



Faculty Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 7, 2016

Meeting Time & Place: 3:35pm in Heritage Common

Called to order: 3:38 PM

- I. **Acceptance of the draft minutes** of the October 5, 2016 meeting.
Faculty became aware of a few things to be fixed, will table the acceptance until February after revisions have been made.

- II. **Reports**
 - A. **President**

(The report will be distributed via email before the meeting. The president will be available to answer questions during this meeting.)

Q: Kate Harrington expressed concern with the website project and thought the timing was unfortunate because they all put a lot of time/effort into putting information for the site together but it can't be found when you go onto the new website. She would like an update as to when the website will be completed. Rich answered that the new site was developed by M5, and the goal was to be able to allow everyone access to update on their own, but to make that work on WordPress it needs to be on a multisite and it was delivered on a single instance site. So to hit the level on the multisite they need to do over 200 provisions, and only 63 had been created by the time the site went live. Rich and his team are working on creating a mirrored version to work on the bugs that come up before they completely switch over to the new site.

Q: Ann McLellan would like to know who wrote the content, and what departmental information from the old site will be migrated to the new site? Robyn answered that the content was mostly written by M5 and they are addressing the script. All of the content will be available when it gets migrated to the new site (most likely the first week of January).

Q: Linda Levy would like to know if faculty would still be able to edit some or all of the content and when? Robyn answered yes. The idea is to put control back into the faculty's hands. Faculty should be able to go in and edit right away if you know how to work WordPress, otherwise they will be holding workshops during January Jamboree.

Q: Heather would like to know what they should do know to solve critical problems because they are having issues with students accessing applications online. Jason Moran answered that they are currently working with some potential students, but if the information on the site is incorrect please contact him immediately so his team can fix it. Ava Tyler can make small changes to the site now, but more wholesale changes will happen by January. Nick Sevigny made a comment that he had been running around for weeks because students were told to contact him about content, and so he contacted Jason and the problem was fixed right away (really appreciated it). ALWAYS TRY MORE THAN ONE AVENUE TO GET THINGS DONE.

Q: Gary would like to make note that the link to the Lamson Library has disappeared, and would like for it to come back. Typically it is found under Academics and it is no longer there. Mike Davidson will advocate putting the link to the library on the home page (it is currently under Students drop down menu).

Q: Chris Chabot wanted to know if it would possible to go back t the old website and work on the issues with new website offline. President Birx answered that both sites are currently running, but the old landing page is not there – he will look into, though. Rich added in that from a technical perspective the old site does still exist, and they will talk with Paula Lee to see if they can go back to old site and get back to the group.

B. Academic Deans

(The report will be distributed via email before the meeting. Dean Parker will be available to answer questions during the meeting.)

None.

C. Athletics Council

Ryanne Carmichael, Chair

(There will be a short in-person report. Supporting documents are attached at the end of this agenda)

Ryanne had a couple of issues to talk about regarding policies. The first is regarding excused absence policy for student athletes. Game schedules for the semester are supposed to be delivered to the students as soon as they are available and it is the student's responsibility to communicate with their professor IN PERSON their schedule and the implications of missing classes. They are required to give proper notice, however, there has been some confusion because some students have given proper notice (according to university policy) and the Athletics Council isn't sure all faculty is clear on these policies.

Q: Scott asked if there was any upper limit to classes a student can claim to be excused from. (It starts to affect the grades of others when they miss so many and are working on group projects). Lauren said she had faculty to her, and talked to the student/coaches and moved schedules around to accommodate the class. They are very willing to work hard to not miss the class (course work comes first), and she encourages communication between everyone.

Q: Barbara asked if there was a separate upper limit that could be enforced by the instructor (ex. can't miss more than 20% of classes).

Q: Sandra Gamble said an absence is still an absence and grades will suffer, so what are they supposed to do? Ryanne reiterated the need to plan ahead. Sandra said that answer is very piecemeal/disorganized at the beginning of the semester and needs to have stricter parameters. Lourdes suggested that there is an Athletics Council and maybe it would be a good idea to bring this question up with them.

D. Principal Policy Making Committees

(There will be short in-person reports from the Curriculum and General Education committees. Written reports by the Curriculum (pages 5-7), General Education (page 8), and Academic Technology (page 9) committees are included with this agenda. All committee chairs will be available to answer questions during the meeting.)

- Hillary Swank, Curriculum Committee Chair

There has been a lot of questions about the four-credit model and transitioning. The bottom line, however, is that they've been told that the system is ready to support the new model. The main idea to take away is that majors shouldn't grow and the overall credits will remain at 120. Experimental courses should go to the Deans first for approval and then goes to the Curriculum Committee as a second step.

Q: Liz Ahl asked if they could change programs as they go. For instance, could you propose a programmatic set of changes and stall the date of implementing it? Could they work on getting approval without having a date set yet? Hilary answered that it would be challenging to not have a date, but committee can discuss it for the next meeting.

Q: Faculty member asked when the new experimental course policy would be going into effect? Hilary answered that they haven't voted on it yet, so at least not until next semester.

Q: John Krueckeberg mentioned that he didn't think the idea of limiting second running's of experimental courses to have to skip a semester in the name of getting an official evaluation. It is limiting to offer a class one semester and then have to offer an entirely different course the next semester. Hilary answered that evaluations should happen before the course can occur again.

Many course were listed on live offering before they were brought to the committee after the first offering, and they felt it was important to take a semester in between to evaluate.

Q: Faculty member was concerned about second offering, as COBA moves forward they are working with outside partners and need more continuous movement of experimental courses. Saying it can run one semester and not the next would result in a serious setback with outside partners and current inside staff. Hillary answered that they will clarify how everything will work at the next meeting. There was a suggestion made that perhaps the course could run for two semesters before an evaluation?

- Wendy Palmquist, General Education Committee Chair

The minutes from the 30th meeting will be coming soon. Wendy wanted to note what they have received from Chairs, and they are in the process of considering internal approvals for students that want to switch majors that don't have approved transfer courses. They are planning on talking to David Zehr about this issue to get input on how he used to handle these types of situations. They have gotten emails about credits for General Education courses and are tinkering within the model they have to make it fit better into the Cluster model.

Q: Linda Levy said they have found the number of students that ask for student requests about courses that are not in their home discipline, and instead taking a different similar course to be applied to that major. How should we handle other General Education courses? Who should sign off on these, and how will it be consistent?

Q: A faculty member asked if there will be a motion later coming about this issue? Wendy answered that they are not sure it requires a "motion" per say, but the Chairs asked them to do it so they will be talking about it at the next meeting.

III. Old Business

None.

IV. New Business

A. Resolutions of Standing Committees

None.

B. Other New Business

1. Topic: Block scheduling (Dennis Machnik)

Dennis would like the faculty to have a chance to discuss if we want to go to block scheduling, with the intention of having a vote in a future meeting.

Note: A vote in an upcoming meeting would most likely be a vote of support, rather than approval. For your information, this is what our bylaws say about the role of the faculty:

Article II.B

The distinctive responsibility of the faculty is the academic mission of the university. In particular, the Statement asserts in Section V. The Academic Institution: The Faculty that, "The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances and for reasons communicated to the faculty.

(The Statement refers to the 1966 Statement on Government of Colleagues and Universities, described in Article II.A)

Kathy: this is a premature conversation because there has been no proposal for it. Dennis answered that is always too early or too late, and doesn't want to get into that mess again. There has been some good conversation about the new schedule and maybe it's not too late to see a draft of the schedule.

Some faculty don't like the four-day schedule because none of their current classes fit into it and they will be forced to revise.

Ann made note that a four-credit model motion was passed last Spring and it stated that administration would explore different models before finalizing anything. She agrees that a draft should be made public soon.

Faculty members also stressed that many students are working out in the field up to 40 hours a week and the new model doesn't leave a lot of flexibility for those students.

Jeremiah Duncan said that he believes they saw a make-up of the advisory group, but who is one this group? Are there any faculty on the group? Robyn answered that the stage they are currently at is modelling for maximum flexibility (they have Joyce working with Rich to make this happen). Try not to look at the blocks as something you are stuck in but rather blocks you build with. She doesn't know if there is a "group" per say, but they ARE working on it.

President Birx stated that the reason it is somewhat vague is because it is a decision they are trying to come to jointly. The decision will be made mostly by the administrative side, but if you look at his report he puts it into the context of a discussion with faculty. Technically it states in the Bylaws that in the end it is the President's decision, but ONLY in adverse situations do his decisions trump the faculty.

2. Topic: The formation of a calendar advisory task force (faculty member Jeremiah)

Jeremiah would like to have a conversation about forming "a task force to provide recommendations on aligning our academic calendar breaks to those of the surrounding schools"

Note: Per the faculty bylaws, the signature of at least ten faculty members is needed to form a task force that has not been requested by the steering committee, a principal policy making committee or the administration. Jeremiah will be seeking to collect signatures during/after the faculty meeting. The proposed task force charge, composition and timeline are included with this agenda.

Jeremiah only needs ten signatures to bring this to the Steering Committee. Some faculty members are opposed to changing Spring breaks, because the design of the university schedule is to serve the students not the faculty. Spring break as it stands is halfway through the semester, if they were to make breaks during February and April it wouldn't meet the needs of the students.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45PM

Respectfully submitted,

**Emily Evans
Office Support
Office of Academic Affairs
Plymouth State University
603-535-3373**

ATTACHMENTS

Athletic Philosophy of Plymouth State University:

Plymouth State University endorses the NCAA Division III Philosophy:

NCAA Division III Philosophy Statement

Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience. They also seek to establish and maintain an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among their student-athletes and athletics staff. (Revised: 1/10/95)

Class Attendance Policy (effective May 2008)

Plymouth State University students are held accountable for meeting all course requirements, which may include both in-class and out-of class experiences, as well as both individual and group-based activities. Students must therefore realize that they are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of courses in which they are enrolled. During the first regularly scheduled class meeting, all instructors must explain class attendance policies and explicitly document, in writing on a course syllabus, whether or not unexcused absences will be used in computing grades. Students are urged to recognize the importance of participation in class activities and to be aware that their course grade may be affected by unexcused absences. It is the option of the instructor to determine the attendance policy for classes and to decide whether to allow students to make up missed work for unexcused absences. Unless the course instructor states otherwise, students should assume that there will be academic consequences for every absence deemed unexcused by the instructor.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Student absences are defined as excused or unexcused. Unexcused absences are those that occur without adequate reason. Unexcused absences may be used in the computation of grades.

Excused absences are defined as absences stemming from (a) participation in University sponsored activities and (b) compelling and extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control. Documented excused absences may not be used in the computation of grades. Instructors must allow students to make up missed examinations, quizzes, writing assignments, and other course work for documented excused absences. Examples of excused absences include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Documented student's participation in university-sponsored events
2. Student's documented illness
3. Student's documented injury
4. Documented death in a student's immediate family
5. Documented illness or injury in a student's immediate family
6. Documented student's required military duty
7. Documented student's required jury duty

Instructors are not obligated to excuse an absence if a student fails to provide requested documentation. Instructors also reserve the right to determine when the number of excused absences exceeds a reasonable limit to the extent that it significantly interferes with a student's satisfactory mastery of course content/skills. Excused absences do not exempt a student from course requirements, and therefore in circumstances that entail excessive excused absences the instructor may reasonably recommend that a student consider withdrawal from a course.

Procedures for Reporting Absences

It is the **responsibility of the student**, where possible, to notify instructors regarding absences for whatever reason or period of time. This should take place before leaving campus, during an illness or upon return to campus. If there are extenuating circumstances that make such communication difficult, students should contact the Undergraduate Studies Office. The Undergraduate Studies Office will send absence notices to a student's instructors, but such notices are for information purposes only and do not serve as documentation for absences.

Additional Attendance Considerations

Students are reminded that they have the responsibility to choose their extracurricular activities at times not in conflict with their academic classes.

Students who do not appear for the first class of the semester and do not notify the instructor before the class meeting that they will be absent, may be dropped from the course by the instructor and that their place may be given to another student. Students should not, however, assume they have been dropped if they miss the first class.

Student teachers are subject to the same attendance rules as the regularly employed cooperating teachers, within the bounds of the University catalog. Absences because of sickness of the individual or a family member can be excused by the principal or superintendent of schools. Absences for other causes have to be agreed upon jointly by the principal or superintendent and the University's Coordinator of Teacher Certification and Clinical Experiences.

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### **Report from the Curriculum Committee**

*(submitted by Hilary Swank, committee chair)*

### **Transitioning to Four-Credit Model**

The committee welcomes proposals for program changes to the four-credit model. The deans have indicated that the system can support such changes. The committee has developed the following guidelines for departments as they prepare proposals:

- The overall degree requirements must remain at 120
- The requirement for a *minimum* of 15 free elective credits remains in effect
- The degree program should not increase in size (number of required credits.) Change to a four-credit model should rearrange existing content, rather than merely add content, open lab, or field experiences to existing three credit courses. Proposals should demonstrate how existing three credit program content maps onto the proposed four-credit program.

### **Proposed changes to Experimental Course Procedures**

The Curriculum Committee intends to alter the experimental course proposal procedures in the ways indicated below. The committee wants to encourage curricular innovation and experimentation, but prevent the experimental course process from becoming a way to circumvent faculty oversight of the curriculum (via the Curriculum Committee).

### **Experimental Course Proposal**

An experimental course is one which lies outside the area of an already established course either in terms of perspective, subject matter, or audience.

- 1<sup>st</sup> offering: Experimental Course proposals are ~~submitted to and~~ approved by the ~~Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs~~ **Department, the Dean** (who may also approve a General Education attribute) **and the Curriculum Committee. The instructor is expected to conduct a course evaluation at the close of**

**the experimental course offering. A summary and interpretation of the evaluation are then forwarded with the Experimental Course Report to the Department Chair, the Dean, and--if a 2nd offering is planned--to the Curriculum Committee.**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> offering: Experimental Course proposals are submitted to the **Department, the Dean (who may also approve a General Education attribute) and the Curriculum Committee**, with an Experimental Course Report of the first offering and student evaluations. **An experimental course cannot be offered in the semester immediately after the first offering since the instructor will not have an opportunity to collect and interpret course evaluations until the end of the first offering.**

Experimental courses are not included in the Academic Catalog.

- The Registrar's office enters Experimental Courses into the appropriate schedule of classes (Fall, Winterim, Spring, summer).

The syllabi for Experimental courses should be kept on file by the department offering the course so when students need information about these courses, it can be accessed easily, even after several years have passed.

Current version:

### **Experimental Course Proposal**

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- 2<sup>nd</sup> offering: Experimental Course proposals are submitted to the Curriculum Committee, with an Experimental Course Report of the first offering and student evaluations

Experimental courses are not included in the Academic Catalog.

- The Registrar's office enters Experimental Courses into the appropriate schedule of classes (Fall, Winterim, Spring, summer).

The syllabi for Experimental courses should be kept on file by the department offering the course so when students need information about these courses, it can be accessed easily, even after several years have passed.

### **Requests for Information**

The Curriculum Committee requests that departments inform the committee of any significant anticipated proposals and the planned timeline for submission. This will help the committee to plan its work for the rest of this academic year and beyond. Email [hkswank@plymouth.edu](mailto:hkswank@plymouth.edu) with a summary of planned changes.

In order to be as productive as possible in adapting to Integrated Clusters the committee requests faculty input on the following:

- The kinds of credit-bearing cluster experiences you hope to provide students and the perceived existing barriers to doing so
- Ideas for procedural and structural changes to curriculum that you believe would be productive

General inquiries and suggestions are, of course, always welcome. Send your input to [hkswank@plymouth.edu](mailto:hkswank@plymouth.edu)

### **Reminders, Meeting Times and Deadlines**

This is a reminder about meeting days/times, submission deadlines, and procedures. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about the committee generally or about specific proposals you wish to bring before the committee.

Remaining Curriculum Committee meetings this academic year will be as follows at the specified locations:

December 16<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room  
February 17<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room  
March 17<sup>th</sup> Lamson Tower Room  
April 21<sup>st</sup> Lamson Tower Room  
May 19<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room

The committee will be voting electronically on all proposals. Only those proposals requiring discussion (as determined by committee members) will be voted on in-person at committee meetings.

Proposals will be collected and sent out for electronic votes after each of the following deadlines:

December 7<sup>th</sup>  
January 25<sup>th</sup>  
February 8<sup>th</sup> **CATALOG DEADLINE** for proposals needing approval beyond departments.  
February 22<sup>nd</sup> **CATALOG DEADLINE** for changes needing only department approval.  
March 8<sup>th</sup>  
April 12<sup>th</sup>  
April 26<sup>th</sup>  
May 10<sup>th</sup>

Please submit one electronic file (PDF) of all **complete** materials (with appropriate required signatures, recorded votes, etc.) for each proposal to [hkswank@plymouth.edu](mailto:hkswank@plymouth.edu) by the deadline indicated. When your department has one or more items on the agenda, I will inform the department chair if there are questions and if a representative will need to attend the meeting.

Course proposal forms are available here:

<http://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/faculty-committees-and-appointed-groups/curriculum/forms-and-documents/>

\*\*\*These forms will continue to be updated as we adjust to the new administrative structure so please retrieve the most up-to-date forms from the link above instead of recycling proposal forms stored on your desktop.\*\*\*

The syllabus checklist can be found at the link below. *There is a new ADA statement, sent to all faculty by David Zehr that must be used.* The checklist has not yet been updated to account for the new statement.

<https://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/files/2010/08/PSU-Syllabus-checklist-Appvd-06Feb2012.pdf>

There are two useful documents that will help you as you prepare proposals. The first is the Curriculum Change Procedures document and the second is the 2016 Curriculum Guide. They are both available at the following link:

<http://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/faculty-committees-and-appointed-groups/curriculum/forms-and-documents/>

Please make sure any new or revised course syllabi attend to all items on the list. Syllabi which do not include the items on this checklist will be returned for revision/completion. Most syllabi we see at present already include most if not all of these items – it is not an onerous checklist. If you have any questions about any of the items on this list, please send them to me.

With electronic voting, the committee hopes to have more time during monthly meetings to discuss general curricular matters related to the four credit model, clusters, and changes to general education.

Thank you.

-Hilary K. Swank