

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
Academic Quality and Workforce

Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee

September 15, 2017

Summary Notes

Members present: Edward Byerly, Janna Chancey, Elizabeth Garcia, Homer Guevara, Sheila Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, Elizabeth Howard (via phone), Nancy Martin, Richard Miller (Co-Chair), Julie Penley (Co-Chair), John Quintanilla, José Rojas, Ester Rumsey, Janet Tareilo, Monica Villarreal

Members absent: Daniel Brown, Sonia Flores, William Harlow, Elva LeBlanc, Stephanie Legree-Roberts, Teri Longacre, Kristin Spizzirri

Visitors: Larry Abraham (UT-Austin), Cynthia Ferrell (Texas Association of Community Colleges), Marilyn Kaplan (UT-Dallas), Kevin Lemoine (UT System), Rissa McGuire (Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors), Jennifer Morgan (UT-Austin), Norma Perez (Houston Community College), Kerry Schindler (Ranger College)

Coordinating Board staff: Reinold Cornelius, Assistant Director, James Goeman, Assistant Director, Stacey Silverman, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Melinda Valdez, Program Director

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Orientation for the Work of the UEAC

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m., followed by members and visitors introducing themselves. Melinda Valdez, Ed.D., Coordinating Board staff, gave an orientation about committee operations and proceedings.

2. Election of Committee Chairs

Members nominated Richard Miller and Julie Penley to be Co-Chairs of the UEAC and elected them with unanimous vote.

3. Consideration of Summary Notes From the April 21, 2017 Meeting

Dr. Rumsey made a motion to accept the summary notes from the 2017 April meeting, seconded by Janna Chancey, and the committee voted unanimously to accept.

4. Update on the Pathways Project, Texas Association of Community Colleges

Guest speaker Cynthia Ferrell, Ph.D., Executive Director, Texas Success Center, Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC), presented an update on the progress of TACC's Texas Pathways Project (TPP). She first reported to UEAC about the TPP in September 2016. The TPP aligns with the goals of the Coordinating Board's Texas Core Curriculum (TCC), Fields of Studies (FOS), and the issue of transfer of students. It is a five-year, multi-million dollar project. There are currently 38 community colleges in Texas involved with the work of the TPP, with 8 additional colleges committed to do so.

Dr. Ferrell explained that the four-year old Texas Success Center promotes the TPP as a strategy to increase students' credentials that lead to meaningful careers, as well as to increase awareness among universities. She explained how student success data had significantly improved in the last 12 to 13 years. She cited how half of the community colleges in the state have worked with Achieving the Dream, another student success

program, and how the data from that program informed current education leaders about the evolution of Texas' student success policy and practices since 2000.

The Community College Research Center at Columbia University reported how community colleges can align programs for student success by focusing on students' educational experiences across the full education system, beginning with K-12 partners and ending with university and industry partners. The TPP has embraced this idea in their work, from when an 8th grader chooses an endorsement to when he/she enters a family-sustaining career. Dr. Ferrell discussed the meaning of 8th grade endorsements or meta-majors as a fields of study context that attract students' interest, allowing for meaningful exploration. The essential practices of the TPP include clarifying a student's path by helping students choose, enter, and stay on the path while ensuring learning is taking place.

The TPP is organized around four major activities: 1) opportunities to learn from national partners/experts in the field, which includes two annual statewide workshop institutes, 2) regional meetings, 3) annual training at the Board of Trustees Institute, and 4) knowledge development for management in Texas via research fellows.

Dr. Ferrell invited members to share how pathways projects are developed in their individual campus/district. Representatives from Tyler Junior College, Houston Community College, Victoria College, El Paso Community College, Sul Ross State University, and Stephen F. Austin State University reported about their initiatives and experiences.

Efforts focus on aligning the curriculum with input from K-12 partners and through pathways partnerships with four-year institutions. The work takes into account high school endorsements, meta-majors or areas of study tailored to the local industry and job market, and the colleges' own degree plans. The identification of meta-majors can lead to common first semester experiences. An initial career assessment can be built into student orientation. Complicating factors such as part-time/full-time attendance, English as a Second Language, or developmental education can be integrated into pathways maps. Including advisors and financial aid representatives in pathways discussions is important for the transferability of courses. Building pathways allows students to recognize the distinction between the Texas Core Curriculum and degree requirements.

5. Discussion and Consideration of Marketable Skills

Reinold Cornelius, Ph.D., Coordinating Board staff, introduced the topic of marketable skills with a draft of Coordinating Board implementation guidelines. The guidelines define marketable skills, give note to a student awareness gap in identifying marketable skills, and explain the three-part implementation requirement for marketable skills: (1) identify and document the skills offered by degree programs by 2020, (2) communicate skills to students, and (3) update documented skills regularly.

The guidelines emphasize that marketable skills are tracked with regards to progress made but are not going to be assessed. The guide also provides resources for defining marketable skills. The Coordinating Board will continue to facilitate the implementation of marketable skills via new rules, a statewide learning community, and a second marketable skills conference in 2018.

Members discussed the approach of experiential learning transcripts as a tangible record for students in addition to the traditional curriculum transcript. Items on the transcript include

experiential engagements on and off campus and may be presented chronologically. Students benefit from a verified record of the overall collegiate experience. Potential employers may find the experiential learning transcripts useful, especially if they are not familiar with academic content of course listings. Members also discussed a similar initiative to create an online database of competencies for each program/course. Other approaches for addressing the topic of marketable skills included adding a stronger emphasis on financial literacy and career center components in student orientation. An increased focus on informing parents during student orientation was discussed.

6. Discussion and Consideration of the Texas Core Curriculum

Dr. Cornelius invited members of the Texas Core Curriculum work group from September 8, 2017, to report. Dr. Ester Rumsey reported ideas concerning five questions that the work group had laid out in an eight page discussion document: (1) What is the purpose and function of the TCC? (2) What are the implications of the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS), as required by statute? (3) What are the implications for upper-division courses and the TCC Rules? (4) What are the implications of the Component Area Option (CAO)? and (5) What are the implications for "skills-based" courses?

The Committee discussed "skills development courses," courses that focus on further skills development of the individual. Dr. Rumsey reported that discussion in the work group revealed a characteristically narrow breadth for these courses. The act of teaching individual skills precludes the core curriculum's goal of laying the broader foundation necessary for students' contribution to society.

The Committee discussed the previously advanced argument that introductory language courses emphasize immersion in different cultures in addition to teaching vocabulary and grammar. Members recalled that ACGM learning outcomes include three out of six learning outcomes focusing on culture, traditions, and customs. [Staff note: for SPAN 1411, Beginning Spanish I, it is two out of six learning outcomes that have such focus.] Dr. Cornelius asked to consider the full definition of a Foundational Component Area (FCA) for the core curriculum, for which there are always two parts. For the Language, Philosophy, and Culture FCA, the first part addresses aspects of culture but the second part addresses aesthetic and intellectual creations. While introductory courses have a focus on culture, they lack the analysis of literary output such as short stories, poetry, literature, or film.

The question was asked whether the Language, Philosophy, and Culture FCA was misnamed, since not only introductory language courses are not allowed, but the discussion in 2012 suggested that philosophy courses were also not appropriate. Dr. Cornelius said he did not know this about philosophy and the discussion may have been about a different issue. [Staff note: the ACGM course PHIL 1301, Introduction to Philosophy, is included in the core curriculum at 37 community colleges and 18 four-year institutions.]

The importance of studying languages with respect to students' professions in an ever shrinking world was discussed. It was discussed if introductory language courses can provide an adequate foundation in that respect and whether it is part of the core curriculum's purpose or whether languages should be a program requirement.

The alignment of intermediate language courses with the core curriculum was discussed. Dr. Cornelius said that he has seen different emphases for these courses. Some institutions focus on culture immersion, while others incorporate weekly readings in the foreign

language or viewing of films, etc. A sole focus on cultural immersion, without immersion in aesthetic and intellectual creations, is not in alignment with the core curriculum.

The implementation of the removal of previously approved skills courses was discussed. The Coordinating Board will remove the skills courses from the Texas Core Curriculum starting with the fall 2018 semester, after a two year transition period.

The Committee discussed implications of pre-requisite courses for core curriculum courses. Upper-division cannot have pre-requisite in the lower division and lower-division courses cannot have pre-requisite courses outside the core curriculum.

The function of the Component Area Option (CAO) was discussed. Members expressed a desire to allow courses approved in the Foundational Component Areas (FCA) to be also approved in the Component Area Option, without specifically listing them. The Committee discussed allowing different courses than FCA courses in the CAO. These changes would require changing the rules in the Texas Administrative Code. Staff will work with the UEAC and its co-chairs on furthering concrete ideas on how to propose rule changes.

7. Update and Discussion on Coordinating Board Initiatives

The first university/health-related institutions liaisons' meeting was on July 10, 2017. The next community, state and technical colleges' liaisons meeting will be November 13-14, 2017. The most recent Low Producing Program (LPP) report was published in July 2017. The 2018 LPP list has an April 2018 anticipated publish date. The request and certification forms for new bachelor's and master's programs for university/health-related institutions were updated in August 2017. Legislatively required parameters require a special application form for public junior colleges wishing to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

The Coordinating Board is undertaking a major effort, with the help of advisory committees, to increase the number of Fields of Study Curricula (FOSC). A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another must receive program credit for courses in the FOSC.

The new distance education program search tool allows a user to search by distance education type in order to obtain a full list of offerings. The search can be narrowed by institution type or by institution. The related Distance Education Portal allows institutions to enter, revise, and review distance education information.

8. Consideration of Future Work and Meeting Dates

Suggested meeting times fall on the third Friday in April and September: April 20, 2018 and September 21, 2018. Members' documentation of costs for attending the meeting were collected. Coordinating Board staff will make available Dr. Ferrell's TACC PowerPoint. Members are interested in work groups for Marketable Skills and for the Core Curriculum prior to the next meeting. The April 2018 meeting will include an LPP update, marketable skills discussion, and the Texas Core Curriculum. Another possible work group concerning best practices for the core curriculum assessment should be kept in mind.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.