

Minutes for the ***Carolina Core Committee Meeting***
November 10, 2015, 12:30 – 2:00 pm
Thomas Cooper Library, Room 204

Members Present:

Pam Bowers (ex-officio), Susan Beverung, Karen Brown, Mary Ann Byrnes, Ron Cox, Rob Dedmon, Helen Doerpinghaus (Administrative Co-Chair), Kris Finnigan (ex-officio), Andy Gillentine, Kimberly Glenn, Manton Matthews, Chris Nesmith, Joe Rackers (Faculty Co-Chair), Kimberly Simmons, Nicole Spensley (ex-officio)

Members Absent:

Kenneth Campbell, Sara Corwin, Daniel Freedman, August Grant (ex-officio), Brian Habing, James Kellogg, Kathleen Kirasic (ex-officio), Gene Luna, Alfred Moore, Brian Shelton

Specialty Team Chairs Present:

Pat Gehrke, David Hitchcock, Chris Holcomb, Camelia Knapp, Francisco Sanchez, Adam Schor, Shelley Smith

Specialty Team Chairs Absent:

Sam Hastings, George Khushf, Mary Robinson

Guests:

Panayiotis Doutis, VSR; Heike Sefrin-Weis, VSR; Ginger Nickles-Osborne, Arts and Sciences

Joe Rackers called the meeting to order, and introduced new GHS Specialty Team Chair Adam Schor (History), and new VSR Specialty Team member Heike Sefrin-Weis (Philosophy).

Kris Finnigan mentioned two new Carolina Core course approvals since last meeting, MATH 174 and STAT 206. Courses in process to be approved include HIST 103, MUSC 310, PHIL 210, PHIL 213, and RELG 101. RETL 495 has been entered erroneously as an integrative course, and needs to be deleted; integrative courses can be submitted directly to the Curriculum & Courses Committee. A further sixteen proposals were at the “Working” stage.

Ginger Nickles-Osborne updated the Committee on enrollments in the SAEL 200 CMS/VSR overlay course, which offered with an 18 student cap. In 2013-2014 there were 784 seats, in 2014-2015 965 seats, and in 2015-2016 the expected total will be around 1200 seats. To date 468 students are enrolled for Spring 2016. Fall enrollments have traditionally been greater than Spring. SAEL 200 is largely staffed by graduate students, and at the end of the Spring 2016 semester the first class of graduate instructors is rotating off. The number of class offerings has been dependent upon the size of the graduate instructor pool.

Pat Gehrke reported on the status of CMS offerings. He noted that there are very few Speech programs in state from which to draw instructors, thus the courses are staffed mainly by adjuncts. Current CMS offerings come from the Speech program (57.4%), SAEL (22.3%), Evening School (11.7%), Philosophy (4.7%), Palmetto/Ft. Jackson (2.3%), and Trio/Opportunity (1.7%). The College of Arts and Sciences houses 84.4% of CMS courses.

His team is working on a lot of creative solutions, all of which will require resources.

Total CMS offerings across campus:

Fall 2015 & Spring 2016: 4,939 seats. Including summer, evening, weekend, Ft. Jackson, Honors, and Trio/Opportunity sections = 5,321 seats

Fall 2014 & Spring 2015: 3,420 seats

Growth from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 by unit:

Phil: +80 seats

SAEL: +414 seats

SPCH: +1025 seats

Chris Nesmith asked if there were a way to use instructors who were not graduate students; could instructors be trained, to help address the CMS shortfall? Extended University does have potentially qualified full-time instructors.

Nicole Spensley reported on the Carolina Core Program Review progress during Fall 2015, and addressed the Spring 2016 Review Timeline. There were 119 CMW evaluations, and we saw increases in both the LO2 satisfactory rating and inter-rater reliability. There was discussion about whether 21.01% rater disagreement was a good outcome, and Nicole responded that the rate has improved overall. As to the question of what inter-rater reliability score would be considered good, she noted that 80% is considered acceptable.

She reported good discussion at the CMW review, and noted that it was sometimes difficult for faculty to separate the 'assessment' task from grading task. Chris Holcomb was concerned that the group spent time discussing the rubric, and suggested we need to work on norming about rubrics. Nicole mentioned that CMW raters noted they would like to see anchor papers at each level. This is something that will need to be identified for future assessments.

Heike Sefrin-Weis spoke about the difficulty of reaching agreement because of the course being at the intermediate level. The person who designed the course had not done a careful enough job tailoring it to the stated Learning Outcomes (LO's), making it hard to assess. A course creator needs to take the LO and its rubric into account. Camelia Knapp agreed as to the importance of this issue. Her take-home message from the SCI training was that instructors need to have training in designing assignments. One of her trainees recommended an assessment workshop for instructors, to teach them to make a better match between course assignments and LO's.

Helen Doerpinghaus suggested that the next Carolina Core meeting could focus conversation on how best to do this. We might consider live-streamed training sessions at the Russell House, allotting 45 minutes for each LO. Camelia Knapp felt that a hosted webinar would be a better idea. Adam Schor recommended proceeding carefully with regard to how we approach instructors and their time in the classroom. We should tailor the message, which should not be telling them how to teach, but how one might tweak an existing assignment. It should be set in the context of how the Carolina Core Committee would like to look at this data, in order to make the class better. The purpose should not be presented as just making the *data* better.

Shelley Smith questioned how many instructors actually read their syllabus rubrics. Cases with such an apparent disconnect between a LO and an assignment would seem to suggest that they don't. Helen

noted that some department chairs not aware of the rubrics and LO's associated with courses in their units, and asked how we might raise their awareness of this information. Pam Bowers commented that Student Affairs assessment looks at the numbers, but also at the environment. This too can be reported as results of assessment. Helen said that assessment may need to have a qualitative component if there has not been a uniform understanding of the LO's, for example with VSR. Nicole reminded the Committee that these aspects are included in full report of each LO review, and that there will be training offered every time assessment is done.

Mary Ann Byrnes asked where else these assessment results will be accessible. Nicole replied that they will be posted on OIRA website, and linked to Carolina Core site. Helen said we will want to know if student learning is improving. Mary Ann noted that if you put together data that someone doesn't like, they quibble about the data. But the more important question is, are we doing what we are supposed to? And how do we know what we know? If the numbers are faulty or open to debate, we really don't know what we know.

Chris Holcomb felt he had a less negative perspective. If the numbers were higher, he wouldn't believe them. He is teaching ENGL 102 now, and 73% feels about right to him. He is working with Duncan Buell to feed thousands of ENGL 102 papers into an algorithm. Preliminary results do clearly show that we are not spending enough time reworking/revising. Instructors have a lot on them, but need to bring the revision process back into classroom.

Kim Glenn stated that in assessment of SCI, they have increased satisfactory ratings by 20% and decreased unsatisfactory ratings by 12%. There has been a steady reduction in rater disagreement. The news has not been all negative; we're moving forward. Helen argued that assessment reports could mention their review of results from the past year, which were discussed, and in the rewriting led to next year's process. Adam cautioned that because it is so tempting to draw conclusions about direction things are going, clarifying comments should always be included.

Pat Gerkhe said that rater agreement is also likely to happen just by chance. He had the same problem with CMS, in that the number of unsatisfactory ratings was significantly higher than the number failing the course. When the Review team is looking at artifact, the instructor has already assessed it. In effect we are creating an extra line of work. Helen disagreed, arguing that the assignment looks only at one component. Joe noted too that how graders grade varies. He asked whether the assessment rubric for a LO will go every instructor who teaches courses in that LO. Chris Holcomb responded that CMW does follow that practice. Joe commented that the assessment and syllabus rubric are pretty much the same, and Pat responded that they should be.

Camellia asked how that was supposed to be policed within the departments. Is it the Specialty Team's responsibility to police this? Mary Ann responded that it was absolutely not the ST, the Core Committee, or the Dean's Office's role. Departments and programs are responsible. They hire the instructors, and can rightfully ask to see an Evening school syllabus, for example. It has to be done in atmosphere of trust, as community of scholars. Helen said that as dean of undergraduate studies, she forwards a memo to deans and department chairs every semester reminding them of their oversight responsibilities. Arts & Sciences also does this once a year. Helen suggests two methods: (1) sending a memo with the reminder; and/or (2) offering one webinar per LO as learning tool.

Camellia commented that regional campuses have a better setup and are already doing this type of systematized assessment. Chris Nesmith confirmed this, noting that regionals have been doing

assessment for a while; he has learned is that it is a good thing, as it gets faculty together to discuss how to improve student learning.

Helen recommended putting this discussion on how to share results on the agenda for the next Carolina Core meeting, when we might look at samples of things we could share. Chris Holcomb thought we should look at other studies and where they stand, for comparison, as the rate of disagreement may vary from one LO to next. David Hitchcock has no problem with rater disagreement being higher than we want, as it is just an honest assessment and could be attributable to a lot of things. Pat said that the odds of random agreement go down with the number of raters going up. Heike commented on the VSR team difficulty reaching agreement even on criteria, even on things they were grading. Adam noticed that the number of options tended to simplify between the pilot and the rubric. If one option was added, you couldn't tell because assignment did not match. Nicole said her office was testing this. Camellia was concerned that with the full possible spectrum of raters for the SCI LO, including geologists, physicists, and biologists, not all raters would be familiar with the subject of an artifact. People would not understand the assignment well enough to evaluate it effectively. Manton Matthews wondered how one normalized, based on the raters. Camellia suggested a webinar would be useful to train faculty how to create broad assignments.

Helen said she would check on available dates to begin offering webinars. What will we talk about? The new phase of core assessment? Results? Should there be a panel of people presenting assessment reports? Should we do some sort of teaching piece along the lines of the annual memo to chairs? Joe suggested providing an overview of what has happened so far with assessment. We should reiterate that we're not assessing individual sections, review what data we now have, and how will it be used.

David Hitchcock requested examples of how those who don't use Blackboard are complying after being mandated to use it for artifacts. Nicole responded that Blackboard cannot be mandated, as it just doesn't work for some discipline areas.

Joe requested that Committee members send in webinar ideas before the next meeting on February 9. Francisco Sanchez recommended doing them later in semester, for example March or April. Adam suggested using case study examples.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Kris Finnigan