**Curriculum Committee**

Monday, January 22, 2018

**Present:** Andrew Gay, Anna Oliveri, Vincent Smith, Laura Jessup, Emily Miller-Francisco; Jody Waters, Lee Ayers.

**Guests**: Thomas Arce, Elizabeth Whitman

The meeting began at 9:00am.

The minutes from the November 29th meeting were accepted.

**THEATRE**

Gay informed the Committee that the Library confirmed having had a conversation with Theatre regarding the Musical Theatre minor, so the minor is now officially approved by the Committee.

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

Thomas Arce discussed the proposed new Undergraduate Studies course, UGS 325 – Diversity Dialogues. The course has been offered under a soft number previously. It promotes dialogue around issues like diversity and social justice, and it’s built around readings which give students a starting point to engage in dialogue. Ayers said it has been taught as a 299 in UGS, but the thought was then to put it forward for University Studies consideration as a J Strand course. To be a J Strand course it would need to be hard numbered as a 300 level course. Smith asked why it was taught as a UGS course. Ayers said it didn’t seem to have an obvious home in another division. Waters said if we were to seek another place for it, it seems like Communication might be a good fit. Smith said his question was prompted by thinking about how to market the course so people would come across it and be interested, though of course they could find it as a J Strand. Gay asked if there are other upper division UGS courses. Ayers said yes, under the House prefix, but it would be one of the program’s only upper division courses eligible for integration. She suggested that maybe in the future it could be taken as an elective in another program like Communication.

Waters noted that there are no prerequisites or class restrictions and asked if the content and level suitable for anyone to take it. Arce said yes, when we’ve offered it before there were first year students who took it without difficulty. It’s more about how far students want to take a conversation. Waters asked if it feels like a 300 rather than a 200 level course. Arce said the assignments are very reflection-based, and there are also some digital storytelling assignments, so it allows for different learning modalities. In addition, it’s very project based, so some there is a level of accountability. Highland asked if the program would want to discourage fall term freshman from taking it, or might want to restrict it to Sophomores? Arce said he was open to that idea.

Gay asked if the course is “dialoging to the choir.” Does it attract students who don’t already understand how to have a dialog, or are not already ready to engage with those issues? Arce said when we’ve taught it before we definitely had some students who already were comfortable dialoging, but also some students who were not, and who needed to develop their ability to engage constructively in this kind of dialogue. People were able to engage with their unique passions and interests; for example, commuter students chose to engage in dialogue around issues relevant to commuters. Waters noted that there’s a pretty powerful theoretical grounding to the course as well, so it has a broad appeal on a deeper level. Ayers said that looking at the roster from the original teach, there were a nice mix of ages, standings, and programs represented. Also, part of the desire to make the course larger is to attract a more diverse group of students and perspectives.

Smith noted that the proposal lists the course as graded only. He asked if there would be any objection to allowing students to take it pass/no pass. Arce said there’s no objection, it would be fine for the grade mode to be optional.

Gay noted the Committee’s concern that anything rigorous enough for 300 might be unsuitable for Freshmen. Waters said, with regard to the numbering, that the current language in the resource evaluation section of the proposal could be problematic. Specifically, it appears that faculty or administrative staff could teach the course as long as they have taken a training. Instructors need to be appropriately credentialed to teach an upper level course. She said it would be wise to add language regarding appropriate faculty credentials or approval by the Division Director to ensure that as a 300 level class it’s being taught by an appropriate instructor. Ayers said she would be happy to make sure that if the course is approved it’s taught in a way to meet expectations.

Returning to the issue of restrictions, the Committee discussed the best way to ensure that students are prepared for the course. Highland noted that restricting it to Sophomores might discourage some students who would be prepared. Freshman standing includes anyone up to 45 credits, so it might be better to have a restriction that just discourages Freshmen from taking it in their first term. She suggested that having USEM 103 as a prerequisite might be the best way to go. Arce and the Committee agreed. As in any course, the instructor can override a prerequisite, so a student who is very interested could get in, but this would make it less likely that a first-term Freshman just browsing through the catalog would pick the course.

Oliveri/Miller-Francisco moved to approve the proposed course pending an updated proposal that addresses the following items to the satisfaction of the Committee:

* Add USEM 103 as a prerequisite;
* Change the grade mode to optional;
* Add language to the resource evaluation section to ensure that it is being taught by an appropriate instructor; that is, one with the appropriate credentials for a 300-level course or one who has been approved by the Division Director to teach this course.

The motion passed, 5Y/0N/0A.

**UNIVERSITY SEMINAR**

Elizabeth Whitman discussed the proposed changes in University Seminar. She said the proposed changes are a reflection of how things have been changing in University Seminar, and include more explicit alignment with Oregon Writing & English Advisory Committee (OWEAC) writing expectations. She said House Seminar is now very different from what was originally proposed. Regarding USEM 185, she said it has been in the catalog and taught regularly, but the content has varied dramatically depending on instructor. USEM faculty got together to discuss this and determined that it would be better to split the course into separate writing, research, and presentation skills courses, all offered at different times when appropriate. The USEM curriculum committee is currently working on making sure those will be taught in a consistent manner. Ayers added that the changes align better so students can more easily see how the courses line up.

Waters said, regarding 185, 186, and 187, that she is curious what the ‘workshop cluster’ will look like. She asked if there will be encouragement for students to take them as a package, and asked why not just do 101, 102, and 103. Whitman said these can be taken separately to prepare for certain things like SOAR presentations. She said she doesn’t see them as being remedial, but as a way to supplement skills.

Waters noted that the repeatability of credit hours is set at 4. Whitman said 185 was repeatable for up to 6 credits, and should still be repeatable for up to 6 (she noted that there is a discrepancy in what was submitted, but the program would like 6 credits), but 186 and 187 should still be repeatable for up to 4 because of the content. Ayers said we wouldn’t want to discourage people from getting involved with these earlier, there might be some populations of students who might use them more. Whitman said there was some discussion around whether they should be labeled UGS instead of USEM to encourage students who’ve already completed USEM to consider them. Waters said this change might also avoid the perception that these are remedial. Whitman said the program considered who would be taking these courses, and also when they would be scheduled, either beginning of term or 5 weeks into the term. Ayers said these courses can be like scaffolding to help with USEM or students drop in when needed. These courses can also help students reach the recommended 15 credits per term to move toward graduation in 4 years. Waters said that some students transferring in who wouldn’t have to take USEM 101 or 102 might want to take these. Jessup said when she’s taught it she had some students who were strong writers but just want to make sure they are clear on all the rules of grammar, etc. Whitman said the USEM curriculum committee is working on how it would look in different circumstances so we can offer it ‘out of the box’ with more consistency. She also said that the Library has been keen on creating research courses, so USEM might want to have students work with librarians in USEM 186.

Gay asked about the changes to catalog descriptions. Whitman said the goal was to create a more purposeful way to talk about what’s actually happening in the classes. Gay said that by comparison the old 101 description was more clear for students. Whitman said the proposed new descriptions are more for faculty to maintain consistency in how the course is taught. Highland said that USEM is a special case regarding descriptions; Enrollment Services overwrites the topic. Ayers said every former OUS school and all 17 community colleges are aligned with OWEAC; these things have been aligned for some time across the state. Even though it’s called something different here, and may not line up session to session, the outcomes are aligned. Whitman added that the layering of audiences for the descriptions also includes other institutions.

Gay pointed out that HSE 101L, 102L, 103L are new but there are no new course proposals. Smith said the proposals were created but were not approved and sent. Ayers said she has them. Gay said the courses could be approved pending receipt of course proposals. Whitman said separating the courses and labs makes it clearer what we’re accounting for with the credit. Waters said that as we’re looking at competency based education as a possible direction for some programs in the future, there could be some way to align learning outcomes with what students do in the courses. The more flexibility we provide around this the better. Whitman suggested that they might be called seminar labs.

Highland said it would be possible to set these courses up so, for example, HSE 101 requires 101L, but not vice versa. This way, someone in USEM 101 could take HSE 101L. Ayers noted that House has come to be taught mainly by Undergraduate Studies faculty, with fewer faculty from other programs coming in to teach. Whitman said that these labs are a better place to pull in some content from other disciplines.

Smith/Oliveri moved to approve the proposed changes in USEM, with the new labs approved pending documentation; the motion passed 5Y/0N/0A.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25am.