

2/1/11

CALS Curriculum Committee Minutes

By Maria Stubbings

Present: Stier, Bednarek, Bohnhoff, Fadl, Hayslett, Paustian, Sandberg, Pfatteicher, Kumerow, Pearson, Stubbings

- 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