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Minutes for the *Carolina Core* Committee Meeting
March 24, 2015, 12:30-2:00 pm
Thomas Cooper Library, Room 204

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Members Present:
Karen Brown, Mary Ann Byrnes, Kenneth Campbell, Ron Cox Kris Finnigan (Administrative Co-Chair, Andy Gillentine, Brian Habing (ex-officio), Carolyn Jones, Carrie Linder (ex-officio), Manton Matthews, Chris Nesmith, Joe Rackers (Faculty Co-Chair), Kimberly Simmons, Christine Sixta Rinehart, Nicole Spensley (ex-officio)

Members Absent:
Pam Bowers (ex-officio), Sara Corwin, Daniel Freedman, Kimberly Glenn, Stuart Hunter, Allison Jacques, James Kellogg, James Knapp (ex-officio), Gene Luna, Jerry Wallulis,

Specialty Team Chairs Present:
 Pat Gehrke, Sam Hastings, Chris Holcomb, Camelia Knapp, Doug Meade, Saskia Coenen-Snyder

Specialty Team Chairs Absent:
Alexander Beecroft, George Khushf, Mary Robinson, Shelley Smith

Guests:
Wayne Buff, Jed Lyons, Milind Purohit, Kimberly Young

Joe Rackers called the meeting to order. He introduced Kris Finnigan as the new Administrative Co-Chair due to Helen Doerpinghaus' appointment as Interim Provost. The minutes from the November 2014 meeting will be sent out for review at a later date.

Nicole Spensley and Carrie Linder reported on *Carolina Core* Assessment results for Information Literacy (INF) and Foreign Language (GFL). After summarizing the assessment process, Nicole noted several issues that had emerged during the INF pilot tests: in some cases, assignments did not lend themselves well to students' demonstrating the learning outcomes, resulting in inaccurate scores; terminology within the rubric was interpreted variously by different reviewers; and the rubric did not permit reviewers to verify the learning outcome regarding whether students are staying true to their original sources. Nicole noted that over the three pilots for INF, rater disagreement went down and satisfaction ratings increased.

Joe Rackers asked what Specialty Team members should be doing to prepare for upcoming pilots. Nicole recommended working on the rubric, recruiting faculty to be reviewers, and starting to identify sample assignments.

Carrie and Nicole provided details on how the reviewer training sessions are managed. The sessions include people from disciplines represented in core courses. The representation of departments is based on whoever volunteers. Carrie reiterated the importance of instructors understanding that it is not the course or professor that is being assessed, but rather the extent to

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which students are meeting learning outcomes. Sam Hastings noted that the courses have already been determined to meet all *Carolina Core* requirements. She recommended that a Town Hall meeting be held in the fall to report on the assessment results and to provide a forum for discussion of faculty concerns.

Doug Meade noted that courses are increasingly taught by adjuncts and Graduate Assistants, and we should monitor how they are teaching and using *Carolina Core*. Mary Ann Byrnes was less concerned with Graduate Assistants, as they are closely monitored by faculty, and more concerned with how familiar temporary faculty are with the *Carolina Core* and other University policies and regulations.

Kris reported that Honors College courses that count toward the *Carolina Core* are now posted on the Honors College webpage. The list will be updated every semester.

Kris introduced Jed Lyons, who reported on the advisement surveys completed by students and advisors during the preceding months. The purpose of the surveys was to solicit feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of advising at the University. Jed distributed a summary that highlighted results and comments specifically regarding the *Carolina Core*. The data indicate that students and advisors remain confused by the *Carolina Core*, especially overlay courses. Jed alluded to his own College's (Engineering and Computing) issues with overlays for transfer students. There was some discussion about overlay courses, which several members argued were too few in number.

Milind Purohit suggested that Colleges begin creating recommended lists of *Carolina Core* courses/core components for each major to assist with advising efforts. Kris mentioned that DegreeWorks has a feature that allows for mapping out a suggested 8-semester course plan for every major, which could be useful for advisors.

Sam Hastings suggested that advisor training/tools and assessment of the *Carolina Core* be addressed more fully at the fall Town Hall meeting.

Kris introduced a draft revision of the Undergraduate Bulletin policy on Transfer Credit and the *Carolina Core*. Anecdotal evidence has indicated that many departments are making exceptions to *Carolina Core* in the absence of a written policy. The Registrar's office is working on a course equivalency database linking the course lists of USC Columbia with USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate. Brian Habing suggested that faculty and content experts review our current courses before creating a master list or database. Kris noted that the database would be vetted by all four-year campuses prior to implementation.

Mary Ann Byrnes suggested that Loren Knapp and his staff review the proposed Transfer Credit policy revision. The term "overlay" needs to be defined more clearly in the policy, which specifically mentions department, faculty, and student but does not include the role of the College. The policy should also include language about how new courses are added and the Registrar's role in the process.

Jed Lyons recommended that the policy also be reviewed by the Associate/Assistant Deans Council.

Andy Gillentine noted the potential problem that the language as proposed may encourage students to seek exceptions, and that increasing numbers of students may begin requesting that their transcripts be reviewed.

Joe and Kris agreed to send the policy draft to the suggested audiences for vetting.

Given the lateness of the hour, discussion of the website revisions was postponed until the next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the *Carolina Core* Committee will be April 14, 12:30-2:00 p.m. in TCL 204.

Submitted by Kris Finnigan