College of the Environment Curriculum Committee
Meeting Minutes for January 25, 2021
9:30 – 11:00 AM

Present (via Zoom):

- Aquatic & Fishery Sciences – Luke Tornabene
- Atmospheric Sciences – Greg Hakim
- Earth & Space Sciences – Drew Gorman-Lewis
- Environmental and Forest Sciences – Clare Ryan
- Friday Harbor Labs – Megan Dethier
- Marine and Environmental Affairs – Sunny Jardine
- Marine Biology – Kerry Naish
- Oceanography – Mikelle Nuwer
- Program on the Environment – Kristi Straus
- Graduate Student Representatives – Rosalind Echols, Taylor Ganz
- Undergraduate Student Representatives – Amanda Gardiner, Jessica Goulet
- Director of Student & Academic Services (ex officio: committee staff) – Michelle Hall
- Guests: Jane Dolliver, Julia Parrish, Dean’s Office/Academic Affairs; P. Sean McDonald and Tim Billo, Program on the Environment

1. Kristi Straus presented two proposed new courses from the Program on the Environment:

**ENVIR 420 “People, Planet, and Profit in Sustainable Cannabis Production”**
https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5fe1088aa599770026885cc4

Course has been taught for 2 years and originated from a grassroots group of students who got careers in cannabis industry. The curriculum encompasses hemp in fiber and food production, recreational cannabis, and medicinal cannabis. Students explore environmental issues of monoculture crops, energy consumption of indoor growing, social justice and equity, environmental policy and conflicts, and sustainability of cannabis. Frequent guest lectures. Requires an independent project: presentation and a blog. Optional field trips are visits to cannabis facilities for those 21 years or older. PoE has decided to use 420 for the course number in hopes that the cultural reference will serve as a marketing tool for the class and may attract students who will then have the opportunity for this learning about sustainability.

The committee approved the proposal pending final revisions:

- On module 2, concepts for evaluating sustainability in agriculture, consider how this could be used to strengthen college sustainability curriculum as a whole and how it relates to other courses such as C ENV 110 “Food and the Environment.” Module 2 focuses on concepts for evaluating sustainability, but all of the readings are tailored towards cannabis, not focused on sustainability. Consider adding other readings focused on evaluating sustainability.
- In the syllabus, under “In Class Discussion Preparation & Contributions,” delete repeated phrase, “you must be prepared to both lead a discussion . . . .”
- Make course description and learning objectives less vague. Consider making it clearer in the course description and materials why the course is focused on cannabis (as
compared to cherries, apples, or flax, for example). Can you be more specific about what students will learn and what makes cannabis unusual? Will they learn about technical aspects such as indoor growing versus outdoor growing, or large-scale monoculture crops?

- For field trips, both students 20 and younger and international students cannot attend - what is the role of the field trips and importance in learning for the course? Explain the options for students who cannot participate.
- Consider adding more detail about why the primary assignment is a blog post (as opposed to another medium). Perhaps add a statement such as “blog posts will be available in class to others.”

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

**ENVIR 380 “Wilderness in the Anthropocene”**
[https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5f6dfc87627ff400269d628e](https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5f6dfc87627ff400269d628e)

Course has been taught every summer since 2013. It begins with reading traditional literature and revisionist wilderness philosophy and history (some humanities, psychology, ecology). A big part of the course is learning about climate change (past, present, future). The course is taught in hybrid format. First 3 weeks are readings/discussions followed by 9 days in the field (Olympic National Park, Shaw Island, Alaska). It is about wilderness but does not need to be taught in a specific area. Students spend time thinking about relationships of people to nature and landscapes. Thinking about who those places are for – who is excluded from places of wilderness, who is welcome, who benefits? How do we make outdoor spaces more inclusive?

The committee approved the proposal pending final revisions:
- Include information in the syllabus on how strenuous the field portion will be and whether students need to provide their own gear; what gear resources are available.
- Provide a materials/gear list.
- Consider including a video of what backpacking in the wilderness looks like.
- In the course disability accommodation statement, include specific course components that may necessitate accommodation. See examples of how to describe course activities on the college’s disability accommodation website: [https://environment.uw.edu/intranet/academics/teaching/disability-accommodation/](https://environment.uw.edu/intranet/academics/teaching/disability-accommodation/)
- Consider including explicit discussion of removal of native populations in creation of National Parks and racist views of early Park promoters.
- Consider including international perspectives on the concept of wilderness or clarify in the course description that the focus is North American.
- Multiple committee members commented that the course description, topics and readings do not seem to include adequate focus on diversity themes to justify the undergraduate general education Diversity (DIV) designation, using the University’s definition of the requirement to assess whether the course content meets the DIV requirement: [https://www.washington.edu/uaa/advising/degree-overview/general-education/diversity/](https://www.washington.edu/uaa/advising/degree-overview/general-education/diversity/) (see also “Topics and example courses” at the bottom of this webpage).
- Follow-up with units listed as potentially affected to ask them to review the proposal and acknowledge in the CM system (SEFS, UWB, UWT as of 1/27/21).
2. Drew Gorman Lewis presented a course change from Earth & Space Sciences:

**ESS 510 “Advanced Applied Geology Field Investigations”**
https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses/view/5fea5844470b0f002780339a

Course was taught in summer and now will be taught in spring. Instead of a 9-day summer trip, it will occur over shorter, weekend trips. The department has been fine-tuning advanced curriculum to avoid teaching over the summer, avoid coursework for MS students who are working full- or part-time. The timing front loads field techniques and data analysis ahead of students beginning their capstone; the learning goals have not changed.

The committee approved the proposal pending final revisions:

- Spell out “MESSAGe” for those who are not familiar with this program.
- Consider explaining in the syllabus how the instructor will convert 500 points to a 4.0 scale.
- Add more detail to the “Justification” section to clearly explain why the changes are proposed, e.g., include goal of “front-loading field techniques and data analysis” and other reasons shared during the committee meeting to explain the proposed changes.
- In the “Justification” section, change “complimentary” to “complementary.”
- The course description mentions “Intersection of science and the environment,” but this is not included in learning objectives; make the language in syllabus the same as the language (and in the same order) in the Curriculum Management system to avoid having the proposal sent back for revisions by UW Curriculum Committee.
- In the “Activities & Hours” section of the Curriculum Management proposal, make the student credit hours add up to 9.
- In the “Learning Goals,” correct the typo: “Present findings in useful to stakeholders.”

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

3. Update from Online Teaching Team

**Ongoing efforts**

- Hosting pop-up workshops again in weeks 8-10 ahead of Spring Quarter.
- Holding *Office Hours* this quarter – please get the word out, especially to ESS, SEFS.
- TA workshops were held in week 1 of Winter – will be held again first week of Spring.
- Canvas site updated with content from workshops.

**New efforts**

- Course observations will begin in classrooms that are using evidence-based teaching strategies. OLT is inviting all instructors (faculty, grads, postdocs) in the college to view and hold facilitated conversations with José Guzmán.
- Theater of Equity (pre-recording of role playing) will begin, on how to handle difficult situations in the classroom with Tim Essington as lead.
- José Guzmán, Mikelle Nuwer, Kerry Naish, LuAnne Thompson submitted a National Science Foundation IUSE: GEOPAths grant to create a bridge program at Friday Harbor Labs for
transfer students to improve quantitative skills and get introduced to marine issues of concern.

- Tim Essington, Ere Aceves-Bueno and Phil Levin submitted a National Science Foundation IGE grant to develop a program to better bridge quantitative and conservation/ecology grad students.
- OLT currently working on how to work with the Curriculum Committee to advance teaching and learning in the college. A Proposal will be developed and shared.
- In response to the question of whether anyone knows of a meta-analysis that evaluates methods of “evidence-based learning” across many studies, Kerry Naish shared these resources: PNAS article: https://www.pnas.org/content/111/23/8410
  UW Biology Education Research Group: http://uw-berg.wikifoundry.com/page/Articles+by+BERG+members

4. Julia Parrish led a Teaching and Learning website structure activity:

Parrish noted that the audience for this new site is instructors; students will still be served by the student section of the college website, which is being revamped this year. The goal is not to duplicate key campus resources such as the Center for Teaching & Learning website, but to create a college resources because instructors tend to use resources from the college before global UW resources, and the college can tune or site to specific STEM content: labs, lightboards, field courses, etc. Currently site is built and maintained by college MarComm team, but structure is a “carbuncle” of topics compiled over years – need to take a step back and think about structure. After the exercise, committee members discussed results:

- Events were not top of mind for users; perhaps this can be some sort of banner instead of a section. Need a way to advertise teaching events within college, mini-workshops, and select events from CTL, BERG, etc. Good to have events that can auto-upload to google calendar or outlook, and good to tag/label them (e.g., equity and inclusion, online teaching, etc.).
- The term “resources” could apply to everything. Not sure what goes into resources; how is it distinguished from teaching best practices (which are also resources)? Some interpreted it as technology, computer classrooms; some as logistics.
- To avoid confusing the audience, maybe title it “teaching” or “instruction” (not “learning,” which signals student audience).
- Far more content in “best practices” than “developing courses” – lots of focus here at upper level and lots of micro topics.
- How users define “best practices” may depend on where they are in the process – best practices could be for developing or changing or enriching.
- “Developing courses” is currently administrative, e.g., “where are the forms?” The next step is “best practices” or “how to be a better instructor.”
- Make section for “Rules” or “Policies and Procedures” / “Resources” / “Polishing your course” (nuts & bolts).

Meeting adjourned: 11:00 AM