

Educational Policy Committee September 24, 2021 Minutes

In attendance were Jim Barber, Candice Benjes-Small, Annie Blazer, Susan Bosworth, Magali Compan, Jim Deverick, Josh Erlich (chair), Matt Haug, Sallie Marchello, Denise Ridley-Johnston, Cory Springer, Kristin Wustholz, Amy Xia, and Tom Zhang.

Josh called the meeting to order at 1500 EDT and reminded the Committee that Ben Boone is seeking additional student members.

Consent Calendar

The minutes from Sept. 17 were approved by unanimous consent.

RELG 344 Religion and Sports in the U.S., a COLL 350 application, was approved by unanimous consent.

Discussed Agenda Items

1. New Course Application: CHEM 300 Global Infection Diseases

CHEM 300 was proposed as a new course to be offered on a recurring basis. The course evolved from a CHEM 360 topics offering, but the recurring nature of the course combined with its study abroad component prompts the Chemistry Department to seek a separate, permanent course number. Kristin said that the Department may prefer a 36x number as an alternative to reduce confusion with COLL 300 courses. Even if a later application for a COLL 300 designation is added to this course (Magali expressed anticipation of this), there may be a need for different course numbers for future variants. Cory says that some departments use COLL 300 catch-all course numbers, but Kristin believes that the Chemistry Curriculum Committee would prefer the 36x EPC votes today on the course as proposed, acknowledging that the course number may change.

The Committee approved the course by unanimous vote.

2. Review of Incomplete Policy

Continuing from the previous meeting's tabled discussion of FAC's request to provide more robust guidance on when faculty should issue incompletes, Josh proposed draft language based largely on Cornell's policy with additional editing by Matt Haug. Josh heavily emphasized EPC's concern that any changes to the incomplete policy at the present time might not be well-received because of the potential to increase stress loads on students in an uncertain environment. Also, a P/F grade task force is still working on long-term policies that may be relevant in relation to incompletes. The Committee reviewed the following proposed language:

A grade of Incomplete (I) may be given only if the following conditions are met:

1. The student has completed a substantial amount of coursework at a passing level and would have a reasonable expectation of passing the course if the un-finished work were completed; and

2. circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., unexpected illness or family emergency) have prevented them from completing all course requirements on time.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for a grade of Incomplete. Reasons for requesting one must be approved by the instructor and be consistent with the two conditions above. An Incomplete may not be given merely because a student fails to complete all course requirements on time.

Kristin asked whether instructors should receive guidance on how to evaluate the incomplete, specifically with respect to resolution timelines, including consequences if such timelines are not met. Sallie presented the current policy from the Catalog for comparison because it includes information on timelines:

Incomplete Grades: An incomplete grade indicates that an individual student has not completed essential course work because of illness or other extenuating circumstances. This includes absence from the final examination and postponement of required work with approval of the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor to complete the work by a specified date (first full week of the upcoming semester for deferred examinations). A grade of "I" automatically becomes "F" if the work is not completed by the last day of classes of the following regular semester, or if the postponed work has not been completed satisfactorily by the date specified by the professor. Incomplete grades granted because of a deferred exam should be changed early in the following semester. The instructor may grant a one-semester extension under exceptional circumstances; after this extension, the "I" reverts to an "F" if sufficient work is not completed to warrant assignment of another letter grade by the instructor. A degree will not be conferred if an incomplete ("I") grade is on the student's record.

EPC is considering guidance on when it is appropriate to issue incompletes without impacting the resolution times. Matt suggested that we are effectively just replacing the first sentence of the Catalog description with the proposed new wording. Kristin suggested researching beyond the example from Cornell to see other options as well. Josh mentioned that in his separate search for P/F policies, most of what he encountered was similar to the Cornell language. Kristin suggested that due diligence requires looking at more options.

Sallie asked if this is a policy change or just guidance but agreed that there is a lack of consistency and expressed support for more targeted guidance. Sallie mentioned functionality in Banner that can provide alternative default resolutions beyond "F," but W&M policy is that I converts to "F." Josh asked if this could be combined with P/F task force. Sallie thinks they are separate issues but input from the group may be useful.

Josh volunteered to collect additional policy examples in response to Kristin's due diligence concerns and reiterated that more restrictive policy changes are not appropriate in the current climate, especially with a more flexible P/F

policy likely pending. Sallie mentioned that the Committee on Academic Status is considering changes to the continuance policy wherein students with multiple incompletes may be restricted on credit loads until the incompletes have been resolved. Josh will follow-up with Wilmarie Rodriguez in Dean of Students office to invite CAS's input.

The Committee tabled this item for continued discussion.

3. *COLL Course Language Inclusion on Syllabi*

The Committee discussed whether Curriculog application pages should include language suggesting as best practice that COLL course syllabi include information on COLL objectives and how the course meets them. Josh said that some have expressed support for a formal policy that EPC will not approve COLL courses without syllabus language. Josh expressed hesitation for this because EPC has no similar policies for other courses or programs in place. He prefers suggesting the inclusion as best practice because he thinks its omission from syllabi is usually an oversight. Josh proposed the following language be added to Curriculog forms for all COLL course applications:

It is best practice for syllabi of COLL courses to include the description of the corresponding COLL requirement, and to clearly indicate how the course satisfies the goals of that COLL requirement.

Annie approved of the language. Amy seconded the approval. Josh expressed concern that Ben Boone is absent today and may have input on this matter but called a vote.

The Committee approved the changes to the Curriculog forms by unanimous vote. Cory will implement the changes to the forms for new applications. Existing applications will not be affected.

Josh adjourned the meeting at 1532 EDT.

Submitted for the record by Jim Deverick.