

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

June 19, 2009

204 Whitehurst

MINUTES

Present: Celeste Campbell, Bruce Crauder, Bob Davis, Ed Miller, Shiretta Ownbey, Mark Payton, Chris Ross, David Thompson, Mark Weiser, Tina Meier, Jason Kirksey, and Gail Gates.

1. University Diversity – Jason Kirksey

Dr. Jason Kirksey, Interim Associate Vice President for Institutional Diversity noted that he has just returned from Columbia, Missouri where he attended “Difficult Dialogues Institute” designed to educate faculty on how to deal with situations and discussions while addressing diversity. The institute introduced different techniques and ideas on how faculty can address these issues in the classroom. Dr. Kirksey’s office is putting together a group to discuss how to relay these techniques to faculty on campus. The President proposed two initiatives for Institutional Diversity: 1) Integration of diversity across campus and 2) Recruiting under-represented students and first generation students. Dr. Kirksey plans to meet with OSU-Tulsa about collaborative recruitment efforts.

2. New Website Template and Pager Function on D2L – Tina Meier

Tina reminded members that the upgrade to D2L will occur on June 26, 2009. Information Technology (IT) will post the date of the upgrade on the Online Classroom main page. Members asked if an email can be sent Instruction Council and/or faculty and Tina replied yes. Tina noted that the Respondus secure testing module will not be upgraded until July 7, 2009; and members suggested that it be upgraded on July 9th or 10th instead of the 7th. Tina said the IT has added the pager functionality to D2L. When faculty login to this function, students can click on the pager and start a private conversation with the faculty member in D2L. Faculty can use this function for virtual office hours. Members asked if a statement explaining this function can be sent out with a testing program and asked if it could be turned off to avoid interruptions. Tina commented that she has contacted other institutions on the subject of D2L material retention and will bring the results to IC once summarized. OSU Marketing is working with IT to upgrade and coordinate webpages throughout the university and will be requesting names of all of the webdevelopers. The web-developers will attend a training session. Please send Tina a list of the web-developers in your college and they will work with them on development and deployment. A&S would like to be able to give certain people view only access to D2L courses and Tina noted this is a possibility but would have to have Associate Deans approval before activating. Tina will create a “Instructor/Faculty Review Only” option and forward to members.

3. D2L Start Dates – Gail Gates

Dr. Gates has received about 10 requests from faculty to open up D2L classes before the published start dates in SIS. Currently D2L opens up for students one week before the date indicated on SIS. When faculty want the class to open up earlier, they have been instructed to change the class start date which affects withdrawal dates, drop/add dates, etc. There is other option in D2L called the “Communities” section. Faculty can deliver material to students before the official start date by setting up a “Community” in D2L. If a faculty member decides on using this section, it would have to be requested providing the specific dates. Tina suggested that members take a look at the test site, she will send them the information faculty need to get set up.

4. Curricular Request

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS AND POLICY MINOR

New Minor

The minor in agricultural economics and agribusiness does not allow for the inclusion of courses outside of agricultural economics. Students who want training in natural resources and environmental economics and policy are interested in other social science approaches to environmental policy. These students are not interested in taking the additional agricultural economics courses required for the minor in agricultural economics and agribusiness that do not have a specific environmental focus. For majors outside of agricultural economics or agribusiness, the minor will allow a focus in natural resources and environmental economics and policy. Many students with majors in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources plus many majors from other colleges will work for agencies involved in environmental policy. The minor in Environmental Economics and Policy may prove to be an asset in job searching and job promotion for some of those students. Students obtaining the minor in Environmental Economics and Policy may consider furthering their education by obtaining a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics with an emphasis in the natural resources or environmental economics area. While the students may need additional prerequisite work in economics theory, they may also have a strong background in the environmental and natural sciences.

Dr. Crauder had some concerns regarding the title of the minor, specifically "and Policy"; feels that the minor overlaps with the Environmental Studies certificate and A&S has plans to create an "Environmental Policies" minor. Dr. Crauder suggests that they remove the word "Policy". Discussions will continue in the next meeting.

FISHERIES AND AQUATIC ECOLOGY MINOR

New Minor

The proposed minor in Fisheries and Aquatic Ecology is aimed at serving the curricular and professional development interests of undergraduates in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management (NREM), and as well, providing an opportunity for students in allied programs in CASNR and the College of Arts and Sciences, particularly those in the life sciences. The new minor in Fisheries and Aquatic Ecology will complement NREM's existing programs and provide students with knowledge and skills to enhance their careers in natural resource use and management.

Dr. Crauder would like to share the proposed minor with Arts and Sciences. Discussions will continue in the next meeting.

NATURAL RESOURCE ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT MINOR

New Minor

The proposed minor in Natural Resource Ecology and Management complements several majors on the OSU campus, spanning all colleges. The core course group establishes a well-grounded foundation in NREM's principal disciplinary focus, particularly, the ecology and management of forests, wildlife, fisheries, and rangeland. The minor will enhance the prospects for students to become better citizens, consumer, and stewards of natural resources, enabling them to better understand the scientific basis of management, with the goal of sustaining the values associated with our natural resources now and into the future.

Members approved the new minor.

5. Honors College Policy and Procedure on Honors Grading – Gail Gates

The purpose of the honors policy on grading is to avoid penalizing students for taking honors courses. Honors students are not always gifted in all disciplines and some faculty tend to have higher expectations for honors students than regular students. Members requested that Dr. Spurrier distribute the Honor's College Policy to all faculty teaching honor's courses each semester.

6. Professional Masters Degree – Mark Payton

Dr. Payton noted that there is funding available to develop "Professional Masters" (PM) degree programs. A PM is the "MBA" of other fields, a graduate credential that is viewed as a terminal degree in the professional workforce. A PM is not likely to be a precursor to doctoral study and less likely to be viewed as a "consolation prize". The development of the PM in STEM fields has been endorsed by The National Academies. The Graduate College is considering the PM degrees with an acceleration of their "3-2" initiative, in which undergraduate students are channeled into a PM program after their junior year. Some of the "pros" of the degree could be a significant influx of domestic, tuition-paying students, both resident and nonresident; political value of "stepping up to the plate" in response to the needs of the nation; consistent with OSU's Land-Grant mission; and some interest has already been expressed in developing such programs. Some of the "cons", less consistent with mission of research-extensive campus and students enrolled in traditional masters programs may be tempted to switch and leave the university early to take up employment. The Graduate College proposed the degree to a small group of interested faculty. Please give Dr. Payton your feedback.

7. Personal Finance Class – Gail Gates

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) are concerned about the overall financial situation of students and the country and some Regents have proposed adding a Personal Finance class to the general education requirements.

8. Other

OSRHE is looking at changing the remediation requirements to the ACT benchmarks (e.g. math score of 22) which would change current student enrollment in remedial courses at OSU from 500 to 3500 enrollments.

An Ad hoc committee of the Faculty Council has been formed to address recruitment and retention and members wanted to know the intent of this group. Dr. Gates noted that Kyle Wray wants to have tenure track faculty more involved in recruiting.

Each semester the Graduate College receives stacks of unofficial transcripts that are sent to the colleges, do you still want the paper copies? Please check with your colleges and let Dr. Payton know.

Adjourn: 10:45 a.m.