

MINUTES

*approved*  
*1-3-83*

COMMISSION ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

November 29, 1982 - 3:00 p.m.  
Board Room - Library

PRESENT: Dr. Hall, Acting Chairman; Dr. Phlegar; Deans Bonham, Ford, Gray, Green, Harris, Simutis and Wall; Senators Cook, Stetler (for Barnett) and Yongue; Professors Beams, Krebs, Lovingood, Parrish, Riess and Rosenberry; Student Representatives Blouch, Forbes and McClain.

ABSENT: Dr. Wilson; Professor Sherman; Student Representative Phillips.

VISITOR: Ms. Susan Trulove (Spectrum).

1. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Hall presiding in the absence of Dr. Wilson. Dr. Hall announced that the last meeting for the fall quarter would be Monday, December 13 at 3:00 p.m. in the Library Board Room.
2. The agenda was adopted as distributed.
3. The Minutes of the meeting of November 8 were approved as distributed.
4. Resolution 82-83-A, University Core Curriculum

Dr. Hall opened discussion of the draft of Resolution 82-83-A, as revised at the previous meeting of the Commission. A total of five additional amendments to the draft document were approved:

- (a) courses taken at Virginia Tech to fulfill the core curriculum requirements must be taken on an A-F basis;
- (b) membership of each of the area committees must include faculty from at least two colleges;
- (c) members of the area committees will serve three year staggered terms;
- (d) nominations by departments or colleges of course sequences or clusters which would satisfy core curriculum requirements must be forwarded to the Commission by the area committees with the committee recommendation;
- (e) substitutions in individual cases may be authorized by the University Academic Appeals Committee.

A copy of the draft resolution as amended is attached to the minutes of this meeting. A motion was made and seconded that the resolution as amended be forwarded to the University Council as the recommendation of the Commission for implementation. The motion passed with one dissenting vote.

5. Course Approvals

AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

Modified Course - effective winter 1983

AGRN 4110 - Crop Physiology and Metabolism (3H,3C) (Change in credits from 2 to 3 prerequisites, and course content). UG&G.

ARTS AND SCIENCES

New Courses - effective winter 1983

EUS 4370 - Environmental Management (3H,3C). UG&G.

EUS 4390 - Community Energy Planning (3H,3C). UG&G.

PHYS 2401-2402-2403 - Elements of Physics (3H,3C) each.

PHYS 2411-2412-2413 - Elements of Physics Laboratory (3L,1C) each.

ENGINEERING

Modified Course - effective fall 1982

ME 3060 - Kinematics and Dynamics of Machinery (4H,4C). (Change in credits from 5 to 4, course content).

6. Textbook Approvals:

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

For four-year approval

Campbell, H. C. Linear Algebra with Applications, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971 and 1980. (For use in Math 3521 - 3522.)

Ulloa, Justo and Leonor Alvarez de Ulloa. Graded Spanish Reader: Segunda Etapa, D. C. Heath, 1982. (For use in Spanish 2111-2112-2113.)

Bollinger, G. A. Blast Vibration Analysis, Southern Illinois University Press, 1971 and 1980. (For use in Geology 3120.)

Bloss, F. D. Introduction to the methods of optical crystallography, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961. (For use in Geology 4510.)

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

For four-year approval

Seago, W. Eugene, West's Federal Income Tax, Vol. I and II, West Publishing Company, 1982. (For use in ACC 4171 and 4172.)

7. Document on Course Content Disputes

This document has been before the Commission for several months, extending back to the 1981-82 academic year. It was submitted by Dean Henry Bauer of the College of Arts and Sciences as a series of suggestions for improving

interunit cooperation in the design and teaching of service courses and for resolving disputes when the content of an approved course changed without the endorsement of the appropriate Commission.

The Commission made two minor changes in the phrasing of the document, a revised version of which is attached to these minutes. Commission members debated the question of whether the document was needed: are there a significant number of problems that cannot be resolved without adoption of the document. Concern was also expressed about the generally negative tone of the document which suggested the presence of large numbers of substantial arguments. Dr. Hall indicated that the document, if approved, would not be legislation but rather would be circulated by the Provost as guidelines for the resolution of disputes should any arise. The introductory paragraph of the document will be redrafted as necessary to clarify its status and the covering letter from the Provost will indicate the expectation that difficulties will not arise but that the guidelines are recommended as suggesting procedures for the resolution of disputes.

The motion was made and seconded that, as revised and with the clarification of the document's status, the document be approved by the Commission and distributed through the University community by the Provost. The motion passed unanimously.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin J. Green  
Acting Secretary

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GUIDELINES FOR  
INTER-COLLEGIATE AND INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION  
IN THE DESIGN AND TEACHING OF COURSES

There are circumstances under which one academic department (or college) may become concerned about one or more of the courses offered by another academic department (or college) and may wish to pursue course modifications of some kind with the offering department. What follows is an attempt to describe those circumstances and to set forth some general principles and procedures that can serve as a useful guide for inter-departmental or inter-college expectations. Also suggested are formal channels for dealing with the very occasional disputes which may remain unsettled after usual informal and collegial discussion possibilities are exhausted.

Service Courses: Most inter-departmental concerns or disagreements over course content arise when students in department (or college) A are required to take a course (or courses) in Department X. The "client" department (or college) A clearly has a vested interest in such a course. It may even supply all the students for the course. Yet the faculty in the "offering" department X determine the content of the course and teach it. This is a situation which calls for the clear delineation of responsibilities to be assumed by both parties. These include:

A. For the "offering" department...

1. To design the syllabus and teach the course for the intended purpose. This includes showing respect for that purpose, and regarding this teaching responsibility as equal in importance to other departmental responsibilities. Examining and grading will also take into account the specific purpose of the course.
2. To have an individual or a committee designated as a liaison person or group. If any changes in the course or in its manner of presentation are desired, or if difficulties arise concerning the course, students or representatives of the client department will be able to expect prompt responses from the liaison person or committee.
3. To be forthcoming and cooperative on such requests as for the preparation of detailed syllabi and other handouts, frequency of examinations, etc.
4. To make no substantive changes in the content or manner of presentation of the course without first reaching consensus with the client department.

B. For the "client" department (or college)...

1. To make clear what the purpose--and hence the desired content--of the course is; including the appropriate level at which teaching can begin and the level of sophistication and breadth to be achieved.

2. To respect the professional judgment of the instructors in relation to such issues as how best to present the material, the nature and amount of prerequisite materials, details of grading, and so forth.
3. To make clear to its students why this particular material is needed. The offering department and the instructor cannot alone carry the burden of making students enthusiastic about material that is required as part of their degree, sometimes for no reason that the students can fathom.
4. To contact the liaison person or committee as needed, recognizing that difficulties can usually be resolved if they are taken up promptly, but rarely if resolution is sought only after the end of a quarter, for example.
5. To request the offering department to staff such courses with particular individuals, recognizing that such requests cannot always be met.
6. To make known, before any requirements are introduced, its intention to require students to take particular courses offered by some other department. Such requirements shall not be finally introduced until the offering department has had the opportunity to arrange staffing and other resources.

Both client and offering departments function within certain constraints determined by level of staffing, operating budgets, and so on. A given department cannot offer smaller classes, more trailer sections, more senior instructors, and so on, than the resources at its disposal permit.

Be that as it may, it is the responsibility of each department to arrange its teaching schedules and selections of offerings so as to meet, as evenhandedly as feasible, the various teaching responsibilities of that department--to its majors, to students taking elective courses, and to students in other curricula taking required courses through that department.

The University realizes that disagreements or conflicts between individuals or departments or colleges over service courses must ultimately be resolved at the level of those actually involved in the dispute. It is highly unlikely that satisfactory solutions to such difficulties can be imposed from outside or from above. However, should a dispute reach an impasse at the departmental (or college) level, the college dean(s) (or, in cases of college disputes, the University Provost) needs to become involved. It is then the dean's (or Provost's) responsibility to lead the disagreeing parties to a workable resolution of their dispute.

Courses at Variance with Catalog Descriptions: Careful review and discussion in college curriculum committees and in the CUS and/or the CGS insure, when a new course is introduced, that course content is appropriate and does not duplicate existing courses, and that the catalog description is accurate. With time however, a course may evolve and change to such an extent that its

catalog description is no longer a correct indication of its content or objectives. Furthermore, the changes may be such that the course begins to duplicate (at least in part) the content of another course in some other department, or cover material which another department considers to be within its own sphere of primary responsibility. When it is determined that such is the case it is the responsibility of the department offering the course in question either (a) to restore the course to its original, approved catalog description and syllabus, or (b) to document the changes and seek approval for them in the usual way through the college curriculum committee and the appropriate University Commission(s). Resolution of any questions of course duplication or disciplinary "encroachment" is the responsibility of those reviewing bodies, just as is the case when new courses are under consideration for approval initially.

If and when department A wishes to follow up on a report that a course taught by department X is being taught at variance with its catalog description, it should pursue the matter with the head of department X, to learn whether or not a substantive problem exists. In any such case, department X should furnish department A with a current course syllabus, together with whatever informal explanation or interpretation seems appropriate. If after syllabus exchange and informal discussion department A remains persuaded that the course in question is at variance with the catalog description, it should request that department X proceed as described in (a) or (b) above, whereupon the matter will be resolved one way or the other. However, if an impasse is reached, either department in the dispute may take the matter to the dean of the college of department X, who shall seek to resolve the difficulty. Ultimately, if the matter remains unresolved, it must be placed before the curriculum committee of the college of department X and then finally considered by the appropriate Commission and the University Council. Commission and Council action is binding.

PLH-12/7/82