Call to order: 12:01 pm

Approved minutes from 4 January 2011

Continue to review capstones

Bednarek: Horticulture

- 372 and 374 the only capstone options for Horticulture, more of a seminar course (both courses are very similar), alternate semesters (372 fall, 374 spring)
- Prerequisite: sophomore standing
- Courses are structured with speakers having knowledge of different production systems, styles, etc.
- Second component of both courses: students have the option of taking a 2-week trip to another country (option for 372, requirement for 374)
- Characteristics:
  - Problem solving skills: yes
  - Multidisciplinary: yes
  - Teamwork: yes, group presentations
  - Information resources: yes, lit searches
  - Issues (societal etc.): yes, strength of courses
  - Communication: yes, presentations
- In principle, they meet the capstone characteristics; however, concern about the level of depth and rigor; is this really a capstone experience? What is our expectation (as a committee) in terms of the rigor, depth, etc. of the course? Is a 20-min oral presentation enough? Also, there is a concern about the sophomore standing enrollment (not a higher student level). Class participation?
- Discussion ensued.
  - 20 min presentation: it can be enough, but it depends on what else is going on.
  - only grading info is the grading scale, evaluation of presentation (how it will be evaluated), fairly loose/subjective rubric
  - is it the charge of this committee to start meddling that deeply? Agrees that this is a problem, but how far should we police this?
  - CALS Capstone Criteria don’t contain a great amount of detail, unlike Comm B requirement (# of pages)
  - concern about sophomores & younger students taking capstones; should not happen; we should ask departments what students do when they leave the university
- should we add a statement that says capstones should be limited to seniors or near-seniors?
- other smaller issues: 2-wk trip-no set evaluation; trip required for 374, money an issue? Limits flexibility
  - Pfatteicher: addressing how much we should police: we can give concerns or warnings; concerns more of a set of friendly suggestions; we may want to have a 1-2 page “best practices” written summary at end of process
  - Sebastian will rework summary
- Bohnhoff: AAE
  - Currently have a “stop-gap” attempt to meet capstone characteristics (allowing students to count 300+ level course as capstone, would prefer students to identify course before taking it, approved by Tom Cox), working to change it
  - Do currently have AAE 500, professor retired in 2008, AAE has had a lot of professors that have retired
  - Some advisors (Tom Cox) require students to summarize experience in powerpoint presentation, most advisors do not do this; students therefore get different amounts of benefit out of the capstone experience
  - Bohnhoff’s suggestions:
    - More specific list of learning objectives, reporting requirements, page requirements, presentation at end
    - Special course at college level (i.e. Inter-Ag 500), form small interdisciplinary groups to work on problems supplied by outside ppl, alumni, retired, etc.
    - CALS-wide capstone presentation event
- Hayslett: An Sci/Poultry Sci
  - An Sci 435 Proseminar: required capstone for both majors
  - Only seniors
  - Lectures & student presentations, choose and research a topic
  - Overall feeling: some issues in the course are similar to independent research as a capstone issues (each student does own topic)
  - Specific characteristics:
    - Problem solving: yes
    - Multidisciplinary: not sure, doesn’t seem like it does a good job in lecture portion of course (mostly research methods and professional skills, lit research has potential to do this)
    - Teamwork: no; no evidence for teamwork; research/presentations individual; don’t know about classroom activities
    - Information resources: yes, definitely
    - Issues (societal etc.): yes, for scientific & professional; others, not explicitly discussed
    - Communication: yes, individual presentation
  - Overall, meets most of the requirements; problems-some of the issues not being addressed, no teamwork, should maybe have some more oversight, more multidisciplinary
  - An Sci student demographic has changed a lot over the past 10-20 years
Fadl: has sat in on some of the capstone courses; presentations consist of 40-45 min presentation and 15-20 min discussion afterwards; a lot of range in topic choices (multidisciplinary?)

Other discussion: why is the capstone not focused on field research?

Motion to adjourn Benarek, 2nd by Bohnhoff

Adjourned 1:27 pm