

Minutes of the Academic Policies Committee Meeting

February 26, 2019

3:30pm

Miller Oval

Committee Members in Attendance: Walter Jeffko, Zachary Miner, Bruno Hicks, Daneen Deptula, Gerry Higdon, Billy Samulak, Mary Beth McKenzie, Beverly Hollingsworth, Mary Ann Barbato, Ozge Ozay, Soumitra Basu.

Guests in Attendance: Christopher Cratsley, Jenn Berg, Heather Urbanski, Aruna Krishnamurthy, Sean Goodlett.

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:34pm
2. The minutes from the November 13th APC meeting were approved 11:0:0.
3. AUC Proposal #60

A motion was made to consider AUC #60.

Chris Cratsley discussed the proposal as a representative of the LAS council. The proposal is a revision to our current curriculum. It includes a new catalog entry, approval forms, and learning outcomes. The spirit of this revision is really in changing to more of a learning outcomes model.

Chris gave some historical context for the reasoning behind the revision. For the past 10-ish years, the LAS council has been working on learning outcomes such as problem solving, communication, ethical reasoning, citizenship, and artistic expression and found that the current curriculum is more discipline based than outcome based. For example, ethical reasoning is not represented in the current curriculum in the form of a class students are required to take. The last version of the strategic plan suggested that there were things like information literacy that were also not well-represented. This revision is supposed to be more intentional about skills students would get and use. The council tried to simplify things, but admittedly, that did not happen. This revision does move away from double-dipping classes like with the GDN and AOM type of course we have now. This revision continues to encourage minors and foreign language. There now is a place and requirement for the first year experience.

A discussion was held about where philosophy might fit in to the curriculum. Ethical reasoning is where many philosophy courses might fit, although not that's not exhaustive. It was emphasized this revision is about thinking about how do we identify those things that carry across disciplines. The courses do not need to be interdisciplinary, but the goal is to look for ways courses will provide transferable skills that go across disciplines. The LAS council tried to find a place in the curriculum for all disciplines, but within the context of learning outcomes, rather than by discipline. So as an example, philosophy courses could fit under two learning outcomes.

Any course from any discipline could make the case to AUC that they meet a learning outcome. Nothing in the structure of the revision suggests that any department by default has any courses. Any department/course could request LAS designation for any learning outcome – they just have to justify

that the course does meet those outcomes to AUC. Each course can count as up to two learning outcomes. Students can only count the course in one category, even if the course has two designations.

A discussion was held regarding whether the new LAS curriculum fits with all the majors, particularly those that have done recent changes. Representatives of the LAS council did meet with departments and at the current moment, it does fit. That's not a perfect answer because it depends on the approval process of the LAS curriculum and any departments currently making changes. To help with majors with large numbers of required credits, up to three courses can count for both the LAS curriculum and in the major.

A question was raised about the feasibility of design and capstone courses filling the learning outcomes procedural and logical thinking, and scientific inquiry. It was discussed that computer science might fit in the procedural and logical thinking course. Those courses that focus on the logic of design and design systems are different than scientific inquiry, but may fit in procedural and logical thinking.

A question was raised regarding if courses align with two learning outcomes, do you weight them and say this course is more about this outcome than another. Chris suggested that if faculty think it's more one outcome than another, the course should only seek designation for that outcome. However, if a course does cover both learning outcomes well, the LAS curriculum will honor that.

Ozge spoke up that the Economics, History, and Political Science department has reservations about this curriculum. They felt that the curriculum seems to privilege some departments in that there are discipline specific issues. She voiced concerns about the rationale for revisions in general – the old system was complex, and this doesn't seem any less complex.

Chris spoke that when working on curricula, you have the option of doing revolution or revision. The LAS council came down on the side of revision. They were trying to move in the direction of being intentional about learning outcomes, so you can explain to students and parents the reasoning for the curriculum. This is supposed to help answer the question, "Why can't students just take their courses in their major?" The answer is so they learn these skills. Many of these learning outcomes come from movements across the country and from groups working on these issues, such as the Lumina foundation and AACU. This revision is supposed to cut across disciplinary boundaries, but there are still disciplines being preserved – it's a revision, not a revolution. The council tried to strike a balance between eliminating disciplines and naming them, yet moving towards a learning outcome based curriculum.

A question was raised regarding why high impact practice courses are in LAS curriculum as opposed to the major. IHIP can be met in major. Apart from foundations of lifelong learning, students may complete up to 3 LAS classes in the major. There is very specific suggested catalog language regarding that in this proposal. The LAS council doesn't want students to just meet IHIP in the major with capstones, but they CAN. The council does think there's value to meeting this objective outside the major, particularly if a student doesn't get a minor. This resulted because the council noticed growth in option C in our current curriculum, but they wanted students to take more advanced, integrative, or substantive classes rather than only introductory classes.

A question was raised regarding flexibility and the possibility of exceptions to this curriculum. Is there a process for students who need exceptions (ie, like option C)? Is there any major that will need routine exceptions? The council didn't want to create an LAS specific exception process and tried to create a

curriculum as inclusive as possible. At the current moment, it appears that all majors can fit with this curriculum. If an individual student needs an exception, they should go through the regular approval process – advisor, department, dean, etc. The council has had discussion although nothing formal about transfer policies. That will get arranged later and the council doesn't want to make things too difficult for transfers.

A discussion was held regarding whether this proposal should include how to decide whether a course will earn each learning outcome in terms of quantification. The main reason for revision is to be able to assess the general education curriculum. A course can meet a learning outcome only if three things happen in a course. 1. The student receives direct instruction on the outcome. 2. The student gets practice with the learning outcome. 3. The student receives regular feedback on the learning outcome. All this happens within the course. Percentages could be a way to do that, but none of that is written in the proposal. It does ask for courses to describe how the course demonstrates student learning for the specified outcome. There needs to be room for academic freedom and AUC judgement. The LAS council admits that that's the job of the AUC, but the council wanted to provide clear definitions. The LAS council wants to continue to evaluate the curriculum. Another self-study is due soon. Changes may need to be made in the future.

A discussion was held regarding whether a document could be made showing how our current 13 LAS designations roughly map into 9 learning outcomes. The LAS council would prefer departments analyze if their courses meet certain learning outcomes to find their place. There needs to be space within the curriculum for everyone and each department can find their place.

A question was raised regarding numbers of courses in each learning outcome. Could there be an issue if many courses fit one outcome but few courses fit another? If the LAS council is reconvened, this will be monitored and if an issue arises, respond.

A question was asked about the approval process to determine which courses get LAS designation. The AUC and AUC curriculum committee approves it. APC might be part of the approval process to approve the approval document.

Every single course will be required to go to AUC to earn LAS designations. Each course needs to have separate AUC proposals and justification.

FSU's chapter of MSCA union president Aruna Krishnamurthy spoke about a potential violation of the contract. The proposal provided two potential forms to get approval for LAS designation. Item #8 on the form for critical and creative thinking and item #7 on the form for lifelong learning asks for feedback from the LAS council. That is a non-contractual detail. The only bodies that can weigh in on curricula is the department curriculum committee, AUC, and the AUC-curriculum committee. Aruna is currently speaking with the provost and the LAS council on ways to resolve this issue. In the current contract though, the LAS council does not have the authority to provide feedback on curriculum matters, so Aruna suggested it should be removed. We do want to empower LAS with the ability to give feedback but as the proposal is written, it is in violation of the contract.

Sean Goodlett spoke as a member of the LAS council and co-author of the forms. He stated that the feedback is not mandatory, so it is possible for that field to be blank. With respect to the contract matter, he said that the proper order of operations is that you have to wait for violation to occur, then

grieve it. If the grievance is successful, at that point, the language has to be revised, but governance bodies aren't the place to settle grievance matters. The LAS council is an advisory committee and the contractual language around advisory committees doesn't carry same weight as other committees do. Sean said it is the case that the contract has things to say about curriculum as the proper domain for general education revision work. But not the same sort of restriction is placed about advisory committees and truthfully, there is just a short paragraph about advisory committees.

Jenn spoke as a member of the LAS council that the general consensus appears to be from the council that it would be better to fix this now, rather than go through than the grievance process. The council would rather have friendly amendments, that way next year courses can go through the approval process.

Aruna agreed that the best thing would be to find a solution now that consistent with the contract.

A question was raised regarding why were those specific fields were optional but all the others required. A suggestion was made that the proposal could be clarified to make the two items optional. The other fields aren't listed as needing feedback, so a concern was raised that it would be viewed as important and required. In other words, we don't want to create something that is expected, even though it's not required.

A discussion was held and many agreed that the LAS council should be able to provide feedback. The curriculum committee would gather feedback from LAS, not replace curriculum committee. Jenn Burg spoke that the items were included to help with assessment. The AUC curriculum committee has a full docket for every meeting, but LAS assesses this and will be better able to determine if a course meets these objectives.

One potential solution might be to create a subcommittee within the AUC curriculum committee that specifically deals with this. Aruna is working with Alberto to see if this can be achieved. It was discussed that these two don't need to agree for the curriculum committee to make a subcommittee. APC could recommend this subcommittee be created.

Minor edits or typos can be sent to Chris Cratsley.

An amendment was made and seconded to remove the two lines from the course approval forms.

The amendment was approved: 7:4:0. (For: Against: Abstentions).

AUC #60 as amended was voted on and approved (9:0:2) . (For: Against: Abstentions).

4. A motion to adjourn was made and voted on. (11:0:0)

The Meeting adjourned 4:46.

Respectfully submitted,

Billy Samulak