

Minutes of Core Curriculum Meeting
October 22, 2012
WHTC 125

Members Present: R. Bachnak, F. Bernat, M. Broncano, C. Bruni, P. Camacho, R. Goonatilake, C. Hickey, M. Kidd, B. Leyendecker, K. Lindberg, J. Lira, J. Lozano, P. Madlock, W. Manger, V. Martinez, M. Menaldo, T. Mitchell, P. Niemeyer, P. Roberson, B. Sanchez, D. Scaggs, M. Trevino, C. Waters, R. Wright

Visitors: S. Sears, A. Rodriguez, P. Arenaz

Members Absent: C. Ferguson, D. Mott, J. Reed

Proceedings

Consideration of minutes for October 8, 2012

The minutes for October 8, 2012 were distributed and approved.

Consideration of different alternatives for Component Area Option of Core Curriculum

Dr. Lira briefly reviewed the October 8th decision of the committee to focus on the courses to be included in the Component Area Option (CAO) for the October 22 meeting. Since the meeting on the 8th of October, he indicated that Sanchez School of Business (SSB) and the College of Education (COE) had two proposals they wanted the committee to consider.

A.R. Sanchez School of Business Proposal

Dr. Antonio Rodriguez from the SSB stated that he and his colleagues saw an opportunity in the CAO to offer a freshman level business course that introduces students to the business world, regardless of their major. This course would be a two SCH course, so that it could be part of the CAO options, coupled with two science labs and UNIV 1101 and 1102. He indicated that since it would have a significant writing component, it would have no difficulty meeting this competency. Dr. Sears indicated that in other institutions, many nonbusiness take this course, since its purpose is to orient the student to ways that a business works by focusing on issues such as business professionalism, ethics, and management of resources. He also stated that it was a highly beneficial course for all students.

A lengthy discussion ensued. Dr. Kidd asked whether the proposed business course would not fit best in the Social and Behavioral Sciences option. Dr. Rodriguez responded that it would not work, since they prefer Business majors to take Introduction to Economics.

Dr. Broncano expressed his concern about the course being too discipline specific, which is not the purpose of core courses. He summarized the CAO discussion of the Oct. 8th meeting for those who were not present. In sum, the concerns raised were that many TAMU students needed to improve their communication skills and that these skills would be best developed in a three-hour course specifically dedicated to building those skills, e.g., COMM 1311 Fundamentals of Communication, COMM 1315 Public Speaking, or COMM 2311 Technical Writing, and that these courses should not be sacrificed for others.

Dr. Niemeyer stated that maybe it would be good for students to see how the world works from a business viewpoint.

Dr. Bernat suggested that the committee have an opportunity to listen to both course proposals first, and then proceed with discussion.

College of Education Proposal

Dr. Roberson proposed 3 science labs, 1 SCH wellness, and both UNIV 1101 Learning in a Global Context I and UNIV 1102 Learning in a Global Context II. Since several of the education degrees are above the 120 hour requirement set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, he indicated that COE would be hard pressed to add the science labs and wellness courses, which the students need, to the degree programs at a time when they are already being asked to reduce courses in the major.

Dr. Mitchell reiterated his concern that students would not take a speech course. Dr. Lozano strongly recommended that we keep the Communication courses, as these are taught by discipline experts in communication and grounded in the research for their field.

Dr. Bachnak requested that the committee determine what we want the CAO courses to accomplish. If that is communication skills and speaking, then that should be the focus.

Dr. Bernat had no objections to being flexible with the colleges and allowing courses outside Communication in the CAO, as long as they met the required competencies. She did raise concerns about changing the Communication courses to two SCHs, since most courses are three hours and the change would be disruptive.

Dr. Arenaz reminded the committee that all course proposals need to meet the assessment objectives. He also stated that hidden pre-requisites are not allowable and degree programs should meet the 120 SCH limit.

As a follow-up, Dr. Lira re-focused the discussion on the points of consensus so far-- those being the value of the science labs and UNIV 1101 and 1102. The remaining third dimension would be comprised of courses that would be as effective as the communication or technical writing courses currently being proposed.

Science Lab Proposal

Dr. Arenaz recommended that the Survey of Science courses for non-majors be restructured into a two-hour didactic and one-hour lab experience for a three-SCH class. The actual lab hours could exceed one clock hour. Under this option, the science labs could be removed from the CAO to make room for other course proposals.

Dr. Mitchell reported that Dr. Diane Miller from Laredo Community College had asked about our core development process, and the science lab question in particular. She is eager to know our plan in an effort to reduce transfer issues.

Communication Proposal

Dr. Broncano indicated that he would not approve a course to meet the CAO competencies, unless he had hard evidence that the course would meet the communication student learning outcomes, i.e. a detailed syllabus.

Discussion followed. Dr. Mitchell recommended that we use our experience with the Writing Intensive courses and require that at least 50% of the course grade be determined by communication assignments/assessments and that these be rigorous enough to satisfy the critical thinking competency as well.

Final Proposal and Vote

It was moved by Dr. Scaggs and seconded by Dr. Hickey that 1) the Science labs be removed from the CAO and be integrated into the Natural Sciences Component as Dr. Arenaz proposed; and 2) that the remaining courses in the CAO meet the 50% grade criteria in communication as proposed by Dr. Mitchell to be considered for inclusion. Motion passed unanimously. (Please see **Note** below Coordinating Board requirements for the CAO.)

Course syllabi for the CAO must be submitted to the committee for consideration and approval. It was agreed that departmental representatives would present these documents for consideration at the November 5, 2012 meeting.

Begin discussion of possible assessment methodologies

Prior to adjourning the meeting, it was agreed that the discussion regarding the means of assessment for the core curriculum would begin at the next meeting.

C. Bruni noted that Human Anatomy II had not been included in the course options for the natural sciences and needed to be added.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:45 p.m.

Note: In order to comply with Core Curriculum Coordinating Board requirements applicable to the CAO, the following criteria must be met: Each course designated to complete the Component Area Option (CAO) must meet the definition and Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas. As an option for up to three (3) semester credit hours of the CAO, an institution may certify that the course(s): (i) Meet(s) the definition of one or more of the foundational component areas, and (ii) Include(s) a minimum of three Core Objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining Core Objectives of the institution's choice.