

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

MINUTES

November 7, 2018

2:00-3:30 pm

****ACC 205****

I. UCOC SEPTEMBER 2018 MINUTES

(Note that an October meeting was not held.)

- Attachment: *UCOC September 2018 Minutes*

➔ **APPROVED**, with minor edits

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. USC Attendance Policy and Documentation (Ginger Clark, Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET))

DISCUSSED SEPTEMBER, 2018 Clark reported that instructional designers who work in the CET regularly find that instructors award course points for attendance. Efforts to guide the instructors effectively are hindered because the materials that refer to attendance on the Curriculum Office website are neither definitive nor entirely clear. Clark noted that, as an instructional design best practice, points that count toward completion of a course should be attached to an assignment or activity – not for attendance – though there may be a struggle to conform within some of the professional schools that teach their own best practices related to attendance and participation as part of their curriculum. Brian Head, AHS co-chair, noted that the policy is understood to mean attendance may not count as a basic assessable component of the grade, but that non-attendance may be used as basis for docking the overall grade when stated in the syllabus. He pointed out the a justification and potential value for docking a grade for attendance relates to an effort to cultivate a community setting and to secure the benefits thereof, while not necessarily considering attendance an assessable component as strictly.

Robin Romans, Associate Vice Provost, pointed out that the confusion, especially concerning CET's work and perspective, may result from USC simultaneously disallowing attendance to be a graded component while also allowing a final grade to be docked for non-attendance. He contended that this is appropriate, however, to support cases in which the instructor needs the flexibility to lower the overall grade beyond a grade reduction in any one assignment – for instance, when a course is set up such that if the final exam is missed then the student will not be allowed to pass. Romans explained that in his experience, such attendance policies as stated in the syllabus may well never be called on to be enforced, but being present in the syllabus does act to promote the notion of community participation and to convey most clearly what is expected of the student.

Additional points were discussed, such as attendance considerations related to the contact hour policy, excused versus unexcused absences, and variations among USC's uniquely diverse range of disciplines and needs.

Ultimately, Clark maintained that, whether or not UCOC and CET will take a closer look at USC's position on grading attendance, in the meantime a necessary first step would be to establish consistency across all posted materials and documents. John DeMartini, Curriculum Coordination Office, agreed and noted that there has been an uptick in academic units asking for a policy that is stated in a definitive and accessible way.

Mak thanked the committee for the thorough input and agreed that the initial step will be to work to make materials and documentation consistent. He asked DeMartini to research previous instances of attendance policy language and present the findings at a future meeting for further review.

DISCUSSED NOVEMBER 7, 2018 Members reviewed the previous instances of attendance policy language that was compiled by the Curriculum Office. Chair Chi Mak suggested that the committee finalize a baseline policy, which could then be adopted and published where appropriate. A member pointed out the usage of "generally not" and wondered if stronger language may be suitable, but other members responded that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary for justified cases. Mak questioned whether limits or guidelines should be devised for when instructors choose to enforce a non-attendance policy. Members agreed that the instructor should have autonomy in this regard in order to accommodate a greater variety of innovative course configurations. The baseline participation and attendance policy will be voted on at the next meeting.

B. Procedures Related to Programs with Zero Enrollment (Matt Bemis, Associate Registrar, Degree Progress and Curriculum Services)

DISCUSSED SEPTEMBER, 2018 Bemis explained that while compiling accurate reporting data for financial aid purposes, he discovered that of the greater than 800 degree programs at USC, about one-quarter of them have zero student enrollment in the past several years. Bemis suggested a way to handle this would be to recommend to the school deans that these programs be sunsetted and removed from the catalogue with the option of an expedited and simplified reimplementation process in the future, if desired.

Brian Head, AHS Co-Chair, questioned the harm in keeping these programs in the catalogue, noting that there is an advertisement component that may be useful. Mak wondered if it might be the case for many programs that the department is merely unaware of these circumstances.

Romans claimed that, previously, enacting such procedures would not have been an issue for accreditation reasons, but more recently he is not so sure. It might be worth considering options beyond fully terminating programs because to reestablish them they would need to be considered completely new programs for the purposes of accreditation and the Department of Education. He said this should not halt the discussion, but wondered if USC could assign an "inactive" status for these programs instead of terminating them fully.

Bemis replied that the POSTs are either considered active or expired, so the programs would need to be fully terminated and because of this there may or not be value to implementing these procedures. If UCOC would recommend moving forward with this, a plan for implementation and messaging can be developed.

DISCUSSED NOVEMBER, 2018 Bemis reported that there are between 40 and 50 new programs created yearly, but only several terminated. He questioned if the University feels comfortable with such a degree of expansion, and reiterated that the idea sunseting zero enrollment programs created before 2016 could be circulated to the deans as a litmus test. Not all programs would necessarily be examined and no action would be taken without the school's approval. Mak asked about courses that may have been specifically designed for a program under examination and questioned if such courses would automatically be terminated. Bemis replied that courses themselves would not part of the process, though the department would be encouraged to investigate the status of such courses and terminate them when appropriate. Bemis will further refine the list of programs in question and develop a method of information sharing with the deans for further review.

C. International Partnership/Joint Programs (UCOC/OSP, Provost's Office, Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office)

DISCUSSED NOVEMBER, 2018 Chair Chi Mak acknowledged the ongoing discussion surrounding these issues. Megan Chan, Financial Aid and Compliance, mentioned that her office is updating their review process to include tracking OSP program reviews in the pipeline so that her team is kept aware of continuing off-campus programs. Chan said the Globalization Working Group (which is a subcommittee of the university's Compliance and Ethics Committee) is going to continue meeting under the leadership of Harper Wells in the Office of Compliance, and one of their goals is essentially to develop a partnership checklist. Mak noted that previous MOUs written for partnership programs may not have been specific enough to encompass the needs of university-level review. Chan agreed, noting that at least the presence of an MOU would indicate when such a checklist would be relevant. Chan offered to report back as the Globalization Working Group meetings continue.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Inconsistent Treatment of Degree/Major Credit and GPA (Matt Bemis, Associate Registrar, Degree Progress and Curriculum Services)

ITEM ADDED NOVEMBER, 2018 At the call for additional business, Bemis mentioned an inconsistency and lack of clarification in some instances where courses are labeled as *not for major credit*, or *not for degree credit*. He explained that, at the undergraduate level, the practice has been to remove from the GPA courses labeled as not for degree credit, when the notation specifically applies to student matriculated to certain programs. He cited ACCT 410, which is not available for degree credit to business majors. However, students in multiple bachelor's programs are allowed to retain the credit in the cumulative GPA calculation, based on a long-standing application of the rule in the Registrar's Office. He said that because this course is at the 400 level, it was suggested that, while the course would not apply to the total hour requirement in the program referenced, it should perhaps be always included in the cumulative GPA.

The other instance referenced was at the graduate level, in particular a graduate statistics course specifically labeled as not available for graduate credit for certain majors. Bemis noted that, as it is a graduate-level course, and the course would also not have been removed from the cumulative GPA had the student had an additional master's program whereby the course could apply, it seems the same standard should apply here. He suggested that it might be a good idea to review the definitions of not available for major credit, and not available for degree credit, and their impact on students enrolled in those courses.

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. GE Memos

- Attachments: *UCOC GE Memo 10-23-18*
UCOC GE Memo 11-1-18

B. Scheduled Special Topics Report

- Attachment: *September-October 2018 Special Topics*

Members Present

Diane Badame
Matt Bemis (Assoc. Registrar)
Steven Bucher
Megan Chan (Financial Aid)
John DeMartini (Support Staff)
Donna Garcia
Lawrence Green
Brian Head
Chi Mak (Chair)
Danielle Mihram
Robin Romans
Geoffrey Shiflett

Members Absent

Judy Garner

Guests