College of the Environment Curriculum Committee
Meeting Minutes for April 14, 2020
10:00 – 11:30 AM

Present (via Zoom):
- Aquatic & Fishery Sciences – Luke Tornabene
- Atmospheric Sciences – Greg Hakim
- Earth & Space Sciences – Bruce Nelson
- Environmental and Forest Sciences – Clare Ryan
- Friday Harbor Labs – Megan Dethier
- Marine & Environmental Affairs – Nives Dolsak
- Marine Biology – Kerry Naish
- Oceanography – Mikelle Nuwer
- Program on the Environment – Kristi Straus
- Graduate Student Representatives – Robin McLachlan, Henry Bell
- Undergraduate Student Representative – Emily Busse, Bela Sanchez
- Director of Student & Academic Services (ex officio: committee staff) – Michelle Hall
- Guests: Lisa Graumlich, Dean; Julia Parrish, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Jane Dolliver, Interim Executive Assistant to the Associate Dean

1. Dean Graumlich and Associate Dean Parrish led a discussion of strategies for curricular responses to increasing student credit hours – new courses, increased enrollments in existing courses, and cross-unit efforts.
   - Graumlich noted that the discussion of increasing student credit hours (SCH) got eclipsed by putting courses online, but we now need to think about midterm goals and long term goals of increasing course enrollments. With the possibility that student numbers remain lower than recent long-term average (increasing trend for a while), the College faces the possibility of budget a decrease from the University at the same time we may have University-wide decreases.
   - Parrish noted that the last shift in budget formula for Activity Based Budgeting (ABB) shifted emphasis from student majors to SCH. Prior to this, some units had increases in majors, some had decreases, but overall trend was upward. Then University switched formula to emphasis on SCH, and those decreased. Now need to think about how to dial up SCH in a responsible ways that push teaching excellence and do not put faculty/units in competition with each other.
   - Parrish noted some Covid-cloud silver linings. Although online is a heavy lift and faculty had to pivot to put online courses together, there is innovation, e.g., Terry Swanson’s 100 level course in ESS expanding online to 400-700 students, while hitting environmental literacy goals and using new teaching techniques. She also noted a lot of innovation in online lab and field courses, especially in SEFS.
   - Parrish addressed three key concerns identified by the committee at their February meeting:
     1) Need for clear goals – how many SCH are enough? Parrish noted that the decrease in SCH was a fairly steep decline over last two years. College is ~10,000 student credit hours down. In CoEnv, there were two units that shouldered the vast majority of SCH (ESS, SEFS), and a shift in any one of these units and courses created instability. Goal is to get us back at least to where we were 2
years ago (but NOT via one or two very large courses, which is not stable or sustainable).

2) **Is this a unit level or college level issue?** We need units to pay attention and not decide it is someone else’s problem. Would love to see some other units grab more of the SCH load than ESS and SEFS, so there is more balance. A key non-numeric goal is to continue to steward and enhance our College as “the place that delivers environmental curriculum to the entire UW.” Parrish encouraged the committee and the Online Teaching Team to work with faculty in units to foster collaboration within and across units and optimize efforts. She encouraged pursuing courses focused on “wonder about the world” (organisms, habitats, ecosystems, processes, phenomena to environmental activism), exploring continuum of “worry” courses (pollution, climate change, overfishing) to “wonder” courses (deep sea, volcanoes, space science).

3) **What are the incentives?** In order to deliver better courses, need additional funds to pay additional TAs. Dean’s Office has some temporary funds to put towards this over the next couple years.

**ACTION:**
- Parrish will share updates with the committee on commitments her office is making to fund these efforts.
- Committee will hold a brainstorming session at a future meeting on course topic ideas.

2. Kerry Naish offered updates from the Online Teaching Team:
- Created a [Teaching Resources Canvas page](https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5de9760de6cff225007fa46c)
- Looking for representatives from all units in the College
- Offering workshops on “Exams and Assessments: Deterring and Detecting Cheating” and “Digital Storytelling, Virtual Labs, and Story Maps”
- Created new working group focused on online field teaching and looking for more members
- Encouraging faculty to use existing tools better, not to add many new tools. OLT needs help in getting this word out to faculty. Office of Educational Assessment has put out mid-quarter assessment – faculty are encouraged to use it to get early feedback
- Polling students regarding what is (and is not) working in online courses. Getting feedback on pacing issues, little interaction with faculty, and difficulty engaging students online
- Naish asked student committee members how their online courses are going so far. Student members described challenges of meeting the same level of instructor expectations despite barriers, such as working from home with multiple others in same household, finding a quiet place, screen fatigue, lack of adequate internet band-with. Students also noted that some faculty are doing a phenomenal job with using polls, chats, etc.

3. Clare Ryan presented proposed course proposals from the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences:
- SEFS 504 “Social Science Research Design and Methods” – course change to update course title and description [https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5de9760de6cff225007fa46c](https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5de9760de6cff225007fa46c)

The committee approved the proposal pending final revisions:
• Document that SMEA has reviewed the course as an affected unit because they offer a similar course, SMEA 583 “Research Design.” Hall will ask SMEA to document via email to avoid sending the proposal back through the workflow.
• Change the effective year/quarter to Spring 2021.
• In the “Learning Objectives” section, use verbs that are easier to evaluate. Consider revising the learning goals to use higher level Bloom’s taxonomy language and action verbs such as “evaluate, create, etc.” instead of “understand, learn, etc.” See the Center for Teaching & Learning’s webpage on “Course and syllabus design,” which includes a link to “Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.” See also this UC Berkeley reference: https://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/design/course-level-learning-goalsoutcomes.
• In the “Activities & Hours” section in the Curriculum Management system, the total hours listed needs to be updated to 12.
• The “Evaluation Details” listed in the syllabus are much clearer than the list the Curriculum Management system.
• Update the syllabus to remove reference to “Spring 2014, Tentative Syllabus” on page 2.

**ACTION:**
• Hall will send the proposal back in the Curriculum Management system for revisions.

**BSE 410 “Industrial Wastewater Treatment and Reduction” – new course**
https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5e261c10e65d032500dd8e36

The committee approved the proposal pending final revisions:
• In the “Activities & Hours” section in the Curriculum Management system, need to include any non-instructional hours (probably 8) and total hours (probably 12).
• The “Learning Objectives” listed in the Curriculum Management proposal are different than those listed in the syllabus. They should be consistent. Also, the committee noted that learning goal #8 is great, perhaps stronger than #6 and #7.
• The abbreviated title (the one for transcripts that must be all caps) has a max character limit of 20, so you could fit: INDUSTRIALWASTEWATER (spelling out “industrial”).
• The committee thought the “Homework Grading and Feedback policy was very well articulated.

**ACTION:**
• Hall will send the proposal back in the Curriculum Management system for revisions.

4. **Kristi Straus and Michelle Hall shared information about the process for appointing new faculty committee members needed for next year, the annual call for recommendations for new student representatives, and the need for a new Chair of the Committee (Straus plans to step down at the end of this year):**
• Straus encouraged anyone interested in serving as Chair to contact her to learn more.
Hall outlined the current process for selecting student representatives. Student committee members suggested the following to improve the process and clarify their roles:
  o More description on what position was. Is it to serve as a liaison directly to students in their unit, or a general student representative?
  o More information prior to first meeting on what the meetings are like, typical agendas, and expectations for reviewing materials in advance and participating in meetings.

**ACTION:**
  • For faculty appointments, Parrish and Hall will email all chairs/directors this quarter to confirm their 2020-21 faculty representatives for the Curriculum Committee, Scholarship Committee, GPCs, etc.
  • Hall will confirm whether any current student members are available and willing to continue serving next year, and will seek feedback from current student members on description of expectations for student members.
  • Hall will begin process of identifying new student members.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.