

College of Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee
Agenda for the Second Meeting of the Fall 2023 Semester
12:30 PM September 18, 2023
Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Chair: Selfa Chew-Melendez

I. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 12:33 PM

II. Quorum Call

Meredith Abarca	<i>English</i>	<u>Present</u>
Arthur Aguirre	<i>Leadership and Community Engagement</i>	<u>Present</u>
Clayton Bench	<i>Religious Studies</i>	<u>Present</u>
Carina Heckert	<i>Sociology and Anthropology</i>	<u>Present</u>
Josiah Heyman	<i>Sociology and Anthropology</i>	<u>Present</u>
Takeo Hiroi	<i>Political Science and Public Administration</i>	<u>Present</u>
Hilda Ontiveros	<i>Women's and Gender Studies</i>	<u>Present</u>
Richard Pineda	<i>Communication</i>	<u>Present</u>
Sara Potter	<i>Languages and Linguistics</i>	<u>Present</u>
Susan Stanfield	<i>History</i>	<u>Present</u>
Jeffrey Sirkin	<i>Creative Writing</i>	<u>Present</u>

Quorum: 10

Members Present: 11 of 19

Guests Present:

Carlos Chavez	<i>College of Liberal Arts - Dean's Office</i>
Toni Blum	<i>Office of the Provost</i>
Julie Rivera	<i>Office of the Provost</i>

III. Special Business

- Presentation by Dr. Michael Topp, member of the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UGCC), on "A Proposal from the UGCC Subcommittee on the Component Area Options"
 - The UGCC intends to amend the core curriculum at a meeting on 9/21/2023
 - The amendment focuses on the component area option
 - Currently, 6 hours are required that can be taken through 9 different course options
 - The UGCC intends to propose 2 changes:
 - Proposal 1 : amend course curriculum to meet the critical thinking core objectives and add elements of personal responsibility
 - Proposal 2: add 66 additional courses to the component area option that students could choose from to fulfill degree programs
 - At a CoLART Chairs and Directors meeting, this option was met with universal disfavor as it was argued that it would diminish Liberal Arts options from the component area option, and that there was no clear rationale for this decision

- Discussion during committee:
 - Question from Blum - How was this rationale made from the CoLART Chairs and Directors?
 - Answer from Topp – The perception is that other colleges would use it as opportunity to have students take additional hours in their college; also, the alignment from Associates degrees or transferred hours from EPPC hours would be disrupted
 - Question from Sirkin: In terms of pedagogical purposes, what is the component area option for?
 - Answer from Topp & Blum – Courses in the component area option incorporate the UTEP mission and vision like access to excellence and higher education, incorporate UTEP Edge connections, and help build connections to the community
 - Comment from Blum – Enrollment in the courses is mean to be as open and flexible as possible so that all students can get a foundational look at UTEP
 - Comment from Topp – Before 2014, the goal of the component area option was to introduce students to UTEP and university life through a sense of personal responsibility
 - Comment from Heyman – previously taught UNIV 1301 at UTEP and at a previous institution, the purpose is to instill responsibility in students so they understand how college is different from high school. He believes UTEP has abandoned that, since students aren't required to take a course which instills that responsibility anymore
 - Comment from Potter: If there are still introductory or “big picture” courses for freshman that are being offered then this proposal makes sense. Has a concern about adding the additional courses to the core component area.
 - Comment from Blum – students are encouraged to take the introductory courses at the beginning of their degree plan, but they can also take them at the end of their degree plan.
 - Question from Potter: Are there any currently-offered prerequisites that are helpful in the long-term? If not, a requirement should be put in place to take courses in the beginning of a students' degree plan.
 - Comment from Topp – lots of CoLART students have avoided fulfilling their math and language requirement until the last minute
 - Comment from Pineda – Was one of the voices that objected at the CoLART Chairs meeting when this proposal was mentioned. The COMM 1301 and 1302 classes, with curriculums that are state mandate and incorporate what UTEP wants, teach students the skills that enable them to advocate for themselves. Creating a wider intention with flexibility is good, but this

proposal isn't consistent. The component area gives students a base preparation. If data is indicative of students making a choice between intellectual advancement or taking courses that fit their schedule, then adding extra choices makes the choice easier but dilutes the kinds of classes they can take. Territorially, the addition of introductory courses from other colleges takes away the component area from courses that belong to CoLART which is indicative of the identity of the college

- Comment from Bench – Also sees this proposal as a territorial issue, CoLART programs are already struggling with enrollment and adding other options could affect enrollment
- Question from Blum: If we want to ensure that we are controlling all options in this category, is there a need to further restrict what these courses should be? One of the reasons that the Faculty Senate subcommittee is being asked to respond to this issue is that there are requests from every college to create a course for this area, but there is not any guidance from the UGCC in terms of what they should or shouldn't accept to go in the component area. It's possible for worst fears to be realized if the UGCC releases guidance that isn't appropriate from what the component area actually needs to be. This is one of the reasons why these courses have a "UTEP flavor". What guidance should be put in there to further guide the committee to say "Okay you can't just put every possible intro course to every degree plan" in this proposal? One of the fears of the Provost is that there will be an introductory course for everything.
 - Comment from Pineda – Agrees that is a legitimate concern, but he's not sure why that's the worst concern. The UNIV 1301 courses used to have themes and there was attempt to get students interested in the topic and start to critically think; but it was hard to get faculty interested. Now, the redesigned course is a general curriculum and faculty in that pool are coming and going instead of having permanence. Why is the Provost now worried about introductory courses across the curriculum?
 - Comment from Blum – Introductory courses across the curriculum would mean that no student would take UNIV 1301 or COMM 1301 anymore, instead, they would be taking the courses in their field
 - Comment from Topp – He understood that was the direction the UGCC was going in. There are 4 colleges which already have an introductory course in the component area. Onus – the courses should not be designed as introductory courses to a specific major, they must incorporate the UTEP Edge. Even

though that's there, the better option is to eliminate that all together.

- Question from Potter: If UTEP won't offer introductory classes, do they need to be open to all students? If we're expanding, why are we including non-liberal arts courses in this expansion?
 - Comment from Blum – The component area has non-CoLART courses already, since students are allowed to take an additional course from the foundational courses. With this proposal, a sociology major could take Intro to Sociology and Intro to Psychology. There is no intention that students only take 3 hours from the new list, they could take 3 hours from the new list and 3 hours from other foundational course; this would be beneficial for students who want to take more than one social science course, humanities course, etc
- Question from Sirkin: A lot have mentioned that the courses to be added would be introductory courses. The proposal says that they can't be introductory courses. How is an Intro to Global Business course, for example, not an introductory course for a CoBA student?
 - Answer from Rivera – The course should not be something that only students in that discipline should be able to take. Introductory courses should be designed for all disciplines, an engineering course that only civil engineering students would be able to handle wouldn't be included. A course that is specific to any curriculum is not allowed.
- Question from Sirkin: So an introductory course would need to be designed for a general audience opposed to an introductory course for a specific major?
 - Answer from Rivera/Blum – Yes, exactly
 - Comment from Topp – Clarification, the proposal as presented has students taking 3 hours from the component area
 - Comment from Blum – Students have the option to choose option 1 or option 2; but it sounds like there's some things we need to make clear. Other institutions have wide-open core requirements but UTEP wants to centralize it. This would be helpful for transfer students or students from early college high schools
- Closed discussion.
 - Motion o leave it as is until there's a clearer reason why
- Motion from Chew-Melendez: Recommend to the UGCC that "any changes to the component area options are not to be made until there is better rationale to explain the initial proposal to do so."
 - Motion: Approved by unanimous consent

- Recommendation to the UGCC that “any changes to the component area options are not be made until there is better rationale to explain the initial proposal to do so” is approved as submitted.

IV. Old Business

- a. No old business to discuss.

V. New Business

- a. No new business to discuss.

VI. Other Business

- No other business to discuss.

VII. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 1:22 PM

Posted: 4:15 PM on September 20, 2023