

# Core Curriculum Oversight Committee

**Date:** Wednesday, April 27, 2016

**Time:** 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

**Meeting Location:** Chancellor's Conference Room, LSC, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor

**Attendance:** Ruben Anguiano, Fred Chambers, Sheryl Coffey, Andrea Falcone, Sarah Fields (guest), Jeff Franklin, Phillip Gallegos, Carol Golemboski (chair), Nimol Hen, Rodney Herring (guest), Kent Homchick, George Kacenga, Craig Lanning, John Lanning (guest), Christine Martell, Hans Morgenthaler, Mary Lee Stansifer, Gwen Persons, Tammy Stone, Mary Baitinger (recorder)

## Agenda and Minutes

### 1. Announcements/Updates

- The May, 2016 meeting has been cancelled, and today is the last one for the academic year.
- Mary Baitinger requested that CCOC members update their Outlook Calendars by July so that potential dates for fall, 2016 can be selected.
- Based on the vote from last month (7 approvals) and votes from CAP obtained electronically (2 approvals), all First Year Seminar courses submitted by Ashby Butnor in March were approved for Fall, 2016.

### 2. Approval of minutes from April, 2016 meeting

**Vote:** These were approved by the 8 voting members.

### 3. Student Petition: Hannah LaDow

CCOC members received this petition prior to today's meeting. Carol updated everybody on the request, notably that the institution where the student will be studying is non-accredited. Comments from the group included the thoroughness of the documentation, advisor support, fulfilling the three-week minimum, and the petition meeting the spirit of the requirement. An electronic vote was scheduled, but there was enough voting members in the room to make a decision.

**Vote/Action Item:** The petition passed with 8 votes. Carol will contact the student and the advisor with the results.

### 4. Discussion: Departmental restrictions and possible exceptions to the number of courses offered in the Core

Information about exception to the Core was passed out to all CCOC members. Sarah Fields provided background regarding paired classes, GTPathways and department maximum of core courses (4). John Lanning offered additional insights and comments. Discussion points included:

- If it is appropriate to allow exceptions for departments to expand their number of Core courses beyond four if the restriction creates a disadvantage for certain groups of students.
- Examples of unfair situations were provided by Sarah: 1) A high school student who earns a score of 3 on an AP World History can turn that score into World History credits at CU Denver. Those World History credits are treated differently as AP scores than they are for students who actually enroll in and pass the course on campus. 2) A student who enrolls in College Physics at CU Denver cannot transfer the course to Colorado School of Mines, but a

student at Metro who takes College Physics can because theirs a Core course and ours is not. This is because Physics already has 4 courses in the Core and cannot add another Core course.

- Institutions cannot submit courses for gtPathways that are not in the Core. World History and Physics don't have certain courses in the Core because they have already maxed out their limit (4). Students who transfer out of CU Denver don't get credit for these courses if they've taken them with us because they are not in the Core and therefore, not part of gtPathways.
- The State of Colorado is not consistent with their policy and has often changed its mind when initially approving a request.
- Academic units could request an exception without a formal approval process, but the reason for granting the exception would be less transparent to other academic units and perceived as unfair.
- Alternatively it was discussed that a petition process might prompt departments to submit unwarranted requests for exceptions.
- Physics has requested exceptions in the past but History has not done so, according to the Registrar's Office.
- Departments are limited to offering four Core courses for a discipline that offer a major (dating back to 1988). This was in an attempt to prevent the Core from becoming enormous and to keep high standards for Core courses.
- A challenge occurs when students transfer multiple courses in. How many will be accepted?
- AP and IB courses are currently being reviewed in the Registrar's Office.
- Core courses, in general, are hard to teach due to their size, as well as finding faculty to do so.

**Vote/Action Item:** 10 members of the CCOC voted to adopt general language regarding departmental restrictions and possible exceptions to the number of courses offered in the core. Carol and Jeff will craft the language, which will include a petition process that explains why there is a hardship and/or compelling reasons to make an exception. In addition, data should be collected from each group and included in the proposal.

5. Discussion: Core Composition Reform – Core Comp Reform Summary, 9-15 (Option #1) and Engineering 8-15 (Option #3)

This topic was revisited by the CCOC from earlier discussions during the 2015-2016 academic year. Jeff provided background for the decisions reached by the CCOC (Option #1) and Engineering's recommendation (Option #3) due to their coursework requirements and credits available. Highlights of the group conversation below also includes terminology related to Composition 1 (CO1), Composition 2 (CO2), and Composition 3 or an upper division writing course (CO3):

- The ultimate goal of composition reform is ensuring that seniors graduating have the ability to write.
- Students entering the university (new or transfer) are not prepared and have varying levels of ability.
- Different universities throughout Colorado classify their courses in several ways, and there is no consistent policy or rules (ex. schools and colleges decide which courses to count, classification of CO1 as a remedial course, less transfer students bringing in courses to CSU and CU Boulder are accepted more easily than CU Denver, more upper division writing courses at CU Boulder and testing out rules at all schools of CO 1 or 2).
- CO3 courses are more discipline based and use the meta-major approach.
- The English Department does not have enough staff to fulfill completing CO1 and CO 2 within the first two years before taking upper division courses.

- Potential benefits exist for departments to tailor CO3 (3000 level courses) to their major area
- ACT scores play a role towards fulfilling composition requirements (minimum of 26 points)
- Writing is essential to teach but could be disruptive and voiced by faculty that it interferes with teaching their specific subject matter.
- Funding issues and budgeting shortfalls affect implementing this initiative.
- The potential to integrate composition and writing requirements in the spirit of First Year Seminar courses may evolve over time. The new UNIV 1111 courses may help narrow the gap.
- Could cultural diversity courses be more writing intensive and help alleviate the situation? Could certain engineering courses or a capstone/final project fulfill the upper division writing requirement?
- Writing intensive classes should be recognized or notated in registration materials and on transcripts so that students are aware of the type of course they are taking.

**Decision:** As a result of the conversation, the CCOC group agreed to continue the conversation forward as requested by departments and not select a policy at this time. State policies and GTPathways have not been able to determine a clear path forward, and a university policy will need to be established.

6. Discussion: Proposal from English – CO1 and CO 2

The English Department proposed to the CCOC that any transfer student who matriculates at CU who has completed CO2 but not CO1 should be permitted to take an upper division composition or writing intensive course in order to fulfill the state's two-course composition sequence. These students would not be allowed to take CO1, and the upper division or CO3 course effectively would become a requirement. Rodney Herring, representing the English Department, provided the CCOC with additional details: This request came from the chair of the department; if students take the CLEP and pass, they will have fulfilled the writing requirement; the English Department would need 3 composition classes in the core to fulfill this rule; the goal is to make sure students are moving forward, as having a student who has completed CO2 in a CO1 class disrupts the dynamic of the class content; a hold on registration to guide CO2 students to seeing an advisor might discourage them from taking CO1, but there is no restrictions to enforce this; and creating a designation or attribution for an upper division course that it is writing intensive may be a good incentive.

**Action:** Carol and Jeff will draft a recommendation (but not a requirement) that students in this particular circumstance take an upper division writing course. Included in the wording will be seeking advisor advice, and until circumstances change with regards to teaching writing at the upper division level in other departments (see #5), the CO3 course would need to be taken in the Department of English.