THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA

AGENDA
Core Curriculum Oversight Committee
NERC 1012
8:15 to 9:30, January 11, 2018

Attending Thomas Robinson, Ginger Bishop, Millie Jackson, Cory Armstrong, Rainer Schad, Derek Williamson, Cynthia Sunal, Liza Wilson, Jef Naidoo, Joyce Meyer, Charlie Steinmetz, Ross D'Entremont, Beth Todd, Wei Zhu, Luke Niiler, Denny Savage, Daniel Strickland, Mary Ellen Hanna, Dixie MacNeil, Marysia Galbraith, Amanda Thompson, David Cordes

Agenda

1. Review and approval of minutes from December 7

   Minutes approved

2. Quick update on the status of this year's reviews
   - Count of courses still under review, open for voting, and completed
   - Possible discussion on specific courses (as needed by the sub-committee chairs)

   As of this morning
   - 100 courses open for voting
   - 20 courses at the sub-committee chair level (final approval before voting)
   - 10 courses are still being reviewed by committee members

   Please vote on these courses. A few comments were made regarding voting
   - We only need 50% approval for the course to pass, so you do not have to vote on every course. However, if you do not vote at all then you force others into additional work.
   - Would be nice if you could sort the voting list by category
   - Would be nice if you could see which courses were approved by the reviewers and the sub-committee chair unanimously (did not have any "no" comments)
   - People who have served on this committee in the past recommend
     - Do a block of courses at a time (8 or 10)
     - If all the reviewers say "yes" to everything, taking a hard look at the course is probably not required. Spend more time where there were "no" votes during the review process.

3. Discussion Topic #1 – handling current core designated courses that are updated within UA's course inventory system

   Example:
   - CS 495 (Capstone Design) is designated as a W course (it is reviewed every five years and the schedule for CS is 2014, 2019, 2024, …).
   - The pre-requisites changed for CS 495 this past year.

- The current system requires that new review of CS 495 for W designation.

Is this how we want the system to operate? Should we do an additional review of existing core courses when there are changes made to the course in the course inventory system?

We do not have control over this, the Registrar's Office and others dictate what is needed when course changes are made.
This can add significantly to a department's workload if they are revising a curriculum (making many changes to existing courses)
From a departmental perspective, keeping the five-year cycle is clean
With the exception of C-designated courses, other courses should not be impacted by pre-requisite changes as much (C-designated courses require a specific computing pre-requisite).
It is the content of the course that is critical, not the rules on administering the course. However, it is often impossible to detect course content change in the course inventory system.

Recommendation – David Cordes will work with the Registrar's Office and see if there is a clean improvement to the system.

4. Discussion Topic #2 – enrollment restrictions on core-designated courses

Example:

- Enrollments are increasing, covering courses is difficult for departments
- A department offers a W course and wants to restrict it to their majors only
- The pre-requisites for this course include "must be majoring in the field of xxx"

Should departments be allowed to do this? Is it any of our business?

The basic question is "should core courses be available to all students?"
Currently, there are 36 core courses with restrictions on who can take the course

- 6 computing, 2 math, 3 natural science, and 25 writing courses

W courses are designed as "writing in the field" so there is some justification for that restriction
Looking at how departments handle their W courses

- two departments lack any W courses (accounting and computer-based honors). All Culverhouse students take GBA 300 and GBA 490, CBH is not a major, their students take W courses in their major)
- three departments have only one W course (mathematics, communicative disorders, music education)
- Philosophy has 22 W courses, New College has 19, History has 19, and others have a large number of W courses as well

Departments relying on other departments for their W courses should talk with those departments
Restrictions that block a student from taking a core course goes against the basic philosophy of a liberal arts education where students can take courses that interest them
New College, where students may have a major similar to an existing major, is penalized when its students cannot take W courses in related disciplines.

PLEASE TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGES ON THIS AND WE WILL CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING