

Curriculum & Instruction Committee, 2014-2015 Year End Report to the Academic Senate

Members: Jane Fitzgibbon, Frances Brockington, Victoria Dallas, Jeffrey Grynawski, Patricia Jarosz, Aaron Martin, Fayette Martin, Marsha Richmond, Mark VanBerkum, Barrett Watten, Casey Westerman

Liaisons: Pramod Khosla (AAUP-AFT), Ahmad El-Moussa, Student Senate, Joseph Rankin, Administration

Guests: Mathew Ouellett, Karen McDevitt, Monica Brockmeyer, Thomas Fischer

Below is the summary of the CIC meetings and activities for the 2014-15 academic year.

Online Courses.

1. The administration has promised that there would be a plan developed to evaluate the quality of our online offerings.
2. How does the administration ensure that online courses are of high quality?

The committee struggled with the definition of “online,” as it appears that WSU has Online, Hybrid (some mixture of face-to-face and online components) and Traditional courses. It also appears that there are a number of modes of delivery. These include

- The College of Nursing has a system of Distance Learning that provides advanced nursing education.
- The School of Social Work has put in rigorous efforts to ensure continuity in its online Bachelor in Social Work program.
- Some colleges and departments are using supplemental online course platforms in addition to Blackboard.

Based upon the committee’s discussion of those present it appears that each school/college has developed a set of standards.

Note A search of the Winter 2015 Course Schedule lists 250 courses, some of which offer multiple sections. For Fall 2014 the aggregate number was 232.

Discussion – Guest Mathew Ouellett (Associate Provost and Director of the Office for Teaching and Learning (OTL) explained that OTL took over WSU’s online programs in September 2014 and has been focusing on establishing best practices in online education. He discussed some of the ‘state of the art’ thinking on how to evaluate courses. They have met with a number of colleges/schools and specifically members of the committee Patricia Jarosz and Fayette Martin.

These meetings were to help the OTL understand what is working and what is not from different perspectives. These informal interviews are allowing the OTL to begin to develop a set of formative guidelines for Online Teaching, “*A handbook for all.*” With the goal to launch this campus wide in fall of 2015.

This will take the form of “Help materials” for those wishing to teach on line.

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The OTL is using National Level and HLC guidelines.
They aim to collect and develop as a resource best practices.
These would include

- Blackboard rubric learning management
- U of Maryland “Quality Matters” <https://www.qualitymatters.org/>

In addition to the above, there are still questions such as

- How are we developing courses?
- How are we giving feedback to instructors?

Mr. Ouellett suggested that it might be possible to use the Midterm Assessment Program (MAP) evaluation process as a means to evaluate online classes. He noted that no PhD’s are taught to teach online yet all universities are pressing to enact these types of courses. Another area that offers potential is with the launch of ‘Collaborate” on Blackboard.

There were a number of questions specifically on assessment. Do we assess an on-line class the same as normal or hybrid? The committee noted that course assessment must have the same criteria no matter the course delivery. Assessment needs to be linked to goals of the course. Learning outcomes need to be the same for online and normal classes (HLC).

Suggestions for evaluation included

- Peer review
- Departmental review
- Certification

There was a general concern that departments are being driven to add online classes without the expertise of what needs to be included. It was suggested that thought might be given to including a how to module for some colleges and departments

A couple of committee members are investigating the University of Maryland’s ‘Quality Matters”

New Scheduling Matrix

Course Schedule Matrix Committee (CSMC) is a cross-functional university committee. Members include the office of the Provost and the Registrar, representatives from colleges, administration and students. The rationale is that the Provost is anxious to remove barriers for students registering for classes. There are a number of anomalies with the present WSU schedule. These include

- Peculiar start and end class times
- Very little time between classes (average 5 mins)

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- Overlap
- Few classes on Fridays

Scheduling Matrix Committee is working on a proposal that will seek support for changes that will include

- Classes to start on the hour and half hour.
- A credit hour has been defined as 50 mins for most courses, (Labs and some other class designations [hybrid] need to be addressed.)
- The committee is still looking at how to address the Spring (May-June) and Summer (July-Aug) schedule as those classes are 12 weeks each rather than 14.
- The Spring Summer (May-Aug) schedule appears not to be an issue.

The committee noted that adopting the above changes would prove beneficial to the university as a whole.

Retention

Monica Brockmeyer discussed with the committee some of the analysis they have performed on 4-year graduation rates.

From the data presented, it appears that student performance in the first year can be used as a predictor of student graduation. They believe that the addition of advisors to colleges will allow us to be more aggressive in helping students. This includes how 'big data' can be used to identify those students that appear to be at risk.

- The use of data to guide student success
- The use of predictive analytics on student success. This can include how Financial Aid issues can prevent a student from graduating with their cohort class.
- Impact of 'micro awards' to foster timely graduation
- Being able to predict high and low risk students based on first term freshman performance.
- The goal is to develop a model that will allow student advising to know which and when to reach students that need assistance.
- Degree Works
 - Town Hall schedule for advisors
 - Comprehensive system that allows for degree audits and tracking
 - Advisor and Student planning tools
 - What-if and look-ahead analyses
 - User-friendly reporting system that allows departments, advisors and students to review progress
 - Will be able to tie a number of Wayne's data elements together to provide a comprehensive system as one place for advising and student reporting

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The committee would like to see a report on the 2015 graduation rates as soon as the data is available.

Gen Ed Reform Committee (GERC)

The CIC had two visits from Monica Brockmeyer and Thomas Fischer, Co-Chairs of the above.

The first meeting covered a general explanation of what the goal and process of the committee will be. This will include

1. Goal is to develop new/revised General Education curriculum for Fall 2016
2. As part of the process, they hope to address some of the issues that transfer students face.

The second meeting in April they presented progress of the committee. The following tenets are being used to drive the committee's process.

- The process will be an open conversation with the campus community: faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
- Faculty will lead the process.
- The committee will use the best available data about our students and institution.

Curriculum design will be attentive to established best practices and current research supporting student learning.

- Focus Groups are being conducted from April – June 2015.

They will not look at curriculum design until focus groups are complete. There are many areas that offer views on Gen Ed guidelines or desired outcomes, these include the State of Michigan and the Presidents Council.

- Another area they are looking at is the AACU Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) <https://www.aacu.org/leap>.

The GERC process has included a review of the essential learning outcomes. In addition material from the above organizations, they are reviewing how the MTA fits with a redesign. As they noted they intend to be rigorous and address issues of content and of pedagogy.

GERC now has a website, which has just become operational. It will become the repository of data, discussion, findings and recommendations.

<http://wayne.edu/engaging-gened/>

The CIC committee looks forward to working with the GERC over the next year.