, Nanette Hogg, Suzanne Maughan, Tim Jares

Absent: Melissa Wuellner, Beth Hinga

I. Call to order:

- **Approve agenda:** Unruh/Seshadri moved to approve the agenda.

Berrier/Blauwkamp moved to include Wuellner's assessment information from her email sent to the Council on October 30, 2022, on the agenda under item II. Old Business, Further Reflections on APR (ongoing). The vote was unanimous. **Motion carried to approve the agenda as amended.**

- **Notes from October 6, 2022, meeting:** There was no quorum in the meeting, so approval was not necessary. The notes are for internal use only to notify absent Council members of the items discussed; no official actions were taken since there was no quorum.

II. Old Business (Open Items):

- **Course proposals** (review for final approval): Nothing pending
- **ITEC 290 Special Assessment / Recommendation**

Background: The Council voted 7 to 6 against the inclusion of ITEC 290 in LOPER 3 in the December 3, 2020 meeting. Dr. Bicak subsequently overruled the Council, and on May 14, 2021, he directed that: "ITEC 290 will be offered in a 2 year pilot framework. I expect the course will be evaluated by the GS Director and Council throughout the two years. A recommendation for continuance or discontinuance should be offered at the November 2022 GS meeting. Further consideration will be based on the evidence provided from the November 2022 meeting."

Obermier/Harms moved to recommend to Dr. Majocha that ITEC 290 be retained as a LOPER 3 course.

The discussion on this motion reiterated similar points that Council members raised in previous deliberations on this course. To briefly summarize:

Proponents believe that: Learning about how to communicate through technology is essential, particularly given experiences during the pandemic; SPCH 100 should not be the only LOPER 3 option for students; the assessment analysis in the Spring 2022 report did not find statistically significant differences in student performance between ITEC 290 and SPCH 100; and the course syllabus demonstrates that the course is meeting the LOPER 3 learning objectives.

Opponents believe that: Industrial technology is not an appropriate discipline to teach an Oral Communications course, and the assigned instructors do not meet the HLC minimum qualifications to teach communication; additional LOPER 3 course options should be offered by disciplinary experts in communication; the assessment data are not precise enough to compare student performance across courses; and the ITEC 290 syllabus and schedule indicate little faculty instruction in communications theory.

The vote on the motion to recommend retaining ITEC 290 in LOPER 3 was 7 in favor to 5 against. The votes in favor were: 3 CBT + 3 COE + 1 LIB. Under the voting rule, with no 'yea' votes from CAS, **the motion failed**.

Harms/Obermier then moved to extend the trial period for ITEC 290 for another year, to the November 2023 meeting.

There was some confusion about Dr. Bicak's instruction on this point. He said 'two-year' trial but also that the Council should make its recommendation for continuance or discontinuance at the November 2022 meeting, which is only 1.25 years. If the course is discontinued, that action would take effect at the end of this academic year, with ITEC 290 removed from the LOPER 3 options in the next catalog, so it would have been an option for two years: 2021-22 AY and 2022-23 AY.

Proponents argued that there will be 4 semesters of assessment data from ITEC 290 and 3 semesters of data from SPCH 100 at the end of the extended trial period, allowing for clearer conclusions from the assessment results. Opponents argued that their objection based on ITEC being an inappropriate discipline would be unchanged next year.

The vote on the motion to extend the trial period for ITEC 290 to November 2023 was 8 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstaining. The 8 'yea' votes were: 3 CBT + 3 COE + 1 LIB + 1 CAS. The other CAS members voted nay (3) or abstained (1). The Governance Document voting rule specifies: "Actions are approved by a simple majority of the voting members in attendance, but the majority must include one vote from CBT, one vote from COE, and one vote each from at from least two divisions of CAS." Therefore, by the Council's voting rule, **the motion failed**.

(Note: This result was not recognized during the meeting, where majority support and votes from all three colleges was mistakenly interpreted to mean the motion had carried.)

The agenda items were rearranged to consider next the new course proposals from Philosophy, in deference to guest David Rozema, who waited patiently through the earlier business.

III. New Business:

- **Course proposals (new): PHIL 125, 150, 205, 209, 214, and 261**

Rozema explained that Philosophy was moving courses previously approved in General Studies on philosophy in historical periods: ancient, medieval, etc. out of the Program and seeking to replace them with courses they deemed more appropriate or appealing to General Studies students, mainly courses in the philosophy ‘of something’ – e.g., Philosophy of Science. The new proposals also include an ethics course for preparing health professionals and a relisting of the Philosophy Department’s course that used to be offered in the old Portal category. The net increase in Philosophy General Studies offerings would be 2 courses, since 4 are being removed and 6 added.

Berrier/Umland moved to send the 6 Philosophy courses to campus for inclusion in LOPER 6 (Humanities), pending revisions.

The needed revisions are to revise the course syllabi (all 6 of them) to remove the end of semester assessment assignment, which is no longer used for GS Program assessment, and to remove references to the old Humanities distribution area learning outcomes from the former GS Program in favor of the LOPER 6 learning outcomes in the current Program.

The vote on the motion was 12-0, in favor. **Motion carried.**

Noelle Bohaty left the meeting. (11 voting members remaining.)

II. Old Business (Open Items) – continued:

- **Further reflections on the APR (ongoing):**

The Council discussed the concerns about the assessment data analysis that were raised in the faculty comments on the GS for Faculty discussion forum. The commenters had expressed concerns about the type of statistical analysis that was performed. Melissa Wuellner, before the meeting, had provided to the Council a simulation showing that alternative analytical techniques could produce different results.

Berrier/Unruh moved to create a subcommittee of Council members with equal representation from each college to examine and analyze the data for assessment from Spring 2022 and semesters going forward.

Brown said that he felt insulted that his statistical acumen was questioned. Dillon and Berrier noted that the Council must be responsive to campus feedback, and the APR team recommended renewed attention to campus comprehension of and perceptions of the Council's work.

Proponents of the subcommittee felt that it would lessen the burden on the Director and provide new insights about what the best method of analysis would be. Opponents expressed that each college may not have members with statistical skills to participate fully, questioned confidentiality if subcommittee appointees not on the Council were used instead, and argued that the method of analysis should be determined in advance, so as not to choose a method based on its delivery of some desired result.

Berrier/Unruh amended their motion to task the subcommittee with delivering a preliminary analysis of assessment data and recommendation of method using only the Fall 2022 data from LOPER 10 (Human Diversity) with the report due in time to make the agenda of the March 2023 meeting. LOPER 10 was chosen as the category with the broadest variety of approved courses from different departments and across the colleges.

Hill/Reeves motioned to table. The vote on this motion was 7 in favor, 4 against. Since there were no 'yea' votes from CAS, **the motion failed.**

The vote on the Berrier/Unruh amended motion to create the subcommittee was 8 in favor, 3 against. Since there were no 'yea' votes from CBT, **this motion also failed.**

III. New Business – continued:

- **GS credit for previous military / work experience:**

Dr. Majocha joined the meeting and explained the variety of non-traditional credit that the University already offers, including AP classes, correspondence courses, department test-outs, and military credit, among others. Current policy allows up to 45 hours of such non-traditional credit.

She asked the Council to consider what options might exist to allow students to demonstrate that their prior work or life experience was rigorous enough to be credited within General Studies as equivalent to coursework in some category. She indicated that this was not an urgent matter.

There were several questions from the Council members about paying for the credits awarded, vetted by whom, how evaluated, and where in General Studies? Dr. Majocha responded that there are models from other universities we might consider, students would be expected to pay a reasonable amount for such credits, but the other matters are questions for the Council to decide – or perhaps General Studies is not the right place for these credits, but qualifying students might instead be able to earn non-traditional credit

for life experience relevant to their degree programs. The Council will include this item again for consideration in the agenda for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned @ 5:12 pm. Motion by Seshadri/Berrier. Vote with our feet.

Agenda item not addressed:

- To be completed this year: Student representative to work with the Director of General Studies to solicit and evaluate student nominations for faculty members to be recognized for excellence in teaching General Studies courses.

Next meeting: December 1, 2022 @ 3:30 pm-Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom