

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Annual Report of the Educational Policy Committee to Faculty Council
April 08, 2019

Membership:

Marsha Penner (Chair, Psychology and Neuroscience, 2020); Kristin Reiter (Health Policy and Management, At-Large, 2019); Sherick Hughes (Education, At-Large, 2019); Gidi Shemer (Biology, At-Large, 2019); Meg Zomorodi (Nursing, At-Large, 2020); Melinda Beck (Nutrition, At-Large, 2021); Angela Bardeen (University Libraries, At-Large, 2021); Patia McGrath (Business, At-Large, 2021); Juanita Limas (Graduate Student, GPSF); Carter Vilim (Undergraduate Student); Lauren DiGrazia (Assistant Provost University Registrar, ex-officio); Christy Samford (Deputy Director, University Registrar, ex-officio); Nick Siedentop (Office of Undergraduate Curricula, ex-officio); Abigail Panter (College of Arts and Sciences, ex-officio)

Committee Charge:

The committee is concerned with those matters of educational policy and its implementation as to which the Faculty Council possess legislative powers by delegation from the General Faculty under Article II of the Code. The committee's function is advisory to the Faculty Council and the University Registrar.

Summary of Major Activities:

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the EPC considered the following topics and/or took the following actions:

General Education Curriculum Design

Over the 2018-2019 academic year, the committee had several updates from Andrew Perrin and other members of the committee working on the General Education Curriculum. The first update, on September 6th, was provided by Abigail Panter. Dr. Panter provided a broad overview of the current version of the IDEAs in Action curriculum. The committee discussed the three areas of emphasis: capacities, a focus on the first year, and ways that learning/knowledge can be integrated. A second update was provided by Andrew Perrin at the October 30th meeting, including a suggested time line for implementation. At the November 30th meeting, Andrew Perrin provided an additional update, and the committee discussed some of the concerns raised, including the concern that a student could graduate without ever taking a natural science course.

At the February 5th meeting, Andrew Perrin provided an update on the status of the general education curriculum redesign proposal. He noted that EPC is one of three legislative stops. At the next EPC meeting, Andy will return to ask for EPC's endorsement of the proposal prior to presenting it to Faculty Council for a vote on March 8, 2019. Andrew Perrin gave a brief presentation during which he: (1) summarized key changes to the proposal since December (when the last major draft was released); (2) discussed the processes for obtaining and responding to feedback, and (3) highlighted key concerns that had been raised and described how the redesign committee had responded to those concerns. Key concerns and responses are

summarized below:

(1) Too little attention to natural science and hands-on lab learning.

Response: renamed the scientific investigation capacity to reflect natural scientific investigation, added an empirical investigation one-credit lab requirement that can be attached to a particular course, and demonstrated how natural scientific investigation is covered in other capacities.

(2) Too little emphasis on data science.

Response: New fourth credit was added to the triple I courses called foundations of data science. The college will provide centralized resources for instructor teams that do not feel equipped to meet this requirement. Also demonstrated how data science is present in other capacities.

(3) Global understanding and engagement capacity does not focus beyond US, Canada and Western Europe.

Response: expanded the capacity definition to require consideration of other locations and populations

(4) Recurring capacities are too onerous and will limit instructor flexibility.

Response: reduced the list of recurring capacities

(5) Concern about mechanisms for supporting curriculum and departments' resources. Response: The college has agreed to support departments. Dean Guskowitz will provide a letter to Faculty Council indicating this support.

EPC members had the following questions and comments:

(1) Can students graduate without ever taking a natural sciences course? Andy Perrin indicated that students now must take a course. Abigail Panter clarified that students with an AP credit in natural sciences could graduate without taking a natural sciences course at Carolina.

(2) Christy Samford clarified that there will now need to be two reviews of course transfer credits; one to assess that the course meets content requirements and one to assess that the course meets the focus capacity requirements. Andy Perrin confirmed and noted that transfer students are not required to meet the first year requirements.

(3) Will the curriculum be evaluated? Andy Perrin noted that the general education oversight committee is charged with evaluation, and there is a mechanism in place for faculty to propose curriculum changes and pilots on a more continuous basis. Abigail Panter noted that SACS is supportive of this approach.

(4) Will the new first-year requirements delay entrance into majors? Andy Perrin and Abigail Panter noted that the first year requirements comprise 13 credits out of a total of 30 in the first year so students should be able to complete pre-requisites. The biggest challenges arise for dual science majors and professional schools. The implementation group will look at majors that are sequential to ensure that students can fulfill the requirements of the general education curriculum and the major.

(5) Will course scheduling be done to ensure access for student athletes? Abigail Panter confirmed yes.

(6) What will this cost? Andy Perrin noted that the design committee was not charged with assessing cost, but that the college has been modeling costs and is committed to supporting the new curriculum.

Abigail Panter and Andy Perrin noted that EPC would be receiving a letter from two professors in

Asian Studies that expresses some concerns about the curriculum. Although EPC had not received the letter as of the meeting, Andy Perrin and Abigail Panter presented a draft response to each concern.

At the February 12th meeting, we discussed the perception that the process has not been open. The EPC received 15 messages from faculty prior to this meeting raising concerns over the IDEAs in Action plan. These issues raised are those that the IDEAs in Action team have also heard, and a Andrew Perrin noted the many open meetings have taken place, and the revisions that have been made are based on feedback from faculty and students (including the current revision). At the March 19th meeting, Andrew Perrin along with Abigail Panter, Viji Sathy, Kelly Hogan, Chris Lundberg, and Nick Siedentop provided an additional update, noting that the 'creative expression' and 'ways of knowing' capacities seem to be the most difficult for folks to grasp, and where most effort was focused in the current revision. It was noted that Nick Siedentop has systematically gone through each Major to see how classes fit into curriculum. The curriculum team has begun going to individual Departments to speak with their Director of Undergraduate Studies and Chair to go over how their offerings fit into the new curriculum. The aim is to have a clearer path to graduation that includes a reduction of requirements. The EPC agreed that the revision and the curriculum team's efforts addressed the major concerns expressed by faculty, and put forth the following proposed resolution:

The EPC recommends that the Faculty Council adopt the IDEAs in Action Curriculum as the General Education Curriculum policy for UNC CH undergraduates; and request that the Office of Faculty Governance work with the implementation team and the EPC to constitute the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), as detailed in the IDEAs in action Curriculum proposal. The target for implementation is Fall 2021.

The EPC voted on this resolution, with a vote unanimously in favor of the resolution. This resolution will be brought forward to faculty council at the April meeting.

University Approval Absence Policy

At the September 28th meeting (2018) Debbi Clarke and Joy Renner updated the committee on class attendance/examination policy passed by Faculty Council in February 2018 [Resolution 2018-1 Amending the Policy on University Approved Absences <https://facultygov.unc.edu/files/2016/02/Resolution-2018-1-Absence-Policy5.pdf>]. The amended policy allows for a central office (Office of the Dean of Students) to communicate approved absences to faculty and it alleviates the need for faculty to inquire directly to the student regarding absences. The policy includes three categories that an approved absence may fall under. If a student requests an absence that qualifies under one of these categories, their professors will receive a letter/email notifying them of the approved absence, and the student does not have to approach the faculty member (unless they wish to). The policy does not supersede faculty and school/department discretion and does not stop faculty from supporting a student's absence even if it is not sanctioned. Faculty are not required to report to the Dean of Students. It is a resource for the faculty to use and gives the Dean of Students Office the authority and a policy to refer to.

At the request of Debbi Clarke and Joy Renner, the following sub-committee was formed to look at codifying what qualifies as an authorized university activity: Evan Feldman (Chair); Joy Renner; Debbi Clarke; Sherick Hughes; Angela Bardeen; Suzie Baker; Desirée Rieckenberg; Christy Samford; Carter Vilim; Thevy Chai. The first meeting was convened on April 1, 2019 in which the sub-committee identified action items to fully implement the policy: 1. Communicate the policy and its intent to the faculty; 2. Make recommendations to the Provost regarding the implementation of the policy (e.g., communications to faculty, dept chairs, etc.); 3. Help guide faculty in supporting students. In addition, the sub-committee recommended that a group convene to look at how better to implement this policy and establish a University Approved Absence Office (UAAO).

SP Grade Designation

At the September 6th meeting, the EPC considered a request to expand the use of SP (satisfactory progress) that is currently used for honors projects. The Business School has two classes for which they would like to use SP as a placeholder for classes that either require another semester of work until a grade is assigned or have projects that are dated to be completed after the end of the semester, at which point a permanent grade is retroactively assigned. Discussion about the ramifications of allowing this, what the standard should be for using SP, and the legitimate problems created by not having grades assigned at the end of the semester. The problem of grades being assigned later than the end of the semester also affects graded internships. The committee considered whether these grading issues create a barrier for students choosing experiential learning opportunities. The committee also considered creating a list of classes of types of students and types of classes that require or may require IP and SP grades. The committee discussed which students are affected--- athletic eligibility, financial aid, degree progress, etc.—by these issues? Point was made that these decisions may affect 90% of students. Honors students without financial aid are probably not affected, but this is a small percentage of students. It was noted that IN and similar grades are factored in to GPA as an “F” right away and then are changed if the student completes the class. The registrar explained this is to motivate students to complete the class and also allow GPA’s to be calculated for eligibility purposes (athletics, financial aid, etc.). There were multiple suggestions that students should be given the benefit of the doubt (so not receive an immediate F calculated into their GPA) even though we know a small percentage of students will try to take advantage of the system. The committee decided to gather data and further discuss the issue to see if the faculty’s intent in assigning IN and AB matches practice, and if not, perhaps make changes. A suggestion was made to better communicate with faculty about what grade designations mean, possibly by sending out a one-page description around exam time.

A follow-up discussion took place at the November 30th EPC meeting, with Anna Milar and Leticia DeCastro present from the Kenan Flagler Business School. They noted that some courses at the business school don’t fit semester schedule. One is a symposium undergraduate students run as a career conference. The other is a leadership course. The symposium is offered in September, however the majority of work happens before the event. Students are in class all spring, then for a couple of weeks in August, and then the symposium is held in mid-September. Instead of grading the students at the end of the spring semester, before the symposium occurs, the school wants to give a grade of SP instead. Students enroll for 3 credits in the spring, and then 1.5 credits

in the fall. Final grade is then given after the symposium. The committee agreed this was ok to do. For the Leadership class, mainly athletes and Chairs/Co-Chairs of fraternities take this course in the fall. After the fall semester, there is a meeting that has to occur for the students to use what they learned to transition the next leaders. This is part of the course grade, so they can't be graded at the end of the fall semester until this transition period occurs in January. It was suggested to have an R (something new) which would stand for registered. The EPC also discussed expanding the definition of SP so it is not just something that can be used for honors courses. A solution has yet to be reached, and the committee agreed to take this issue up again at subsequent meetings.

Student Safety and Wellness Proposal

At the September 28th meeting, Emma Caponigro and Raleigh Curry, Student Safety and Wellness Committee of Student Government): Emma Caponigro and Raleigh Curry from the Student Safety and Wellness Committee of Student Government presented a proposal to include 2 statements, 1 pertaining to CAPS and 1 pertaining to ARS, on all undergraduate syllabi. They reviewed the history of the proposal, vision, and stakeholder information. The visiting student representatives stated inclusion on syllabi and review of these statements by professors on the first day of class (when they are going over the syllabus), will help students understand what services ARS and CAPS provide, and for whom. They noted that there is already a template for a statement regarding ARS and inclusion on syllabi is strongly recommended, but not enforced. The students worked closely with Tiffany Bailey, Director of ARS, to make their proposed statement concise and to identify groups of students eligible for ARS services. The visiting student representatives stated this is a feasible and attainable way to make students aware of these services. They also noted this would assist professors in guiding students to appropriate professionals and needed resources. They have "reached out to as many department chairs as could find" and a number of faculty members have offered support for this proposal. The Gillings School of Public Health is currently piloting adding both statements to syllabi. Additionally, several other departments may already be including statements on their syllabi. The committee discussed barriers to implementation and recommended that the proposal be shared with the following parties:

- Kenan-Flagler Business School
- The Office of Instructional Innovation (has a liaison connected to every department on campus)
- Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
- Cara Simmons, Office of University Counsel

The proposal went to faculty council for feedback at the November 9th meeting. Emma Caponigro and Raleigh Curry presented their proposal and received feedback. Abigail Panter shared an existing resolution that makes recommendations for what should be included on course syllabi [*Resolution 2012-11. On Guidelines for Course Syllabi*]. The committee requires further discussion on this matter.

Transcript Remarks

At the September 6th meeting, Lauren Digrazia and Christy Samford updated the committee regarding transcript remarks that are being added. Over the summer, two new transcript remarks were added: Chancellor's Science Scholar and Chancellor's Science Scholars Laureate. Transcript remarks were again discussed at the March 19th meeting (2019) as the committee considered another request to add remarks. The committee's discussion included consideration of what the criteria are for including transcript remarks, as well as the application process.

Revision of the Final Exam Policy

In the 2017-2018 academic year, a proposed revision to the Final Exam Policy was underway, resulting in *Resolution 2017-5. On Final Examinations*. At that time, the EPC agreed that the final exam policy should be revisited once the EPC receives final proposed revisions to the Class Attendance Policy to ensure that the policies governing excused absences are in accord. This work is ongoing.

Report Respectfully Submitted by Marsha Penner, April 08, 2019