Notes
Core Curriculum Meeting
September 13, 2006

In attendance: C. Alexander, D. Buhrmester, M. Chaffin, M. Coleman, E. Elliott, J. Hoffman, C. Jenkins, S. Ntafos, L. Salter, M. Wilson

Guests: S. Kane, J. McDowell, R. Nelsen, J. Reed

SACS Online Assessment Tool - Demonstration by S. Kane and J. Reed.

This will be the tool faculty will use to generate their assessment plans and their follow-up reports to submit to the CCC.

- The timeline for submitting plans and reports will be:
  -Plans due: 2nd week of the semester
  -Reports due: Two days after semester grades are due

  Faculty will be notified by email as to the status of their report. They can also view it online through this tool.

Courses containing a [v] designation

R. Nelsen stated that these continue to be a problem as some are used to satisfy the core curriculum writing requirement and some are not. Advisors cannot differentiate when an audit is performed and some students are being able to get by without actually fulfilling this requirement.

Many of these courses also don't have a syllabus, which is a SACS requirement.

D. Buhrmester suggested that all courses containing the [v] designation should simply be done away with and this will adhere to the Coordinating Board requirements (which state a course must either be designated as a core curriculum course or not a core curriculum course - "Sometimes" and "sort of" are not acceptable.

J. Hoffman will inform the chemistry department know the CCC is removing the the Chemistry [v] courses from the core curriculum and they will need to develop something to replace it.

Science Lab Assessment

We have to look at how the labs are organized:

- Are they tied to the course? (Students receive one grade for both lecture and lab, or the course grade = the lab grade.)

- Are they stand alone lab courses? (Students are encouraged, but not required to take them at the same time as the lecture. The grade earned in lab is completely separate from the grade earned in lecture.)

The latter must be considered separately for the core curriculum and have a separate syllabus and an independent assessment.

Geosciences lab numbers need to be changed to reflect their connection to the lecture. They currently have a number designating hours and these need to be changed to 0 to indicate that the student does not earn any additional credit or grade for the lab portion of the course.

CCC Assessment Report Issues

D. Buhrmester provided a handout of suggestions for things to consider regarding the development of an annual Core Curriculum Committee report on core curriculum courses.

Buhrmester posed the question as to which focus was appropriate for the overall assessment and reporting:

- A "tally" approach in which we present data including the number of courses that met the expected standards identified in the plan and the number of courses that didn't meet them.
- A "closing the loop" , process-based approach in which we identify areas in each course that we will work to improve and noting that improvement each year, thus documenting the continuous process of tinkering with course objectives, assessment methods, teaching approaches, and standards of success each year.

M. Coleman stated he felt that it should be a combination of the two, with the process approach being based on a set of standards established and followed up with regards to student success and the tallies of classes meeting such standards presented within this context.

R. Nelsen confirmed that SACS is focused primarily on closing the loop and the process for using the assessment data to drive this improvement-based initiative.

C. Jenkins suggested that this component might be realized through having instructors not only respond to the follow-up requests made by the CCC once their reports have been submitted (such as "revise your objectives", "clarify your assessment methods", "change your curriculum"), but that they respond by delineating how they will fulfill these requests, hence stating how they will work to close the loop based on the feedback provided.

The general concern was expressed as to how we can ensure that faculty who receive feedback on their report will actually change their classes and/or teaching – and not simply change what is written on their assessment report.

M. Coleman stated that an ideal scenario would be to have the CCC consist of a rotating group of faculty who then become part of the core curriculum educational process at the university. This group would then reflect the input of a multitude of instructors from the different disciplines.

D. Buhrmester stated that the committee needs to determine the reporting process for the annual report.

R. Nelsen suggested that the CCC needs to identify at least three goals for what to do about the core curriculum. What do we want the core curriculum to be? What purpose should it serve? We should develop three different goals a year and build our report around these.

S. Ntafos suggested that perhaps individuals in each school could coordinate certain classes, such as “History”, “Government”, etc. They would help determine what assessments should be done, what the criteria for success should be, etc.

The decision was made to meet again soon. It is assumed to be next Wednesday, but with numerous CUE issues, M. Coleman suggested we try to find another time to meet.