

Agenda: November 17, 2017

2017-2018 Committee Members and Regular Guests

Gayle Goudy (Co-Chair), Chad Galuska (Co-Chair), Andrew Przeworski (Secretary), Thomas Carroll, Garrett Davidson, Douglas Friedman, Nenad Radakovic, Kathleen Rogers, Wayne Smith, Lynn Cherry, Megan Gould, Mary Bergstrom, Julie Dahl, Jerry Mackeldon, Franklin Czwazka

Guests

- Sara Frankel, Studio Art (FrankelS@cofc.edu)
- Tracy Burkett, Sociology (BurkettT@cofc.edu)
- Godfrey Gibbison, School of Professional Studies (gibbisonga@cofc.edu)
- Kevin Keenan, Urban Studies (Keenank@cofc.edu)

Old Business

1) Approve minutes from October meeting

2) October Curriculum Proposals (all approved by senate)

- CITA: proposal to correct the degree requirements of CITA to align with your original intentions
- CSCI: proposal to renumber CSCI 381 to 281.
- FREN: proposals to create 4 new courses ([FREN 334](#), [FREN 335](#), [FREN 336](#), [FREN 337](#)), replacing 4 existing courses ([FREN 320](#), [FREN 321](#), [FREN 326](#), [FREN 327](#)), remove the capstone requirement ([FREN 495](#)), and modify their programs accordingly ([French major](#), [French education major](#), [French minor](#), [Business Language minor in French](#)).

3) Repeatable Variable Topics (Special Topics) Courses

Vote to arrange a meeting with the chairs of the following committees to draft a motion which, if passed by the Senate, will change the oversight of Variable / Special Topics courses to the faculty rather than the Registrar's office and either establish or assign a committee to provide faculty oversight to special and variable-topics courses.

- Academic Standards, Admissions, and Financial Aid (?)
- Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness
- Curriculum
- General Education

Rational: We have been through two drafts of the Guidelines for the Use of Repeatable Variable Topics Courses since April (several more in previous years) and have discussed the issue for at least three hours with no consensus. Some of the problems include:

- Which courses are subject to the 3-in-5 rule?
 - The FCC has tried to (re)define the characteristics of Special Topics and Variable topics without success. For instance, is there a fundamental difference between VT and ST courses (other than the shopping)? Should the distinction between variable topics courses that are reviewed and those that are not be whether a student could take the course more than once?
- Special Topics were originally intended to be a number that allows faculty to experiment with a new subject or departments to take advantage of an expert in the field who will teach for a limited time. For this reason, many special topics proposals are essentially a

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shell of a course with very general objectives. The approval of such a course is generally the example submitted and we trust that subsequent iterations of the course will be similar in rigor.

- Special Topics courses are not used as experimental one-of courses in practice. Many programs rely on the changing nature of ST courses to add variety and depth to their programs. The flexibility of these courses should be preserved. However, when special topics courses are used in this way (not shell courses), they should be vetted. The 3-in-5 guideline was intended to offer this vetting process.
- Current guidelines task the Registrar's office with monitoring the 3-in-5 guideline. While the Registrar's Office is happy to run reports, the judgment of whether or not a ST or VT course taught in different semesters is the same course should rest on the faculty, not the Registrar's office.
- Once the oversight of the ST/VT courses is changed to the faculty, how is the oversight to work in practice? In Spring 2018, there are 144 courses that are variable topics in nature. If this is to be monitored over a five-year period, this will be a very time-consuming effort. Possible solutions proposed by the FCC:
 - chairs report variable topics courses annually
 - the FCC reviews only special topics courses (until we determine a reason to review all variable topics courses) [Realistically, the FCC does not have the time to do this while also looking at proposals.]
 - a faculty senate committee is formed with the task of solving these problems.

New Business

4) **Discussion** regarding the URST 4+1 accelerated Master's program with the existing MPA program

5) Curriculum Proposals Review and Vote

- a) **ARTS 430 Independent Study:** remove the restriction that the course is repeatable up to 6 credit hours.
- b) **SOCY 260** Development of Social Thought: change the title and description of a current course.
- c) **Bachelor of General Studies:** create a new degree program to allow students to earn a degree without completing a major and two new associated courses (BGST 101 and BGST 400).

Upcoming Business

- **Next FCC Meeting:** Friday, January 26, 2017, from 3:00-5:00 pm in 201 Sterns