THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA

MINUTES
Core Curriculum Oversight Committee
NERC 1012
8:15 to 9:30, March 8, 2018

Attending Ed Merrill, Denny Savage, Daniel Strickland, Mary Ellen Hanna, Beth Todd, Ginger Bishop, Jef Naidoo, Thomas Robinson, Martin Evans, Charlie Steinmetz, Reagan Locke, Wei Zhu, Cory Armstrong, Amanda Thompson, Dixie MacNeil, Luoheng Han, Luke Niiler, David Cordes

Agenda

1. Review and approval of minutes from January 11

   Minutes approved

2. 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
   - Seven courses still need to be approved (voting) at the committee level
   - Will work with people individually if courses re-appear or have issues. Look for emails in the next few weeks if you are associated with any of those reviews.

3. (continued) Discussion Topic #1 – 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"

   Reminder – discussion from last time – shown below in green

   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.

The student must have all the necessary pre-requisites in order to take a course. They need the background and discipline knowledge associated with those pre-requisites.

Committee felt that it was up to the individual department regarding how they handled enrollment to their W courses. We should not dictate policy to the departments on how they handle enrollment in their courses.

4. Discussion Topic #2 – comments on the electronic review system and process

Should consider removing the initial set of qualifier questions (enrollment less than 35, taught by someone with at least a MS, multiple sections coordinated, etc.). We can't confirm this. They are just a promise from the department. We should not be agreeing (or disagreeing) with this promise.

It appears that some of the course syllabi that are used during reviews are not a complete syllabus. It was noted that the system uses the "course level" syllabus and not the individual syllabi that faculty generate each semester for each section of a course.

Would be nice to roll-back to a specific location. For example, if a sub-committee chair rolls a course back, it should go to the department chair. It was noted that the system is not built that way.

It was noted that the CourseLeaf system occasionally does not link cleanly into myBama. Occasionally you will have to hit "back" to try something again and get it to work properly.

Other than finishing the last few reviews (via email), there is no outstanding business for this committee this year. There is a chance that this committee might get together in April for other discussions, but that is only a possibility. Please do not remove the April meeting from your calendar. However, it is highly probable that we will cancel that meeting.