

AUC Curriculum Committee Draft Minutes

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Attendees: Adem Elveren (Economics, History, & Political Science)
Aruna Krishnamurthy (Co-Chair, English Studies)
Aisling O'Connor (Secretary, Biology/Chemistry)
Barbara Cormier (University Registrar)
Catherine Buell (Mathematics)
Cheryl Goldman (Psychological Science)
Christine Devine (Nursing)
Danielle Wigmore (Exercise & Sports Science)
Elizabeth Gordon (Earth and Geographic Sciences)
Heather Urbanski (English Studies)
Jared Vanasse (Earth and Geographic Sciences)
J.J. Sylvia (Communications Media)
Jonathan Harvey (Humanities)
Laurie Link (Education)
Lori Steckervetz (Library)
Meg Hoey (Dean of Health & Natural Sciences)
Sara Levine (Dean of Arts & Sciences)
Soumitra Basu (Co-Chair, Engineering Technology)
Steve Olson (SGA Senator)
Nicholas Taylor (SGA Representative)

Absent: William Cortezia (Education)

Guests: Deborah Benes, Robert Carr, John Crawley, Laura Garofoli, Michael Greenwood, Randy Howe, Zachary Miner, Kyle Moody, Audrey Pereira, Jason Smith, Elisabet Takehana, Donald Tarallo Jr, Heather Thomas, Kisha Tracy, WafaUnus, Nelly Wadsworth, Richard Wiebe

1. Call to Order

Soumi called the meeting to order at 3:32pm.

2. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Mention to approve the minutes from the Curriculum Committee meeting of February 17, 2022:

Catherine Buell, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Vote: 18/0/0 (For / Against / Abstain)

3. Current Business

3.1 AUC 31: CL designation for 5 ENGL courses (2 cross-listed with COMM) and 1 SPCH course

Motion to consider AUC 31: Sara Levine, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Elise Takehana

Discussion: This proposal was tabled at the last meeting as the authors wanted to revise it. They are seeking the civic learning designation for 4 ENGL courses (removed 2 from original proposal). The guidance document was used to focus on courses where civic learning is an integral part of course; 3 journalism courses and Writing for Organizations. Elise met with Paul Weizer to discuss this proposal and in response removed 2 of the original courses from the proposal. They also articulated more strongly how well the courses meet CL objectives. Aruna asked for the removal of “speech writing” in the brief synopsis of proposal (section 2); update this section to read “*CL designation for 4 ENGL courses (2 cross-listed with COMM)*”

Liz suggested this should be a friendly amendment and asked for clarification on the 4 courses requesting this designation. Elise: courses are ENGL 2030, 2800, 3830 and 3860. Liz said she appreciated the conversations with the Political Science, but was still hesitant about these courses receiving the civic learning designation and felt it was stretching the outcomes in ways they were not intended to be. From a general education perspective, students are already taking 3 ENGL courses. If ENGL courses receive DP and CL designations, half of the general education courses could come from a single department.

Elise responded that there is a burden of proof that the CL the objective is met and it is up to committee to decide. The proposal describes in detail, how CL is crucial to the class, not just a topic. The English department has many disciplines, but all courses have ENGL code. Heather also reiterated this; a journalism course is very different from a literature course or a speech course. Heather also outlined how the Writing for Organizations meets the CL designation through various assignments, reading everyday texts, responding to current situations, looks at FSU as an organization, looks at different texts each semester etc. Wafa also addressed the CL designation with respect to journalism courses e.g. examine the role of a free press in a working democracy, covering issues of civic importance locally, within Fitchburg State community.

Catherine questioned the use of CL in the FSU community: should we not push students to engage broader with the community? Wafa responded that students go out into city, meet mayor etc. and therefore work outside the confines of the university. Heather mentioned that in her course (Writing for Organization), they address more than just local/FSU issues and are responsive to what is going on in world. Topics of current relevance are discussed e.g. corporate responses to Russian sanctions.

Friendly Amendment: Update section 2 of the proposal to read “*CL designation for 4 ENGL courses (2 cross-listed with COMM)*”

VOTE with Friendly Amendment: 17/0/2 (For / Against / Abstain)

3.2 AUC 33: ER designation for 2 ENGL courses (1 cross-listed with COMM)

Motion to consider AUC 33: Catherine Buell, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Elise Takehana / Heather Urbanski

Discussion: It is important to think about the ethical consequences of everyday events. This course examines how different organizations address and apply ethical principles. In a previous meeting, David Svolba shared concerns regarding the ER designation for these courses so this proposal was tabled. The sponsors followed up by meeting with David. It was a long meeting, the chief concern was clearly articulating ethical frameworks and principals. The sponsors added a deeper description of the reasoning for requesting the ER designation and also removed one class from the ER designation request.

Catherine asked if there was a copy of the updated proposal available. Heather responded that it is in the database. Meg asked which course ER is being requested for. Heather responded that it is the Writing for Organization course and that the content has been revised.

Catherine said she followed up with David and he assumed that the sponsors were moving ahead with an ER request for College Newspaper Production and removing their ER request for Writing for Organizations. Heather said they did not commit to the removal of either course in their discussion with David.

A committee member asked if this was the only ER course a student took would they be prepared /primed to recognize themselves as ethical reasoners? Heather said that the course does that and that is why she decided to move forward with this course.

Soumi mentioned that following codes of conducts are not a normative component of ER, not considered ethics. Heather responded that the course involves creating these codes of conduct, not following them. Catherine said the proposal mentions a hook into it (ER), but asked if ER is a main outcome. Elise responded that this is the challenge with the guidance document; many different descriptions, some sections resonate more with some disciplines than others.

Liz added that one can get lost in guidance documents and it is best to go back to goal (from original AUC proposal, AUC 60, 2019) as that is what went through and was approved by AUC. She does not get the sense that this course meets the ER goal. She is very hesitant to approve the current proposal.

Jonathan said that he checked in with David too. Like Liz, he is concerned about how are students are assessed on their ability to reason ethically. Heather described some of the assignments; students look at principles established, are they being followed, used and implemented.

Kisha indicated that she did not wish to will not speak for or against this proposal, but wanted to state that the ER outcome is in jeopardy as the university does not have enough courses with this designation approved to sustain it. Meg begged to differ with Kisha and stated that we should not vote in favor of a proposal just because we need more of something! Meg called the meeting and requested a vote. There were some questions back and forth regarding procedure, but the committee decided to vote.

VOTE: 8/10/2 (For / Against / Abstain)

3.3 AUC 37: AIA Designations for 66 ENGL Literature Courses

Motion to consider AUC 37: Catherine Buell, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Kisha Tracy

Discussion: These courses are being put forward for AIA designation as all have Writing II as a prerequisite.

VOTE: 20/0/0 (For / Against / Abstain)

3.4 AUC 64: DP Designations for 20 ENGL Literature Courses

Motion to consider AUC 64: Catherine Buell, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Kisha Tracy

Discussion: The literature faculty talked long and hard in order to decide which courses to put forward for DP. They are confident that if a student were to take one of these courses, the DP designation would be fulfilled. Catherine said the discussion was too quick so she would abstain from voting.

VOTE: 19/0/1 (For / Against / Abstain)

3.5 AUC 63: Transfer Student Experience Academic Success Modules

Motion to consider AUC 63: Catherine Buell, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Jason Smith

Discussion: This proposal seeks to change some of the language of AUC 136 from last year (2021). AUC 136 (2021) focused on transfer block pathways, credit thresholds, general education and the introduction of a transfer student experience. In AUC 136, the "Transfer Student Experience" (similar to FYE) was proposed to be a course. This current proposal seeks to change the name of this "Transfer Student Experience" from a "course" to "academic success modules". This is a 0 credit experience with no faculty assigned as instructor of record. It is a set of self-paced modules, aligned with the learning outcomes of first year experience. The modules were developed by Laura Garafoli and they are deployed through Blackbaord.

Aruna asked if these modules are a replacement for FYE, why do all students not take them? Jason responded that the thinking was that they needed a way to honor that transfer students have college experience, so do not need everything first year students do. Students with 0- 29 transfer credits will be in FYE. Heather stated that FYE is a part of general education and she is concerned that a learning outcome can be satisfied without taking a course.

Jason responded that the same concerns have been raised for other requirements in the block pathway. They could just waive this outcome, but think it is important so did not do this. Other general education requirements are waived in the block pathway. A committee member asked if any other general

education requirements are satisfied by a “non course” and expressed concern about setting a precedent whereby a general education is fulfilled by modules rather than a course.

Jason indicated that AUC 136 (2021) established the General Education Block Transfer Pathways; they are trying to highlight the importance of the academic success strategies taught in FYE. Heather pointed out that everything else students transfer in is taught by faculty. JJ asked about the expected time commitment and how does verification of completion occur since there is no faculty assigned. Jason responded that the modules take approximately 10 hours and the goal is to have students complete the modules before they start classes. The general education program area chair verifies completion (currently this is Kisha).

Aruna stated that Heather’s point is important and wondered if word “academic” could be changed to “college” i.e. “college success modules” vs “academic success modules”. Laura (who developed the course), outlined that the three learning outcomes from FYE are academic success and the purpose of the current proposal is need to ensure that this is not viewed as a course. She went on to say that his proposal passed last year and these “modules” exist, the current proposal is just a name change request (“course” to “modules”).

Catherine asked if this is still 0 credits and if it appears on student transcripts Jason responded that the modules appear on Degreeworks, but it is not decided if it will be on transcript. Barbara confirmed that it is in Degreeworks. Catherine asked if there is a penalty for a U grade and if it would impact a student’s ability to graduate. Jason stated that he didn’t know the answer to this question.

Liz asked if other colleges do something like this. Jason confirmed that Alberto used a model from another institution. JJ stated that faculty involvement in FYE is very important, but there are no faculty assigned to these modules. Liz noted that there is nothing to stop a student from moving forward if they do not complete this. Jason responded that they are still trying to figure out how to ensure students complete this; there is the options of holds on accounts, but this is not a direction in which they wish to go.

Liz supports the idea of accountability and asked to table this to talk more about logistics and how completion is going to be enforced. Laura reminded the committee that this course / modules already exist, if the current proposal is tabled, it stays labelled as a course. Sara agreed with Laura and wants it to be reflected as modules and not a course.

Motion to table AUC 63: Liz Gordon **Second:** Adem Elveren?

VOTE: 7/12/1 (For / Against / Abstain)

Since the motion to table did not pass, the committee moved ahead to vote on the proposal.

VOTE: 13/7/0 (For / Against / Abstain)

3.6 AUC 40: Update BIOL 1650 Nutrition Course Description

Motion to consider AUC 40: Catherine Buell, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Aisling O'Connor

Discussion*: The sponsor asked to address both AUC 40 and 41 together. Nutrition is a non-majors BIOL course taken primarily by nursing majors as a required course in their curriculum. It is also taken by other students campus wide who have an interest in nutrition. The biology & chemistry department is seeking the PW designation for this course in AUC #41. In order to meet all 5 PW course objectives in the guidance documents, an update to the course description was needed. The department realized that course description changes do not require AUC approval, but thought it best to seek AUC approval in light of the PW request.

A proposal seeking the PW designation for nutrition was withdrawn by the department in 2021 in order to strengthen the proposal and better outline how the course meets all 5 objectives of the PW designation. The course had been taught by an adjunct faculty member for close to 20 years and is now being taught by full-time faculty. Aisling thought it more appropriate to present the proposal once she had taught the course (in Fall 2021). The main focus of the course is objective #2 and AUC 41 outlines how the other 4 objectives in the guidance document are met.

Catherine brought up two issues. The first related to students transferring a Nutrition course in from another school e.g. MWCC. The Nutrition courses transferred in may not meet the PW designation. The second issue she sought clarification on was with respect to adjuncts teaching the course and how the department could ensure all 5 PW objectives were covered. The sponsor responded that one could have issues with any PW course transferred in e.g. a Health & Fitness course transferred in may not cover all 5 PW objectives. Nutrition courses in other schools (and textbooks) typically cover all PW objectives with perhaps the exception of #3 ("understand factors that promote or detract from psychosocial wellness"). The sponsor went on to say that the Nutrition course will be taught by full-time biology / chemistry faculty going forward and the purpose of AUC 40 is to change the course description so that those teaching it include all 5 objectives.

Kisha stated that we cannot control what is taught in courses transferred in; this is the case for all general education courses transferred in by students. Danielle asked for clarification on the physical fitness and psychosocial wellness goals. She is concerned that they are not being covered with adequate depth. Aisling responded that the primary focus of the course is nutrition, but that the course does cover the other 4 objectives, but do not cover all objectives in equal proportions. This could only be done in a course specially designed for this purpose e.g. Honors wellness course. Liz also expressed some concern about how the course meets all the PW objectives.

VOTE : 17/0/0 (For / Against / Abstain)

**Please note that the secretary taking the minutes was also the sponsor of AUC 40 and 41 so was unable to take notes and wrote the discussion from memory.*

3.7 AUC 41: General Education Designation Request for PW for BIOL 1650 Nutrition

Motion to consider AUC 41: Sara Levine, **Second:** Adem Elveren

Sponsor: Aisling O'Connor

Discussion: See discussion in AUC 40 pertaining to this proposal. Although the meeting had ran well past 5 pm and there was some discussion of tabling this proposal, the committee went ahead and voted.

VOTE: 15/1/1 (For / Against / Abstain)

4. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 5:15 pm: Sara Levine, **Second:** Adem Elveren

VOTE: 17/0/0 (For / Against / Abstain)

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Aisling O'Connor