Academic Policy
February 15, 2016

Present: Sarah Ash, David Auerbach, Alton Banks, Paul Huffman, Doug Pearce, Sheila Smith McKoy
Absent: Kimberly Ange-van Heugten, Thomas Byrnes , Mike Devetsikiotis, Helmut Hergeth, Rich Spontak
Guests: Scott Despain, UCCC Chair; Chris Ashwell, CUE Chair

Discussions regarding the differences between UCCC and CUE

Undergraduate Courses and Curricula Committee's (UCCC) charge:

1. In consultation with the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Services and the Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, advise the Provost in matters relating to courses and curricula.
2. Review undergraduate course and curriculum proposals, including academic minors, honors programs, and non-degree certificate programs.
3. In consultation with the college curriculum committees and the college deans, develop policies and procedures for this purpose except that, when reviewing the proposals that involve the General Education requirements in any undergraduate curriculum, the committee shall follow regulations established by the Provost on the recommendation of the Council on Undergraduate Education.
4. Develop guidelines and conduct periodic review of courses.
5. The UCCC will interface with the Academic Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate on the development of policies and procedures regarding courses and curricula.

The Council on Undergraduate Education's (CUE) charge:

1. In consultation with the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Services and the Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, advise the Provost in matters relating to undergraduate education and the General Education Program.
2. Assist in the development, revision, and evaluation of University regulations with regard to general education and the General Education Program for all undergraduate curricula.
3. Review courses for inclusion on the University's list of courses which can be used to satisfy General Education Program requirements.
4. Develop and conduct periodic reviews of the General Education course lists.
5. CUE in conjunction with the Office of Assessment in the Office of Academic Programs and Services will develop recommendations for implementation of assessment procedures for general education courses and categories.
6. Advise the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Services on procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of general education and the General Education

Program and related policies as they are implemented and for initiating proposals for policy revisions.

Much of what CUE does is more conceptual and therefore less clear-cut than UCCC. For example, the Council has to decide on the meaning of interdisciplinarity in particular and general education more broadly. Differences in interpretation can be significant among faculty by discipline or by college, sometimes with no obvious compromise position.

These differences have practical implications. For example, how does a change in the GEP requirements affect enrollment numbers for a course, department, or college? Should these potential ramifications affect the structure of the GEP? Because of this, GEP-related decisions can have more significant consequences than decisions regarding the approval of individual courses or curricula (the charge of UCCC).

Even having decided on the GEP structure, interpretation of category objectives and outcomes can be contentious, and may vary based on the make up of the committee both year-by-year and meeting-by-meeting. There are particular concerns regarding: the use of one-credit classes to meet USD; a lack of accountability on the part of the Study Abroad program to meet GK outcomes; an overly rigid set of guidelines for IP; and a lack of recognition for the IP nature of disciplines such as Africaner and Women and Gender Studies.

On the other hand, the work of UCCC has become more efficient as previous issues for courses, such how many credit hours per contact hours and grading criteria, have all but been eliminated by CIM and the syllabus tool. Much of the work of UCCC is now purely bureaucratic, in the good sense. For curricula, there might be discussions around the desire for free electives, however in general, there are few turf battles and, academic decisions are left to departments, as they should be.

Discussion regarding the history of CUE (how we got to where we are today)

When the GEP was created, the lists were populated based mostly on course prefixes and assumptions. Now CUE is having to go back and confirm that each course meets the outcomes. This remains a work in progress.

What fraction of reviewed courses does not meet the general education outcomes? Probably less than 10%. More likely due to incorrectly written outcomes.

Discussion regarding the make up of UCCC and CUE

Currently, members have on-the-job training.

It is preferable to construct committees with people who have experience (especially at the college and/or departmental level). This both fulfills the need for institutional memory and the need for familiarity with the ins-and-outs of the GEP strictures.

The Chair of UCCC serves as a non-voting member of CUE. That is the only overlap. And chair of CUE does not serve on UCCC. This reflects the flow of the paper trail (starts in UCCC and then goes to CUE).

The committee asked Scot Despain and Chris Ashwell to think about what they consider to be the ideal make up of their committees. Their responses are below:

From Scott Despain
The ideal UCCC member:
1. has had experience prepping and approving course and curricular actions at the departmental or college level, particularly the college level;
2. is already a member of his/her college course/curriculum committee; (otherwise the expectation would be that the member officially attend the college meetings, either as an official voting member or in some other capacity);
3. has experience with other colleges and their curriculum, through teaching, research, administration or previous committee work;
4. is willing to commit three to five hours each week to dedicated committee work;
5. is kind, gracious, thoughtful and understands the process of building consensus.

From Chris Ashwell
I would echo Scott's description of the ideal UCCC membership and add one additional criteria that the voting membership should be faculty (not "administrators").

These attributes could be met by colleges nominating (or similar process) the UCCC/CUE membership OR requiring the members (selected by committee on committees) to have had experience participating in the college-level process.

Concerns re: simply combining the two committees, as has been suggested.

Is it just putting all the same work of CUE just under a new committee?
What will have been accomplished?

Still have a lot of courses to go through CUE – not in "maintenance mode", where it only has to look at courses that are new or changed.

Perhaps a combination of UCCC/CUE should wait for all courses to finish being reviewed so that only new courses are coming through. Will have to develop more clearly defined criteria for IP, GK, USD before we can streamline the workings of CUE. Make a video—what is a good example and why?

Maybe use service-learning as a model going forward. New courses now coming through, being reviewed by the same group of 3. Measurable outcomes for this designation are clearly delineated.

But do we have to start at the top? USD is problematic (including the lack of a credit hour requirement); if that changes, there will be a need to rethink the GEP.

Consensus of the committee:

- Combining UCCC and CUE might be possible—but only after the backlog of courses that were grandfathered onto the GEP lists has been handled.
- A partial or thorough review of the GEP is overdue, with particular attention paid to better articulating the outcomes and credit hours associated with the IP, GK and USD categories,