

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) > General Education Subcommittee

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General Education Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2011

Attendance: Don Adams (Philosophy), Jan Bishop (Physical Education), Emily Chasse (Library), Mary Erdmans (Sociology), Mark Jackson (Biology), Paul Karpuk (English), Jakub Kazecki (Modern Languages), Adele Miller (Mathematics), Robbin Smith (Political Science), Louise Williams (History), Robert Wolfe (Arts and Sciences Dean's Representative)

Motion to approve the Minutes from the February 23 meeting approved (Karpuk/Erdmans).

22. Senate-Mandated Review of By-laws**1. Under "Membership"****3. Five students, one appointed by each Dean of an Undergraduate School and Dean of Graduate Studies, for renewable terms of one year.**

Problem #1: Item 3 is a problem because we rarely have a student member, and when we do, the student does not attend regularly.

Possible Solution: Change the section to read as follows. "A maximum of five students. Deans of the Undergraduate Schools and the Dean of Graduate Studies may each appoint one student for a one-year renewable term of service."

Although the subcommittee noted that there is no precedent for the new language, historically, there has not been any success at getting students to attend these meetings. The general consensus of the subcommittee was in favor of the new language.

2. One member and alternate elected for a two-year term by and from the membership of each academic department, the library, and the academic counselors. All members will serve on at least one subcommittee.

Problem #2: Some Departments fail to notify the Curriculum Committee chair of the departmental representative and alternate in a timely manner. This makes it extremely difficult for the chair to make subcommittee assignments.

Possible Solution: Amend item 2 by adding the following sentence at the end. "If an academic department fails to submit the names of the departmental representative and alternate by May 31, the department chair will be the representative."

The subcommittee supported this new language.

2. One member and alternate elected for a two-year term by and from the membership of each academic department, the library, and the academic counselors. All members will serve on at least one subcommittee.

Problem #3: Attendance is poor. This defeats the faculty oversight of the curriculum.

Possible Solution: Institute the status of "probation" and "member in good standing" by adding item 2e under "Curriculum Committee Procedures" to read as follows. "If a department lacks representation in three consecutive meetings of the Curriculum Committee, then it will be on probation. The Curriculum Committee will notify the department chair of its status, and that if it lacks representation in two more consecutive meetings, the department will no longer be in good standing, and will not be allowed to submit any requests to the Curriculum Committee for the remainder of the school year."

The committee did not wish to improve absolute sanctions against truant departments but did suggest the following changes:

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2. Under "Functions and Responsibilities"**3. To hold an annual review, following notification of the affected departments, of those courses which have not been**

taught for two consecutive years.

Problem #1: Requires an annual review of courses that have not been taught for two consecutive years. In practice, almost all of the courses that have not been taught for two consecutive years are courses that departments wish to retain and plan to offer irregularly. Also, the consequences of deleting a course that a Department wants to retain are worse than keeping a course that a Department no longer uses.

Possible Solution: Change the section to read as follows. "To hold a biennial review, following notification of the affected departments, of those courses which have not been taught for three consecutive years."

The subcommittee supported the change in language but also suggested changing the wording to: "To hold a biennial review, following notification of the affected departments, of those courses which have not been taught for four consecutive years."

3. Under "Curriculum Committee Procedures"

5. The Curriculum Committee may receive and consider suggestions and/or recommendations from the President, the Faculty Senate, or any other properly constituted agency of the University.

Problem #1: This item is out of place. Since it deals with the submission of requests, it belongs under Item 2. Also, it does not specify the proper procedures for requests it mentions. (Plus, it's in the passive voice).

Possible Solution: Delete section 5 and add section 2e, to read as follows. "The President of CCSU, the Faculty Senate, or any other properly constituted agency of the University may submit a request to the Curriculum Committee. All such submissions must abide by the procedures listed in 2a-2d above."

The subcommittee approved moving section 5 and reconstituting it as section 2e.

Automatic re-submission of proposals

Problem #2: There is no law specifying what is to happen to a proposal if the Faculty Senate fails to approve it, or if the President fails to sign it. Presumably, in either eventuality there is some specific reason for the problem, and the benefit of the doubt should be in favor of a proposal that made it through the Curriculum Committee, i.e. the problem can be addressed by modifying the proposal.

Possible Solution: Add one more item to this section of the By-Laws, to read as follows. "Any items in the Curriculum Committee's report to the Faculty Senate that are not approved by the Faculty Senate or are not signed by the President are automatically re-submitted to the Curriculum Committee."

The subcommittee expressed no enthusiasm for an automatic resubmission process in all cases. The subcommittee believed that there was a distinct difference between those cases when the Faculty Senate or the President neglected to act on a proposal and those situations when a curriculum proposal was rejected by either of those two parties.

The subcommittee did support the following language: "Any items in the Curriculum Committee's report to the Faculty Senate that are not acted on by the Faculty Senate are automatically re-submitted to the Curriculum Committee."

Authorization of Requests:

4c. Requests affecting more than one Department shall carry not only an appropriate endorsement but also evidence of review by the other group(s) concerned.

Problem #3: Item 4c is dangerously vague.

Towards a solution: Making vague language precise is often perilous. Once you begin listing specific possibilities, (a) it is sometimes hard to know when you are finished, and (b) the implication will always be that if something is not listed, then it is not constrained by law. A minimal change would be to include one or two examples of what is meant (e.g. when a proposal by one Department involves prerequisites in other Departments).

Problem #4: Larger Worry: the current language of Item 4 is maximally fractious. The language places the burden of all "turf wars" squarely on the Curriculum Committee, when in practice the Curriculum Committee regularly urges squabbling Departments to come to an agreement with each other before bringing disputed proposals to the Committee. Do we want to keep the language this way, or do we want to place a burden on Departments to settle (or try to settle) inter-departmental disputes before the Committee considers such proposals? We need to make a decision on this basic issue before we solve this

problem.

Problem #5: This item says nothing regarding University-wide proposals (either requirements or changes).

Fundamental Concern: Do we think that the burden is primarily on the Curriculum Committee to publicize such proposals and gather responses from Departments and Schools (etc.)? Alternatively, do we think that Departments and Schools bear the burden of making sure that they are adequately represented in the Curriculum process (e.g. by making sure that their representatives attend meetings, and inform their Departments of important business)? We need to make a decision on this basic issue before we solve this problem.

The Subcommittee left this issue unresolved.

4. Under "Curriculum Committee Structure"

1. The work of the Curriculum Committee having increased to the level that efficient and judicious operation of the Committee is no longer possible in the Committee of the whole, the following subcommittee structure is established:

- a. Standing subcommittees are established to review all undergraduate curriculum proposals from the Departments within each School. These subcommittees are: Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Professional Studies, and Technology.**
- b. Each subcommittee shall be composed of all members of the Curriculum Committee representing constituencies within that School, one representative at large from each of the other Schools appointed by the Curriculum Committee Chair, the Dean of the School, one student appointed by the Curriculum Committee Chair, and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, ex-officio. Each subcommittee shall organize itself.**
- c. Each subcommittee shall review all proposals emanating from any of its constituencies and make recommendations, favorable or unfavorable, to the Curriculum Committee. Each subcommittee shall possess the power to recommend amendments, subject to the limitations on the Curriculum Committee itself.**
- d. Each subcommittee shall meet prior to all Curriculum Committee meetings where pertinent items appear on the agenda.**
- e. The minutes of each subcommittee shall be distributed by the Curriculum Committee Chair to members of the Curriculum Committee in advance of Curriculum Committee meetings.**

Problem #1: The subcommittee structure does not clarify the procedure for dealing with proposals that are tabled in one subcommittee but not others.

Possible Solution: Amend item 1c by adding the following sentence at the end. "A proposal tabled in one subcommittee is tabled in all subcommittees, and is automatically re-considered in the next round of meetings."

The Subcommittee that, in essence, this is already the practice and supported clarifying the language in the bylaws the following manner: "A proposal tabled in one subcommittee is tabled in all subcommittees, and is automatically re-considered by all subcommittees in the next round of meetings."

3. The International and Area Studies Committee shall be recognized as the review committee for all international program and course proposals as well as all course proposals for which an "International" designation is requested.

Problem #2: The International and Area Studies Committee is de facto defunct.

Possible Solution A: Delete item 3. Because item 4 empowers the General Education subcommittee "to assist in the refinement, development and implementation of the General Education Program," and because the "International" designation is part of the General Education Program, the functions listed in item 3 will automatically devolve to the General Education Subcommittee. Furthermore, since the General Education subcommittee is empowered to "organize itself" (item 4a), it may, if it wishes, establish its own task force (etc.) to concentrate on the "International" designation.

Possible Solution B: Delete item 3 and add item 4e to read as follows. "The subcommittee shall be recognized as the review

committee for all international program and course proposals as well as all course proposals for which an "International" designation is requested."

The current practice is for the General Education Subcommittee to review all such proposals. The subcommittee believed that the International and Area Studies Committee should retain veto power over any relevant proposals. However, it was not clear to the subcommittee if a two-thirds majority would be necessary to override such a veto. The subcommittee agreed that the language from "Possible Solution B" should be amended to "The General Education Subcommittee shall be recognized as the review committee for all international program and course proposals as well as all course proposals for which an "International" designation is requested."

Problem #3: The By-Laws do not specify a procedure for assigning the General Education credit for a "First Year Seminar."

Possible Solution A: No action. Since item 4 explicitly establishes the General Education subcommittee "to assist in the refinement, development and implementation of the General Education Program," the assignment of General Education credit for a "First Year Seminar" automatically devolves to the General Education subcommittee.

Possible Solution B: Add item 4e to read as follows. "The subcommittee shall be recognized as the review committee for assigning General Education credit to First Year Seminars."

After noting that all FYS courses are standing general education classes, the Subcommittee altered the language in Possible Solution B to read "The subcommittee shall be recognized as the review committee for assigning Study or Skill Areas to First Year Seminars."

Problem #4: the By-Laws do not specify a procedure for determining which courses will get a "D" designation, if the "D" designation becomes part of the General Education Program.

Possible Solution: Add item 4e to read as follows. "The subcommittee shall be recognized as the review committee for assigning General Education credit to all courses seeking such credit. It may establish such entities as committees or review boards that focus on specific aspects of the General Education Program. It may petition the Faculty Senate to establish a subcommittee of the Senate with preeminent or exclusive authority to submit requests for credit in some specific portion of the General Education Program."

Note: this solution will solve three problems at once, i.e. the problem with the "I" designation, the "D" designation, and "FYS" courses.

Some members of the Subcommittee believed it would be useful to add specific categories to the proposed language. "The subcommittee shall be recognized as the review committee for assigning General Education credit to all courses seeking such credit. It may establish such entities as committees or review boards that focus on specific aspects of the General Education Program (such as I, Lit, FYS, and D should it become part of General Education). It may petition the Faculty Senate to establish a subcommittee of the Senate with preeminent or exclusive authority to submit requests for credit in some specific portion of the General Education Program."

However, the general consensus was that I and D might be distinct from FYS and Lit. Jan Bishop and Paul Karpuk agreed to examine this issue in greater detail before the Main Meeting on April 6, 2011.

Motion to adjourn (Smith/Karpuk).

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Minutes compiled by Robbin Smith.