

Senate Conference Room, Ground Floor, Hall Building 123; 3:30-5:00 PM, Tuesday, October 3, 2017

## SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Attendees: Veronica Makowsky (Chair), Karen Bresciano, Stuart Brown, Jennifer Lease Butts, Robin Coulter, Susanna Cowan, Joseph Crivello, Holly Fitch, Hedley Freake, Larry Gramling, Robin Grenier, Katrina Higgins, Jill Livingston (recorder), Brian Rockwood (in lieu of Greg Bouquot), Ellen Tripp, David Wagner

Absent: Brian Aneskievich, Greg Bouquot, David Clokey, Jean Main

I. Information Items.

Minutes will be approved via email to comply with a state law that requires minutes be approved within a week. [After the meeting, Veronica found out that only a draft of the minutes must be posted within a week. We will thus do the formal approval of the minutes at the beginning of each meeting.]

II. By-Laws Revisions Sent to the Senate: Summer and Winter Semesters: Veronica reports

The By-Laws Revisions were broken into four separate motions.

All revisions were passed at the October 2, 2017 Senate meeting.

III. Further consideration of Additional Degree By-Laws revisions:

A. Editorial Changes

1. Bachelor of Technology—no longer exists—deleted

B. Substantive Issues:

1. “A department shall not impose specific course requirements upon major students in addition to those prescribed in the curricula of the schools and colleges.” The requirements for the majors originate with the departments and then are approved by the schools and colleges and so that sentence may be misleading.
2. Proposed deletion: the last sentence in that paragraph since the by-laws do not need to concern themselves with students who entered the university 50 years ago.
3. NEASC Standards

While the NEASC standards are vague, they point to an additional Commission Policy - Policy on Credits and Degrees. The last page addresses joint and dual degrees: "Dual or concurrent degrees: Two degrees, awarded by one or two institutions to students who have been admitted to each degree program, based on the normal qualifications. At the undergraduate level, students must typically take the equivalent of a full year of study beyond the first baccalaureate degree to earn the second degree." In other words, if students are earning two degrees (as opposed to earning one degree with a double major), the expectation is for an additional year of study, i.e., 30 credits.

Discussion:

To understand the issue fully, SSC discussed at length degree requirements for double majors and dual degree students.

It is important to understand the NEASC requirement that students "typically" complete an additional year of study, and recognize NEASC and UConn's requirements for academic rigor. But it is also important to encourage the pursuit of interdisciplinary study by building flexibility for students.

When a student earns a double major, they receive two majors on one degree. Students are required to declare a primary major, and the primary major determines which type of degree they will receive; ie. BA, BS, etc. There are sometimes consequences from receiving a B.A. vs. B.S. (e.g. graduate school admissions).

Historically, UConn has provided opportunities for students to pursue interdisciplinary programs by: a) joint majors: pre-established majors that cross programs; b) individualized majors: (only CLAS and CAHNR) provide students an opportunity to essentially make their own majors. Engineering/physics is a major that exists in both schools, but students graduate from one.

At least 40% of undergraduates minor. Double majors are also popular; approximately 500 double majors graduated last spring. Both these have sharply trended up over the last 10 years. Additional degrees are less common, but extremely common in Education and Engineering (Eurotech). Part of reason these are permissible is because Engineering already requires more than the standard 120 credits UConn requires for graduation. NEASC requires 30 credits over what would otherwise be required. If Engineering students earned two degrees, they would be required to take +30 credits over the already elevated credit load requirement.

NEAG established its credit requirements approximately 10 years ago (when the Teachers for a New Era requirements was active) to meet state accreditation requirements. Teachers need credentials for teaching and a subject degree. Students typically declare a CLAS degree and another in Education, and then complete a 5<sup>th</sup> year to get Masters. NEAG supported waiving the 30 extra credits because of the additional 5<sup>th</sup> year requirement.

General Education (Gen Ed) requirements are established by the university. Schools and college may add additional course requirements, but these are not Gen Eds.

University Scholars have the ability to flex some of the major requirements, but not credit requirements. Expectations are that students complete a rigorous plan of study, and produce a

scholarly or creative project. Every substitution is reviewed by each Scholar's faculty committee. This program is feasible because there are 30 or fewer University Scholars per year.

Schools and colleges recommend to the BOT that students be awarded degrees, but do not directly award degrees. If double majors crossed schools and colleges, could these be UConn degrees? Students would have to make a choice of what their primary major is, be admitted, and meet the requirements of both majors, as well as Gen Ed requirements.

Dual degrees not requiring 30 additional credits would be relatively easy to support, vis a vis administrative work, especially programming. However, double majors spanning different schools and colleges would have an enormous lift cost.

The plus/delta of raising the required GPA to earn an additional degree was discussed. If double majors are akin in a sense to honors or high-achievers, it would justify raising the GPA from 2.0 to perhaps 2.5. On the other hand, this would shut lower--performing students out of opportunities. Students double major to obtain the credentials, and/or to get access/admittance to classes.

SSC also briefly discussed the notion of contacting NEASC for information.

Decisions:

Katrina will provide Veronica with examples about two degrees that are maximally different. The maximum requires >150 credits; minimum ~130.

Veronica will consult with Brandon Murray and Jeffrey Shoulson.

Veronica will rewrite the By-Laws justification to reflect the goal of interdisciplinarity.

Robin and Jill will make changes to the By-Laws to articulate that students must be admitted to to schools/colleges to receive a degree, if this is necessary. They will consider using a see reference if this expectation is established elsewhere.

#### IV. Discussion of Last Two Weeks of the Semesters

##### A. Issues from Discussion of September 19th:

1. Definitions of Final Assessments and Final Examinations
2. Effects of any changes on laboratory courses
3. Other?

Discussion:

SSC discussed whether there is a need to define final assessments, as differentiated from the assessments given during the semester. Final examinations are currently defined by when and how they are offered, namely, during Finals week with a place and time designated by the Registrar. The issues of concern are: final assessments administered during finals week are bound to By-Laws stipulations related to bunched finals and illnesses (vis a vis Student Health Services), and students follow procedural paths to move the time of a final assessment. Further, if instructors give "final assessments" during the last week of classes, this distracts students'

attention from other courses. If final assessments were to be defined, key characteristics might include: the cumulative nature of the assessment and/or percentage of the total grade (e.g. anything >50% of the semester grade).

In a 14-15 week semester, labs usually run 10 weeks. They usually end the week before the semester ends.

V. No Further Action Items.

VI. No New Business

VII. In Progress Elsewhere: No action needed:

Honors Program Revisions at Honors Board

Gen Ed. Rev. II.C.2: gone from GEOC to C&C; will go from C&C to SSC

Academic Adjustments: gone from GEOC to C&C; will go from C&C to SSC

IX. Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 2017, 3:30-5:00 PM, Senate Conference Room, Hall 123:

Nicole Gelston, General Counsel's Office on disability law (arrives at 3:45).