

ACADEMIC SENATE CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Final Report on the Committee's Activities for 2018-19

Members: Brad Roth, Chair; Robert Ackerman, Juliann Binienda, Victoria Dallas, Thomas Fischer, Jane Fitzgibbon, Jeffrey Grynawiski, Robert Harr, Donna Kashian, Thomas Killion, Michele Porter, Richard Pineau, Yang Zhao.

Liaisons: Paul Beavers (Policy Committee), Meghan Courtney (AAUP-AFT), Darin Ellis (Administration); Bilal Hammoud (Student Senate), Karin Tarpensing (UPTF).

The Curriculum & Instruction Committee met eight times in AY 2018-19 – four times in the Fall Semester and four times in the Winter. The Committee devoted the bulk of its attention to the following topics:

- (1) the Wayne State Bookstore (Barnes & Noble) “**First Day**” proposal for course-fee-based delivery of electronic course materials through the WSU Canvas system;
- (2) the need for improved methods to address **academic dishonesty**, especially with respect to (a) awareness and prevention of innovative methods of electronic cheating and (b) the felt need to amend and update the enforcement procedures specified in academic misconduct provisions of the Student Code of Conduct;
- (3) the Provost Office’s announced changes to the method of **funding undergraduate research**, which included the elimination of the biannual Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) grant competition;
- (4) implementation of the **Quantitative Experience (QE)** component of the General Education Reform package; and
- (5) the need to safeguard against unjustified course duplication (“**curricular overlap**”) that may be inspired by the new Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) budget model.

1. “**First Day.**” The Committee devoted portions of multiple sessions to a proposal presented by Jodi Young, General Manager of the campus Barnes & Noble Bookstore, on B&N’s “First Day” (“inclusive access”) program. The proposal promises improved affordability and accessibility of course materials, invoking a study that reported that 58% of students do not have their materials for the first day of class. The program would offer textbooks online through Canvas, purportedly at below-market prices (though several Committee members expressed concern that this representation may not turn out to be as meaningful as the pitch suggests). As required by the Department of Education, students would be given an opt-out option. The mechanism nonetheless requires the University to collect a course fee from students upon registration for the covered course. The mechanism would therefore require an amendment to

the Board of Governors Statute, though it was suggested that President Wilson might have the authority to authorize a limited pilot program.

Jeff Grynawski led a Committee task force to grapple with the potential benefits and drawbacks of the proposal and to investigate the experience of other universities with the First Day program. The experience appears to be limited, and Committee members expressed many doubts about how helpful the program would be in practice, given the extent of student reliance on farther-below-market-price used (and outdated-edition) materials available for Internet purchase and on hand-me-down materials from previous students, and given the potential for glitches in the opt-out process. Student Senate Liaison Bilal Hammoud informed the Committee of the Student Senate's preference for open access materials and its non-support of the First Day proposal. Ultimately, it was determined that while the adoption of First Day should not be dismissed as a future option, the Committee was not ready to recommend that a pilot version of the initiative go forward.

2. Academic Dishonesty. The Committee continued to explore the problem of academic dishonesty, following up on its AY 2017-18 discussions of the topics of electronic cheating and of academic misconduct procedures. Yang Zhao introduced the Committee to colleagues from the College of Engineering who expressed concern about current enforcement procedures and their implementation. The Committee followed up by holding two sessions with Dean of Students David Strauss and Conduct Officer Nikolina Camaj. These sessions focused on the two enforcement methods available to instructors under the Student Code of Conduct: the 10.1(a) procedure for imposing a course grade penalty only, and the 10.1(b) procedure for filing formal disciplinary charges.

The Dean of Students Office (DOSO) has attempted to enhance the 10.1(a) procedure by creating an on-line system for collecting information from instructors about internally-handled incidents of plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Faculty members are often unaware that they need to observe due process when imposing a grade penalty for academic dishonesty. The on-line system <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WayneStateUniv&layout_id=1> facilitates due process compliance by automatically, upon the instructor's completion of the on-line form, providing grade-penalized students with the required information about their due process rights under section 10.1(a) and about the assistance that the university Ombuds Office can provide. Instructors are being asked to complete a DOSO on-line form even for an ostensible first offense that is being handled by a grade reduction in the course, so that the Conduct Officer can raise a red flag about students who commit multiple offenses that otherwise would remain below the radar. Although DOSO will not disclose to the instructor any previous reports of academic misconduct by that student (for reasons of compliance with the federal privacy statute), the Conduct Officer may call in a student who has had multiple 10.1(a) incidents and may a suggestion to the Department Chair of stronger action. DOSO shared with the Committee a prospective message requesting all faculty to report violations addressed under section 10.1(a); the Committee suggested edits to that message, in the interest of clarifying the reporting procedure.

With an eye to an anticipated updating of the Student Code of Conduct's academic dishonesty procedures, the Committee made various suggestions for amending the 10.1(b) procedure for the bringing of formal disciplinary charges. The major theme of these suggestions was a stronger guarantee that instructors would be kept fully informed and able to play a role in the process, so as to avoid allowing an administrator to issue a lenient disposition without giving the instructor the opportunity to be heard in opposition.

A task force consisting of Richard Pineau and Yang Zhao, with input from the Committee Chair, offered a list of recommendations and initiatives that reflected the substance of the Committee's views about how the University's approach to academic misconduct can be improved. That list, adopted by the Committee, is attached hereto as Appendix A.

3. Undergraduate Research Funding. The Senior Associate Provost for Student Success, Monica Brockmeyer, announced during the Winter 2019 semester an unexpected set of changes to the method of funding undergraduate research, which included the elimination of the biannual Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) grant competition. This set of changes raised concerns from faculty and students. Although the announced changes purported to maintain opportunities for funded undergraduate research through such mechanisms as the McNair Scholars Program (a federal TRIO program targeting Ph.D. aspirants among demographic groups underrepresented in the academy), substantial categories of students would, under the terms of the announcement, no longer have the opportunity to compete for undergraduate research funding. Given that Wayne State's comparative advantage in Michigan largely rests on the accessibility to undergraduates of its nationally- and internationally-reputed scholars, there was a strong concern that the elimination of the UROP grant competition would undermine Wayne State's ability to attract and retain high-achieving students who might be attracted to competitor institutions, not to mention its ability to facilitate such students' realization of their full potential.

The Committee met with Senior Associate Provost Brockmeyer and with Dr. Henry L. Robinson, the director of Wayne State's federal TRIO programs. Two students who had performed UROP-funded research participated in the meeting, and written testimonies from three other students were read aloud, reflecting experiences from a range of disciplines. Dr. Brockmeyer responded positively to the concerns raised by faculty and students. She committed to a temporary resumption of the UROP competition with carry-forward funds in the Fall of 2019, and promised to work collaboratively toward a new model for undergraduate research funding that would more effectively serve the program's goals, with an eye to a three-year transition to the new model.

4. Implementation of the Quantitative Experience (QE) GenEd Requirement. In keeping with the Committee's mandate to monitor the implementation of the new General Education program approved by the Board of Governors in November 2017, the Committee heard updates on the continuing progress in implementing the QE requirement.

A Mathematics Department memo was submitted to the Committee, explaining the revision of MAT 1000 (Math in Today's World) under the direction of Senior Lecturer Dr. Bruce Corrigan-Salter as follows: This course no longer has a large lecture-hall-style component; instead, students meet in smaller classes with one instructor, and the same instructor runs a workshop-style lab. The prerequisite requirement was also removed and replaced with embedded integrated review. The labs feature hands-on activities which often have students up and out of their seats, talking to one another, exploring math around campus (in nature for example), and more fully engaged. The course meets 4 days (50 minutes each class) per week. In Fall 2018, 9 sections of MAT 1000 were offered, all capped at 40 students; total enrollment was 347 students.

Committee member Richard Pineau also shared with the Committee a rubric that the GEOC Assessment Subcommittee had developed for QE courses in connection with the QE learning objectives: (1) apply mathematical models to real-world problems; (2) carry out and justify calculations; (3) draw conclusions based on quantitative evidence; (4) communicate arguments supported by quantitative evidence.

5. Guarding Against RCM-Driven Curricular Overlap. Administration Liaison Darin Ellis shared with the Committee his interest in obtaining faculty input in fulfilling his role, as Associate Provost for Academic Programs, in approving new undergraduate courses and programs. He reports that where new courses are proposed that seem duplicative of courses offered by another unit, he routinely consults with the directly affected units. However, given the RCM-enhanced incentives for units to create their own courses covering subject matter already appropriately taught by other units, he would prefer to routinize the process by constituting a faculty body with which he could consult with in reviewing questionable course proposals. (General Education and graduate course proposals are already subject to review by oversight bodies – GEOC and the Graduate Council – but non-GenEd undergraduate courses are not.) His proposal was for a small “triage” panel of three to five faculty members, drawn from across the undergraduate-degree granting schools and colleges, which could then potentially refer more controversial cases to a most specialized ad-hoc body for a more in-depth.

The Committee looks forward to studying the prospects for the creation of a curricular overlap oversight panel early in AY 2019-20. Meanwhile, pending the establishment of a formal process, the Committee encourages the Associate Provost for Academic Programs to bring questionable course proposals to the attention of this Committee as a whole, so as to take advantage of the collective expertise of Committee members drawn from a range of specializations.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad R. Roth, Chair

APPENDIX A:
Curriculum & Instruction Committee Recommendations on Academic Misconduct

The Academic Senate's Curriculum & Instruction Committee proposes the following recommendations and initiatives to address academic misconduct:

1. We intend to work in continued cooperation with DOSO to propose revisions of the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, so as to address the concerns we raised in our discussions about instructor participation in the process for pursuing formal disciplinary charges under section 10.1(b). In particular, we advocate a stronger guarantee that instructors would be kept fully informed and able to play a role in the process, so as to avoid allowing an administrator to issue an especially lenient or harsh disposition without giving the instructor the opportunity to be heard in opposition.
2. We urge DOSO to make their rounds to the departments on campus, perhaps through periodic department meetings, to educate faculty on the reporting of academic misconduct and on the differences between the 10.1(a) (grade penalty) and 10.1(b) (formal disciplinary action) procedures. We also support efforts that encourage faculty not to treat cheating incidents as in-house problems, and that remind instructors of the importance of reporting all instances of academic misconduct, including those to be addressed solely by a grade penalty, through the reporting feature on DOSO's website.
3. Insofar as #2 proves not to be fully practicable, given DOSO's limited resources, DOSO should at least meet with department chairs and associate chairs to ask that the message be passed on to faculty. We strongly believe that faculty awareness is crucial.
4. We recognize the equal importance of educating the Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) about this problem and the procedures for addressing it. We support mandatory training for all new GTAs on handling academic misconduct issues. This training session can be hosted by the Graduate School and DOSO.
5. We support incorporating a DOSO-sponsored presentation on this topic into Faculty Orientation.
6. We support and view as essential DOSO's efforts to educate incoming students at orientation about the nature and consequences of academic misconduct. We recommend these presentations continue. We also support follow-up efforts throughout the year, which could involve aware-raising by the Student Senate and/or other means (e.g., Social Media, creative flyers, Today@Wayne stories, short video, etc.).
7. We support the creation of a small handout (card or other flashy item) with information on reporting academic misconduct that can be distributed to all departments and faculty. This can

be done in conjunction with the other efforts mentioned above. A brief instruction sheet or guide can be an item that a faculty member can keep nearby for reference, if needed.

8. We support the work to generate a list of websites, software, hardware, and other sources students could use to cheat on assignments or assessments. This list would be useful for instructors to be aware of and perhaps to explore on their own. Due to the wide range of disciplines that are included, perhaps a working group of faculty (maybe from CIC) could generate a list of these sources, or facilitate a submission process from other faculty from around campus.

9. We encourage instructors to include in their syllabi express language regarding academic misconduct, using wording such as: “*Academic Misconduct issues will be handled per the Student Code of Conduct Sections 10.1(a) and 10.1(b). Please refer to these sections at the following link*” Inclusion of such language can help to avert subsequent controversies.

10. In order to support DOSO’s efforts in handling cases, we support the hiring of additional support personnel to aid in the efforts of awareness and the handling of academic misconduct cases.

11. We support the formation of a task force to further analyze, support the efforts to curtail, and to raise awareness about, the academic misconduct problems that exist at Wayne State University.

Submitted by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee of the Academic Senate