

GEOC Meeting December 5, 2011

*In Attendance: Mike Young, Eric Schultz, Olivier Morand, John Ayers, Murph Sewall, Elizabeth Jockusch, Tom Deans, Gustavo Nanclares, Peter Kaminsky, Rosa Helena Chinchilla, Richard Jones, Xae Alicia Reyes, Tom Long, Robert Cromley.
Not present: Françoise Dussart, Wally Madych, Suresh Nair, Tom Roby, Alex Shvartsman, Robert Stephens, Sarah Winter.*

Meeting called to order at 11:06am.

1. Minutes of the November 7, 2011 meeting.

Motion to approve minutes as presented. Motion seconded.

Motion carried.

Approval of minutes will be moved to the consent agenda for subsequent meetings.

2. Announcements

- *University Committee Advisory Council.* The committee has approached the Senate about possibly being made a subcommittee of the Scholastic Standards Committee. Its standing has yet been resolved. The committee is currently working on gaining a detailed understanding of course approval workflow throughout the university.
- *W courses.* There has been an increasing number of complaints about student access to a 2nd W course to complete the gen ed requirement. The Provost's Office has indicated that it has some resources available to help fund more W sections. The GEOC will continue to look at enrollment numbers in W courses.

Discussion:

- Has it been determined whether lack of access to 2nd Ws is a structural problem or a transitory problem caused by a miscalculation by the Admissions Office a couple of years ago (too many students were admitted in one year)? When the W Taskforce wrote its report a year ago, it indicated no overwhelming problems for students to register for W courses prior to their senior year.
 - It is mostly a transitory problem.
- On a structural level, departments are increasingly only offering enough W courses to meet the needs of their majors. The GEOC should ask OIR for data on the aggregate numbers of students still needing a 2nd W vs. how many W seats are available. There should be more seats than students in order to give students some choice.
- Re: the Provost's plan to provide some funding to teach more W courses: quality adjuncts willing to teach W courses are difficult to find.
- Murph Sewall will contact OIR to get data on those students who will be seniors next Fall to see how many still need a 2nd W. We will also look at how many seats are available (without counting artificially high numbers of seats in thesis or independent study courses).
- *ECE courses and Gen Eds.* We now have a rough summary from OIR of ECE students and the number of gen ed courses they have taken while in high school. The data provided was for students who matriculate to UConn and all courses were taken off campus (taught by high school instructors). Close to 25% of incoming UConn classes have some ECE experience.
 - It would also be useful to know how many courses are taken at urban and diverse schools.
- *Transfer Gen Ed courses.* Murphy Sewall is still tracking down transfer substitution credits from Transfer Admissions. It was determined that GA support would not be suitable because the programming language needed is very specific.

3. Subcommittee Reports

Writing Competency

The W Subcommittee recommended the **approval** of the following courses:

POLS 2607W American Political Parties
ECON 2500W Writing in Economics

Tom Deans' notes on ECON course:

It is a 1 credit course that changes how the Economics department does all of their W instruction. The new approach is modeled on other 1-credit courses: 1 credit course to be taken in junior year led by faculty member with team of GA trained by WC and faculty member. The course will meet twice a week, once with faculty and another time with the GA. Topics will be about economics but can be diverse and may be an assignment from another course. The course structure will not have much economic content; instead, it will have more of a focus on writing and research.

Discussion:

- Is it part of the Info Lit plan for the economics department?
 - Not indicated on the proposal.
- This model could be very attractive to other departments but it is very important that graduate students are assigned only a reasonable number of sections of the course.
 - Murph suggested that it might be a good idea to look at the number of W sections that are assigned per instructor. This would be useful to know for CA3 labs as well.
 - CLAS has college-wide workload guidelines that may be good for the GEOC to review.
 - Guidelines for labor practices need to come from the Dean.

Motion carried.

Other considerations:

- As a matter of routine, when departments propose a W course, should we ask about IL implications?
- The School of Business Curriculum Advisory Council is unhappy with the school's 1 credit W course offerings. Many students perceive 1 credit courses as less important.
 - There are other implications to what is seemingly a budgetary solution.

CA1 Arts and Humanities

The CA1 subcommittee recommended the **approval of the following course:**

NURS 2175 Global Politics of Childbearing and Reproduction

(This course has already been approved for CA4 international and is under consideration by CA2. If approved for CA2, it would be the first MCAGE course to be approved by GEOC.)

Motion carried with one abstention.

The original assumption about MCAGE is that there would never be many of these courses.

CA2 Social Science

The CA2 subcommittee has requested that the full GEOC review the ARE 1150 Principles of Agriculture and Resource Economics Intensive Session proposal.

Background:

In October, CA2 subcommittee recommended not to approve the course for intensive session for a number of reasons. The instructor has since revised and resubmitted the proposal. The course is proposed as an online 3-week course. There are no office hours indicated, though it is noted that response time will be within 24 hours. The proposal states that the course will not be exactly as taught in the 16 week session because some of the course content, though not the CA2 content, has been removed to fit into the condensed session.

Discussion:

- Certain courses lend themselves to the compression of 3-week intensive sessions. It could be that the compression of the delivery system would compensate for the reduction of material simply because the student has more intense contact with the content.

- GEOC's question needs to remain simple: does the course as proposed meet the CA2 guidelines? Other matters, like the response time, office hours, etc., are not the problem of the GEOC; these have to be a departmental decision.
 - A 24 hour response time in the Wintersession is the equivalent of 1 week in the regular 16-week session.
- The GEOC could choose to modify the approval process so that another C&CC body reviews the course proposal. Murph Sewall will take this issue to the University Curricular Committee Council. Currently, the GEOC only requires department head approval before accepting an intensive session course proposal submission; this allows individual departments the freedom to decide what department head approval entails.
- Would it be useful to the CA2 subcommittee to have more information about how the course meets the CA2 guidelines?

The proposal will be sent back to the CA2 subcommittee. If they do not wish to approve it, they need to clearly identify how the course fails to meet the guidelines in the proposed format. Robert Cromley will draft an email that notes that the CA2 subcommittee needs to in order to make an informed decision.

Motion to remand the course to CA2 for discussion with the other members; any approval would be provisional (one-time only). All communications between CA2 and the proposer will be forwarded to the full GEOC for review should an e-vote by the GEOC is needed. Motion seconded.

Motion carried with one abstention.

Currently, any course approved by the GEOC for intensive session offering can be offered online without additional review by GEOC.

Meeting adjourned at 1pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anabel Perez
GEOC Administrator