

## **Educational Policy Committee Minutes**

September 14, 2016

**Present:** Renata Jackson, Sarah Greer, Janine Hawley, Kjersten Lester-Moratzka, Krystyna Puć, Christia Thomason, David Winkelman, Karen Beres

**Guests:** Joe Lopina, Dean Wilcox, Abigail Yager

**Minutes:** Jackson called for a motion to consider the minutes of the April 27, 2016 meeting. Jackson made the motion, Puć seconded the motion. Brief discussion followed and the minutes were approved as written.

**Business:** Jackson opened discussion of campus-wide credit hour assignments. Jackson shared an Excel spreadsheet on credit hour calculations created by Joe Lopina with the committee. Jackson reminded the committee that after the presentation on credit by Winkelman and Morin at our April 27 meeting members were charged with going back to their constituents to determine how credit is calculated, and to articulate the logic behind the assignment of credit—an important part of oversight. Jackson stated that her epiphany in looking at this chart was the realization that we do not have to credit courses differently based on the activity type. Lopina explained that he started exploring the distinctions between lecture and lecture/lab courses and collecting information from other campuses in the UNC system.

Looking at the other Schools he was able to determine the prime distinction was the ratio of in-class versus out-of-class effort to achieve stated learning outcomes. If all of the effort occurs in class face-to-face that is a lab. If the ratio is 1:2 (in-class to out-of-class work), that is a lecture. Anywhere in between is more-or-less what we have been calling a lecture/lab. Lopina explained that the chart reflects that the hours devoted to a three credit course are the same (7.5 hours a week) for each type, but the minimum expectations about where the time is spent varies across activity types. Lopina explained that where this begins to have an impact is when we are reserving spaces across campus. He stated that one might wonder that a 2 credit hour studio course has reserved a space for 10 hours. The math doesn't work out: students are asking to put in 10 hours of studio time for a course that should demand 5 hours over the course of a week.

Jackson asked Lopina to address the concept of flexibility of time usage for a particular course over the span of a semester vis-à-vis the total semester hours (as enumerated in the spreadsheet). Lopina explained that this is an important concept for us, and cited the example of practicums that can be production heavy for a 3 to 6 week period within the 15 week semester. He stated that while it might be in the best interest of student workload to try and balance the time, it doesn't have to be balanced—one knows (given the total semester hours) how many hours must be spent to meet the requirements of the course. Sullivan stated that arts instruction is intrinsically time heavy. The conservatory model is created to give students space and time to investigate their art form, the expectation that the student is going to spend more time doing their art form is self-evident. He stated that if there is a minimum requirement on any given campus

for any particular degree that is what students are reaching for; if they want to go beyond and above that, that is their choosing. Sullivan also brought up the fact that there are federal limitations on the amount of credit a student may take. Lopina stated that these are other things that come up frequently and much of this is best practice surrounding the question of what the appropriate amount of work to achieve the learning outcome is: there is some estimation going on. Lopina stated that Sullivan's point is an issue: we perhaps expect that a student put 15 hours in to achieve the learning outcome. The real question is, that perhaps the perspective of the conservatory has the outcomes at a higher level and if more is expected then we need to make the credits appropriate for doing that work. Sullivan stated that he is not suggesting that we cut the workload, he's addressing the problem that occurs when a student is already at 19 credit hours: they are at maximum. Lopina stated that this is another piece of this: do you adjust the expectations? Or do you look at the other courses that are being required of students. Sullivan stated that from his point of view in the School of Dance this would be disadvantageous for the students, they would be getting less. Lopina stated that this is an argument in and of itself, and the other concern we are addressing is: are we accurately reflecting the credit the students are earning for the work they are doing. Maybe the argument we have to have at the end of it is: we want to reflect it honestly and accurately and we (and our students) expect this level [of work]. Maybe the argument should be not to fudge the numbers here, but rather have an exception to exceed those minimums. Lopina stated that that is the more reasonable argument because it is consistent across campuses. This would result in a student workload that is reflective of how much time they are spending.

Winkelman commented that his own "a-ha moment" in studying the spreadsheet was that he had presumed, incorrectly, that the reason a Lab class needed more contact time in the schedule was because the type of instruction students were receiving—since it wasn't that very direct, lecture hands-on type of engagement—he was presupposing that the amount of learning was not going to be as focused and productive as in an intense lecture. There was more time necessary to assure the outcome, and that in addition they were doing work outside of a the Lab class. Winkelman stated that he went back to his credit presentation, presented last spring, which stated that it is an hour in-class and two hours out of class, or what is deemed to be equivalent. One might start to parse out the equivalency that a student sitting at a lab station might not be as focused, and the equivalent time might be a bit more than those three hours. But according to the federal definition it is those three hours, which means that there is no out-of-class time. There are different types of instruction that are appropriate for different tasks, and one could make the argument that a kind of higher concentration of learning perhaps happens in one type of instruction, rather than in a non-supervised lab situation. This brings up another aspect of the presentation from last spring that the spreadsheet doesn't attempt to approach: what is best practice in whatever type of institution or situation? We speak of conservatory, but what is best practice in Medical school or in mathematics degrees what is best practice? This is why Morin and Winkelman recommended that we survey peer institutions, especially if those places are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) or the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) (whatever the agency might be). We can use that body of evidence as a self-check for what we are doing. If it turns out that other top dance conservatories are crediting

things the way we are, but expecting more time to be spent in the dance studio that speaks to a part of what seems black and white in the federal regulation, but actually has appropriate flexibility: 1+2 or the equivalent. That starts to loop back in: are all types of instruction (supervised/unsupervised, lecture, etc.) truly equal in terms of the learning outcome acquisition? Winkelman stated that he does not have the answer yet, but he would posit that for all of us that is a central question that we need to be researching and exploring in an honest way. This will require that we have conversations within our own Schools as well as across the institution. Lopina stated that the concerns raised are things that he has thought along the way as well. One is concerned about rigor, the value or the richness of an experience. Lopina keeps coming back to what are we directly and explicitly requiring from the students and what are the related learning outcomes, because the definition goes back to the amount of time required to achieve the outcomes in a particular course. With all of the other question marks aside this is really at the root of it: do we need to find alternative methods, or hybrids, or other solutions given the concern about time. Lopina stated that the spreadsheet is nothing more than a calculation: it is not an argument, it is a representation of the information in a variety of formats. Lopina stated that another piece of the confusion is that a student who is taking 15 credit hours is already occupied for 45 hours, but that should only be 37.5 if we're going to go by the definitions. Lopina stated that for him he'd like to get the details in order and see how we use those details. Winkelman stated that he deeply appreciates the work that Lopina has done, and the "a-ha moment" that it prompted for him.

Jackson suggested that the committee members next explore the question of credit with the appropriate accrediting agencies for each discipline (i.e. NASM, NASD, and National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST)) and report back to the committee.

Jackson then turned to Wilcox and Puć to start the presentation and discussion of the Division of Liberal Arts (DLA) undergraduate core proposal. Wilcox provided context for the background of the proposed change. When Digital Media for the Artist was removed from required curriculum discussion opened among the Arts Deans about other changes to the undergraduate curriculum and at that point Wilcox asked for time to put together a coherent core with a target total number of credits reduced from 36 to 30 credit hours (30 credit hours being the Southern Association of Colleges and School (SACS) minimum). Wilcox explained the process that informed the formulation of the new proposal over a two year process, and it has been vetted by the Deans. Wilcox explained that two pieces in the proposal are still in process: the First Year Experience (FYE) and the capstone courses. Wilcox explained that there has been two years of discussion around the FYE and a pilot of the course is planned for Spring 2017 semester (he anticipated that an EPC-1 term will be submitted). The capstone piece is more complex at this point: what we have presented is a sketch pending further feedback. They do correspond to best practices, and hope to address the fragmentary nature of the current undergraduate education program.

Wilcox also stated that the other component of this process is trying to find a balance between the 5 Arts schools so that each student has the same General Education (Gen Ed) requirements. The current array of Gen Ed requirements is not an effective use of institutional resources, makes advising a nightmare, and the paperwork on the

Registrar's end is incredibly complex. The intent is to find common balance to meet all of the requirement of SACS while providing a coherent rationale for all students. Wilcox stated that part of what makes this complex is that in the past DLA has absorbed credits that probably should have been Arts credits, which goes to the argument about why there were 36 credits (rather than 30); DLA is embedded in Arts curriculums and it is problematic. One example is Theatre History, which is required for both Design and Production (DEP) and Drama. This year there are 83 students and they cannot all be accommodated with current staffing levels. This curriculum model cannot be maintained, and the reductions were targeted to those type of courses. The curricular models also aim to reduce credit loads in the first year. Wilcox stated that this model also raises the future possibility of cross-disciplinary courses and the opportunity for Arts faculty to develop courses that could count for Gen Ed credit. These possibilities are in the model, which sketches something we can build on.

Jackson read the following comment from Morin (sent via e-mail on 9 September 2016):

My concerns are mostly about the logistics. The new requirements look great to me except for the capstone. Has any discussion taken place as to whether current students will finish out their current requirements? Sharon and I discussed the very real possibility that our office would no longer be able to generate a report to help us calculate a DLA GPA. As it is now, we have a discrepancy between what displays in Degree Works versus what comes up on my report.

Will the 2.0 requirement finally go away (fingers crossed)?

Wilcox stated that he has answered the capstone question via e-mail. Jackson stated that she would like clarification from Morin about her comment regarding the 2.0 GPA requirement. Jackson then shared another e-mail from Morin (10 September 2016):

One concern I'll need DLA to address is what happens to concentrations like UG Sound, that only require 121 Credits, 36 of which are required DLA courses. As we explore a reduction in gen ed credits, we'll need to keep in mind what might have to be added in order to offer a degree of at least 120 credits. The reduction may also make it even harder for a student to remain full time.

The capstone seems like a heck of a lot of work for 1 credit.

Jackson stated that the reduction of credit hours towards the degree is a concern in the School of Filmmaking, as they have the highest concentration of transfer students and they tend to go to part-time status even faster. Jackson stated that she is in favor of the idea of a common core, but Filmmaking does not want to reduce credit hours and would request that there be 2 additional Liberal Arts electives (which would hopefully not tax the department, given that more of their student have transfer credit). Wilcox asked why they must be Liberal Arts classes. Jackson replied that Filmmaking values the Liberal Arts and they are already getting the intensive Arts education. Wilcox stated that part of the reason the proposal is put together the way it is, is that he is looking at the resources he has to run the program and he is building this based on what he has, not what he

wants. Wilcox stated that he barely has enough faculty to do what we are doing now. Jackson stated that she realizes that a lot of this proposal is based on Wilcox trying to make efficient use of limited resources. She gets that, but if all other things were equal she could not imagine another school asking that somebody learn less, take less, when she values so strongly the Liberal Arts education. Filmmaking wants their students to read and write and study more philosophy and psychology. Jackson also stated that she believe that the definition of “core” is something that is a solid basis upon which other things are built.

Pu  reminded the committee that as more students come in as transfer students (especially from the Community colleges who enter under the auspices of the articulation agreement) we cannot build full-time status on what transfer students do, and do not, bring in. Jackson stated that she understands that, which leads to more part-time students, which is not good (from a funding point of view). Jackson stated that she supports the idea of a reduced core (36 or 37 hours for the School of Filmmaking as she proposed earlier) which will help incoming students. Wilcox stated that another issue that has been discussed is that DLA is overwhelmed with students— 3/4 of which are Film students, which means there are fewer slots available for students in other disciplines. Wilcox is concerned that if we build different versions of the core we are not providing a common experience and we are not giving them the same opportunity to get the same education, because it is unbalanced. Wilcox recognized the difficulty to get all five schools to agree on one thing. Jackson wondered: if we have fewer Filmmaking students taking DLA classes because they come in with transfer credit (and they reduce to 36 and others reduce to 31 credit hours) how that would be a problem?

Sullivan asked about the issues surrounding a transfer student taking more credits than required if they desired. This lead to a discussion of federal financial aid regulations and the UNC tuition surcharge.

Winkelman stated that we have tended to speak on this campus in generic terms using concepts such as “core” “Gen Ed requirements” “Liberal Arts classes” and “General Ed classes” more or less synonymously. He proposes that we agree on whatever the General Education core requirement is going to be (e.g. 31 credit hours) and that if there are other classes that we feel are important for our students the Art school can require more, but they would be responsible for helping to cover the staffing issues. Lester-Moratzka stated that that is similar to the discussion DEP had about their open electives. Greer asked for clarification about the funding piece of Winkelman’s proposal, asking if he meant that Arts schools should assume some responsibility for funding the courses. Winkelman agreed that that is what he is suggesting. When a school undergoes enrollment growth after a certain amount of time that school gets an additional faculty line. What has happened, in many ways, is that as modifications to curricula have occurred there has in effect been enrollment growth for DLA without any additional faculty lines to support it. Jackson stated that she would like Beres to relay that argument; it seems unconscionable to Jackson that we have a school that has grown and we are not supporting DLA (and our increased undergraduate population). Beres stated that for better or worse that is how it has been: for the better it has supported the Arts

schools because they are still getting their additional faculty. But, she stated, any time we are asked to give back money it has been in the addition piece that is meant to support DLA: that is what has been given back. This point lead to a discussion of the FYE, the composition program, and the unsustainable way that it is currently being taught. Thomason stated that the Library noted that the proposal relies heavily on the Writing Center, and urged that support for the Writing Center be built in to the plans from the very beginning of the process.

The balance of the meeting focused on discussion of the capstone course. Topics included rubrics, best practices, and the potentialities of capstone project itself.

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted 27 September 2016  
Christia Thomason  
Educational Policy Committee Secretary