**Curriculum Committee**

Thursday, October 11, 2018

**Present:** Laura Jessup, Larry Shrewsbury, Anna Oliveri, Michael Stanfill, Erin Wilder; Tiffany Thom, MaryAnn Neely, Jody Waters, Matt Stillman.

**Guests**: Andrew Gay, Erik Palmer.

The meeting began at 1:30pm.

The minutes from the October 4, 2018 meeting were accepted.

**COMMUNICATION**

Andrew Gay discussed the proposed new Digital Cinema major. He said it has been in the works for about 3 years. Previously, Digital Cinema had been part of a larger option, but was then split out into its own concentration. Gay said that when he was exploring the idea of a Digital Cinema major he heard that there was a long history of people interested in creating such a major, but that it had not come together yet. The proposal being considered went through a long, iterative process, and included efforts to be responsive to the wishes of students. In creating this proposal, the program created an advisory council to hear from a variety of associations and professionals working in the field in the region. This generated a lot of input on what was needed and helped us look at what we’re already doing and what other film programs are already doing so we can build off our current offerings and align with best practice. After incorporating this input, the program began discussions with other programs and with the Provost’s office to gather feedback and learn about possible issues. Gay said the proposal looks big, but some of what looks new is actually built on what the program is currently doing. He said that we can offer the proposed new program, at least in the first few years, without significant changes to loading. He added that most students already in the Communication program will be able to transition to Digital Cinema major without too much difficulty if they want to.

Jessup noted that the proposed major is 76 credits and asked if that feels high. She asked, for example, whether transfer students who come for 2 years at SOU would be able to get it done in that time. Gay said the credits are not too high compared to other programs. He said the average is around 72, and for example, Theatre is 78. He said the goal was to stay in that range. With regard to transfers, he said if a student hasn’t taken any media courses it might be a challenge to finish in 2 years, but we’ve done our best to align with offerings at community colleges and other institutions to encourage transfers. The most significant potential hangup would be getting into DCIN 203 because students need to have a certain set of skills to get into that class and can’t go forward in the program without that class.

Thom asked about using class standing rather than specific courses as a prerequisite, for example in DCIN 301. She said it seems like the background a student has in the area might be more important than their standing. Gay said the purpose behind that class (which, he said, will be rolled out slowly, but eventually the program will want all DCIN students to take) is that it will be a course where students from multiple classes come together and address a big topic in the news. What the program wants is an opportunity primarily for DCIN majors, but also for advanced students from other majors, so they didn’t want to restrict it to people who have taken DCIN courses, but did want to make sure people in the course have some level of maturity in their college experience. Oliveri asked if the class will be scheduled on a weekend or scheduled as a normal class during the week. Gay said that as a 1 credit class it will probably be scheduled on one day, maybe a Friday or Saturday, then there will be one presentation at the end of the term. The goal is for students to really engage with the chosen problem/opportunity/issue. He said the program wants it to be a big course where many students come together but then break into smaller groups. Oliveri mentioned that if the goal is for this class to be a general class that other types of students could attend, a Friday wouldn’t work for science students. Gay said the Communication program does a lot of weekend stuff already, so he could certainly see this as a Saturday event. He said that the program has done a projected schedule and they are not currently planning on offering this course during the first year of the new major.

Waters asked Stillman and Thom if the concept of a sort of pop-up class sounds viable. Stillman said the actual start date of the course has implications for financial aid and athletic eligibility. For example, if it’s a student’s 12th credit hour but they don’t register for it until later in the term they would have issues. Gay said he’s thinking of this more as a mid-term replacement course. Stillman said replacement credits are fine, but if it happens after a student has lost their aid, they won’t get it back retroactively. Neely said this wouldn’t be an issue if the student is registered at the beginning of the term. Thom added that courses with atypical dates can affect not only financial aid and athletic eligibility, but also veteran student eligibility for housing stipends. She asked how soon the program would know before wanting to schedule such a course. Gay said the first time the program would probably want to offer it would be in Winter term 2021. The course will be on the schedule for registration but the topic will not yet have been chosen. Once it gets going, the program wants to offer it every fall and winter; it’s just a matter of what topic the course will tackle. Thom asked if Gay thought the program would select a topic by the last day to drop deadline. Gay said yes. Stillman said we try and do things within the constructs of the term schedule because otherwise it creates some complexities. Thom added that it is preferred for programs to use an existing part of term.

Stillman thanked the authors of the proposal for working through the nuances with Enrollment Services. Neely said she appreciates the fact that there’s an alternate path for students who can’t take the immersion class. Gay said the program had already thought about what it would do for a student who needed a different pathway, but added it to the proposal upon Neely’s recommendation. He said he’s already been asked by several seniors in Communication to ask if they could switch to the new major. He told them they wouldn’t necessarily have to do the immersion, but they said that it’s actually something they were really excited about.

Thom noted that COMM 444 is proposed to become repeatable, but previous offerings of the course would not be repeatable. Gay said there were some challenges around the way that course has worked in the past. It used to happen in spring, around the Ashland Independent Film Festival, but there’s been some discussion around bringing it back in the fall as a 2 credit experience around the Varsity World Film Week. He said that there are benefits to doing the project more than once so that’s why the program wants it to be repeatable. Neely said that it will be important to note the previous iterations of the courses so students know they won’t get repeat credits. Thom said she will take care of that in Banner, but Highland wanted to make sure it’s also listed in the syllabus.

Jessup asked about the $90 per course fee. Gay said this came out of conversations the program had about what is needed to maintain the current level and also grow. He said if the program is 75% enrolled in our production classes, then at $50 per class we’ve gotten what we need. Waters said that the OUS used to manage course fees closely; students had to have something to take away from the course. Gay said the program very rarely requires any textbooks and they’re really thoughtful about keeping costs downs for students. He added that course fees can get covered by financial aid.

Thom noted that when the courses get changed to DCIN, the old COMM course numbers will be unavailable for 8 years. Gay said the program knew that would be an implication of starting a new major and they wanted the numbers to make sense and to have room to grow in the new major. He said the program thinks it will be best for both COMM and DCIN to have those new numbers and make space.

Waters asked about the proposed COMM 300B. Gay said students in the Communication Studies concentration will continue to be required to take COMM 300, DCIN students will be required to take COMM 300B, Social Media and Public Engagement concentration students will be able to choose. Waters said that one of the goals has been to allow for students who have different interests to have more choice, so she would recommend not limiting 300B to allow for more crossover.

Waters said there was a bit of discussion about whether the size of the proposal was going to be an impediment in getting it through the various steps for approval. She said she actually thinks it works in the program’s favor to have done so much work to help avoid and address issues in advance. She thanked the program for putting in that work. Oliveri said that one thing she took away from her experience on the Committee last year was the importance of communicating with other departments, and it was good to see that such communication was incorporated in the creation of this proposal.

Oliveri/Wilder moved to approve the proposed new BA/BS in Digital Cinema. The motion passed, 4Y/0N/1A (Wilder abstained because she had not had a chance to review the full proposal).

Neely asked where this major will live in the catalog. Gay said he feels it should be its own section, but it would be good to add a link in the Communication section and also link to the Communication section in the Digital Cinema section.

Jessup said it sounds like it won’t be too expensive to start this new major. She asked if the program has trouble getting term by terms. Gay said that it can be tough but the program has several term by terms it uses who enjoy doing it. Shrewsbury said that he’s had experience as a term by term and it can work well when you’ve got another source of income, but not as much when it’s your only job.

The meeting ended at 2:13pm.