

# UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)

## MINUTES

*November 3, 2021*

2:00-3:30 pm

\*\*\*\*Zoom Meeting\*\*\*\*

### I. UCOC OCTOBER 2021 MINUTES

- Attachment: *UCOC October 2021 Minutes*

➔ **APPROVED.**

### II. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Updates to New Program Proposal Form (Andy Stott, Vice Provost for Academic Programs)

**DISCUSSED** Stott explained that he had been working with the Provost on this issue and they would like to suggest an alternate way of handling the additional information requested when new programs are proposed. Instead of necessarily updating the new proposal form in Curriculog, a pre-proposal form would be required of the unit before a new program could be considered by UCOC. The contents of the pre-approval form, which would include proof of concept details such as market analysis, resources needed, and target audience, could be circulated among relevant parties in Academic Senate and Enrollment Services and potentially an ex-officio member of UCOC. New program proposals would then be forwarded to UCOC with the approved pre-approval as an attachment. It was questioned whether a Provost pre-approved program proposal that had proceeded to UCOC review and was met with concerns would need to be redone at the pre-approval stage. Stott responded that once a new program is pre-approved it is free to move along the regular curriculum process as it otherwise exists. The pre-approval is meant to ensure that the program, once approved by UCOC, will not result in unanticipated resource, capacity, budget, or other logistical concerns. Stott noted that the information requested of the deans for pre-approval should not be a burden; the dean's offices should already be collecting the data needed anyway. Members were in full support of the pre-proposal concept and were looking forward to the opportunity to review the pre-approval information at the UCOC level. Members noted that careful messaging will be needed to ensure that the deans understand the timeline for full program approval should account for the pre-approval too. Stott agreed, noting the Provost may choose to impose a pre-approval deadline. Members questioned whether the pre-approval component should be built into the general approval process instead of requested separately; related details will need to be worked out as the pre-approval process solidifies further.

### III. NOT ON AGENDA BUT DISCUSSED

#### A. DANC 483 Dance Performance (in Germany) (Steve Bucher, OSP Chair)

**DISCUSSED** OSP had reviewed and questioned a summer performance experience in Germany that was originally presented as a zero-unit course. Should OSP review it? An update from the department revealed that the intent was actually to offer the course for two units (how it was originally approved) but for zero tuition units.

Brian Head, AHS Chair, noted that the proposal makes more sense if the intent is to offer the course for academic credit and as a method of notating the international experience on the academic transcript. However, Bucher and Head agreed that the school would then need to address concerns about the course grading, which was mostly based on participation in various forms, if academic credit is intended.

**B. Bovard College (Chi Mak, UCOC Chair)**

**DISCUSSED** Mak returned to the topic of Bovard College, which had been a subject of discussion at a number of UCOC meetings. He said he wanted to put on record his analysis of the evaluation of Bovard College's graduate programs by UCOC, noting that this view isn't meant to represent an official UCOC position, but rather to provide a platform for further discussion. He shared a draft of the following document, which was later received by email in final form:

In the last several years, Bovard College has proposed a number of new M.S. programs that cut across several academic disciplines. These Bovard College programs are targeted toward a specific cohort of students, predominantly working professionals, who have been underrepresented among the USC student population in traditional masters. These Bovard programs include: Human Resources, Project Management, Criminal Justice and Hospitality & Tourism.

During the evaluation of these programs, UCOC has recognized that the model UCOC has been using up to this point to assess new program proposals across all USC may not be sufficiently equipped to address these types of programs exemplified by the proposals from the Bovard College. In the four M.S. programs already approved by UCOC, elements of some of these issues have surfaced during the proposal approval process, but an analysis of why these factors seem to be new and unique to the recent Bovard College proposals has not been carried out. The purpose of this document is to try to answer a key question: Is the current model that has been used by UCOC to evaluate new master's programs equipped to address programs exemplified by the recent Bovard College proposals?

An analysis of the program proposals in questions revealed four key elements in these proposals that are new to UCOC.

1. Traditionally, new programs have been proposed by academic units who already have existing scholarship or expertise in that domain. Bovard program proposals are the exceptions. At USC, academic programs have always been outgrowth from scholarship, not the other way around. Prior to these recent proposals, USC has never offered a program from a unit that does not have intrinsic scholarship in the domain of that program. The model represented by these recent proposals appears to establish an inversion of that tradition. Should USC only offer new degree programs in domains where we already have a foundation of scholarship, or should we create new degree programs and then staff them with faculty to bring in scholarship? Program proposals following the latter model would have been classified as a new species in academic evolution. This philosophical question cannot be answered at the level of UCOC.

2. In all of these recent program proposals, the domains of scholarship represented by those degrees do already exist at USC. But because the unit proposing these new programs does not have existing scholarship in the areas they are offering programs in, these program proposals inevitably crossover to other schools that do have scholarship in those domains. While crossover do require signoffs from the affected units, the burden of deciding these domain issues among academic units should not be placed on the units themselves, and UCOC also does not have expertise in all academic disciplines to adjudicate in every case. The existing UCOC model assumes that the academic unit proposing the program indeed has domain-level expertise in the subject of that program.

3. While UCOC approves programs individually, the totality of the academic program at USC is more than just a collection of individual programs. All programs share the USC brand. If there are two M.S. programs at USC with similar titles, while one is offered in a unit that have traditional scholarship but the other does not, how should students choose? Or should UCOC be the gatekeeper?

4. In each of these recent proposals, there is a common question about whether the degree is commensurate with the program contents. Feedback from other academic units suggests that if these recent program proposals had been submitted at the graduate certificate level, there would have been no disagreement. Deciding what kind of program contents are necessary to qualify for a master's level degree requires academic expertise in that domain. The model UCOC has been using up to this point assumes that the proposing unit, because of their existing academic expertise, is in fact in the best position to make that determination. The recent Bovard College program proposals have challenged this assumption. [End of document.]

Members were receptive of this analysis, noting that the Provost's new pre-approval process for new programs may aid in answering larger questions and concerns, but pre-approval also might be seen as leverage for the proposing unit to ask for UCOC approval. Andy Stott, Vice Provost for Academic Programs, said that in his view it's institutionally and educationally valid for the university to identify educational needs within the market at large and for there to be an arm of the university that is positioned to respond to these needs and provide these services. He added that he understands the problem and it's important for programs that offer these services be understood as belonging to a different kind of conceptional category in the curriculum process. He said perhaps some component of the Provost's pre-approval process could address specifically establishing a program's conceptional category within the institutional ecosystem. Mak responded that additional complications arise when domains that proposing units intend to occupy already exist within the ecosystem.

Additional points were made concerning UCAR review and how the review outcomes could help inform UCOC curriculum approval. Mak and Stott noted the plan for continued collaboration with UCAR and to pursue a way to close the feedback loop from UCAR review outcomes back to UCOC review.

#### IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

##### A. Scheduled Special Topics Report

- *Attachment: October 2021-November 2021 Special Topics*

**Members Present**

Diane Badame  
Steven Bucher  
Megan Chan  
John DeMartini  
Donna Garcia  
Judy Garner  
Brian Head  
Chi Mak (Chair)  
Danielle Mihram  
Andrew Stott

**Members Absent**

Matt Bemis  
Geoff Shiflett

**Guests**