

# University Curriculum Committee Meeting

Meeting #21, April 15, 2024

**Members (those present in bold; \* indicates a voting member):**

**Dave Paul, Chair\***

**Dean Panttaja**

**Francesca Sammarruca**

Erin James\*

**Stacy Isenbarger\***

**Stacey Doumit\***

**Magdy Noguera\***

**Kyle Howerton\***

**Steve Shook\***

**Erkan Buzbas\***

**Emad Kassem\***

**Jerry Long\***

**Hanwen Dong\***

**Lindsey Brown**

Emma Johnston\*

Nate Trachimowicz

**Gwen Gorzelsky**

**Guests present:** Rebecca Frost, Ted Unzicker, Sande Schlueter, Cari Fealy, Gabriel Potirniche, Mark Nielsen, and Indrajit Charit

- I. Chair Dave Paul called the meeting to order at 3:30.
- II. The minutes for the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved.
- III. Announcements and Communications
- IV. New Business

**UCC Agenda Item Number:** UCC-24-084

**Item(s) Under Consideration:** Add new Department of Nursing

**Speaker:** N/A

**Discussion:** This was part of the structure for the new school approved previously. Steve Shook pointed out that the form stated that there's \$100,000 being requested for operation, and it didn't appear to be funded by the state, so he wanted to know where that money was coming from. Dave said that he believed that WWAMI had a different budgeting system, so he didn't think it would be a problem. Gwen Gorzelsky agreed, further explaining that this is because their program generates revenue not constrained by the same rules that apply to appropriated funds. Dave added that he'd previously discussed it with Jeff about the budget, and he'd said that it wasn't a problem. Stacey Doumit asked if the money was being reallocated from other departments, and Gwen said that it would not. Steve reiterated that he wanted the minutes to reflect his concern regarding the matter.

**Outcome:** Approved with 1 abstention

**UCC Agenda Item Number:** UCC-24-085

**Item(s) Under Consideration:** Add Nuclear Materials Engineering Graduate Academic Certificate

**Speaker:** Indrajit Charit

**Discussion:** This had been seen previously by the committee, and it was sent back with a request for language edits to the program description, which Indrajit explained had been completed.

**Outcome:** Unanimously approved

**UCC Agenda Item Number:** UCC-24-086

**Item(s) Under Consideration:** Edit WLF 553, create NRS 515, and edit Environmental Education and Science Communication Certificate

**Speaker:** Steve Shook

**Discussion:** The WLF 553 proposal requested making it available cooperative with WSU students.

The NRS 515 course had been sent back previously with a request for clarification on the location. Dave pointed out that UCC had previously recommended the first line of the course description be struck, and it hadn't been changed. Steve suggested amending it and removing that line. Lindsey Brown also pointed out that it has "Permission" listed as a prerequisite, and she suggested adding that at the section level instead to provide more flexibility. Steve agreed to the change. Jerry Long asked if this course was just for students at the McCall campus, and Steve agreed.

The certificate proposal requested adding NRS 515 to Content I Block and 599 research credits to the research block.

**Outcome:** Unanimously approved with edits

**UCC Agenda Item Number:** UCC-24-087

**Item(s) Under Consideration:** Edit GEOL 101 and GEOL 102L

**Speaker:** N/A

**Discussion:** Jerry Long started a brief discussion on how an online lab would function, to which committee members offered their insights. Otherwise, no discussion was needed.

**Outcome:** Unanimously approved

## V. Old Business

**UCC Agenda Item Number:** UCC-24-062

**Item(s) Under Consideration:** Edit F-1 and O-2 Policies

**Speaker:** Cari Fealy

**Discussion:** Cari explained that earlier in the year, FSH 2300 had received outside review from attorneys with experience working in higher education law. One of the sections that needed to be changed was the F-9 section, which described the student academic dishonesty process. She explained that this is intended for situations to allow students due process and to reduce the situations where a student receives an F in a course due to academic dishonesty despite receiving a result after a review that says

they didn't cheat. Students often don't see a difference between having an academic outcome and the code of conduct outcome, so this change could help clarify the results for students.

Steve Shook expressed concerns about how this would impact a faculty member's academic freedom. He asked if the student conduct board decided that a student didn't violate student conduct, then faculty members could no longer give a student an F for cheating. Cari explained that it would not be an appropriate grade if it was given solely based on an instructor's opinion of whether a student cheated regardless of the board's conclusion rather than being based on the rest of their academic performance. Steve brought up an example shared at Faculty Senate where a member said they saw a student cheat, but the decision came back from the Dean of Student's Office that said they didn't cheat. He also said that when he was on that committee for over a decade, he saw situations where votes weren't unanimous. Cari pointed out that not all situations go to the board, and most of them are handled by the director of conduct.

Steve pointed out that there is an academic process (grades) and a code of conduct policy, and both have their own separate due process. In E-6, it states that grades are the sole prerogative of faculty, meaning no one else can impact what a faculty member wants to assign, including the Dean of Students Office, which handles disciplinary processes. Cari explained that this policy change would simply allow students to go through the necessary time and steps to complete the process, but the grade is not influenced.

Steve asked what would happen to a faculty member who refuses to change a grade for a student they believed cheated, but whom the board said didn't cheat. He expressed concern that due to this change, faculty members may not report academic dishonesty (i.e. they give a student a failing grade without reporting it). Cari agreed with this concern and shared that they had a line previously included that required faculty members to report all instances of academic dishonesty, which was the only line that indicated a behavioral expectation of faculty, to address this issue.

Stacy Isenbarger said that she had potential issues with the phrasing in F-9 regarding faculty members needing to wait to respond ("including any response") because students may still be taking on projects during this process, and it's important to course correct a behavior sooner rather than later. This phrasing could instill fear in faculty members who aren't tenured. She also brought up Erin James' point from a previous meeting on this proposal that a grade other than "Incomplete" be used for this situation. Cari agreed with the idea and said it would need to be discussed with the Registrar's Office.

Jerry Long asked what the burden of proof was for the student conduct board. Cari said that it was "more likely than not." Jerry asked if this standard should then be applied to the faculty grading process because there are currently two different standards between grades and a code of conduct result. Cari said that if a student is going through the academic dishonesty process and a faculty member's policy within their syllabus is to fail a student if they're found responsible for academic dishonesty, then that grade should wait until the board gives their findings before that grade is given. Jerry followed by clarifying that a faculty member would have to wait, but they're not ultimately bound by the board's determination. Cari agreed, but she gave the example of students who were found to have not committed academic dishonesty, but they failed a course anyway, and they didn't want to petition to get it changed because they must take course from that instructor in the future.

Francesca Sammaruca gave the example of an instructor who saw a student cheat, such as pulling out a paper that they weren't supposed to have. If they then hear back from an academic hearing board that

the student “more likely than not” did not cheat, then that reflects on the status of whether they cheated or not, not whether the student should receive a particular grade. If the student goes to the instructor and the instructor refuses to change the grade, the student can then go to the academic hearing board because they can complain about a grade under any circumstances (e.g. a student believes they received a grade unfairly). Cari agreed that the process would likely follow this path. Francesca followed by saying that because of this and other examples, she did not see the need to give an “I” grade because a faculty member doesn’t give a failing grade unless they’re sure about it.

Gwen clarified that Cari’s main concern was ensuring that students receive a clear message from the university rather than two potentially different messages, and Cari agreed. Gwen then suggested changing the messaging to students that clarifies that the disciplinary process has found one outcome, but their grade in the course is still subject to the instructor, who is not necessarily bound by that process. She also noted that, as she’s said before, anything that can be done to increase faculty reporting is important for all concerned, which Cari quickly agreed with.

Cari explained that overall, situations where academic dishonesty results in a failed course are rare because most faculty members have them redo assignments, failing assignments and not letting them redo it, giving them a single lower letter grade, etc. She also said that in situations where students are found to have not cheated, they then must go through another process to prove that they didn’t do something wrong to show that they don’t deserve the F, which puts the burden on the wrong person.

Jerry clarified that default grades are still used in situations of academic dishonesty, meaning that grade is used if the “I” is not replaced with something else or if the “I” expires. Lindsey and Cari agreed. Jerry clarified that a grade of “I” isn’t mandatory based on the phrasing, and Cari agreed, explaining that using that grade would only be necessary in certain situations, such as when the academic dishonesty is reported near the end of the semester when grades are due.

Dave suggested breaking the proposal into two separate votes, both of which failed to receive sufficient approval.

**Outcome:** Tabled with one yes vote, one abstention, and eight no votes on the F-1 policy and a failure on the table for the O-2 policy

## VI. UCC Certificate Guideline Discussion

Dave Paul asked the committee if they had thoughts on how they wanted to proceed with certificates having at least 7 credits. Jerry Long pointed out that there’s a span of 7-59 credits that a certificate can include, so it would be difficult to capture everything that a certificate should include with such a wide range.

Stacy Isenbarger pointed out that in previous discussions, members had brought up situations where a smaller certificate could be successful with fewer credits, such as working professionals receiving additional certification. She also pointed out that how lenient or strict the committee is on proposals often depends on other factors, such as where the proposal falls on an agenda or how prior proposals in a particular meeting have been received, so there should be some best practices put into place to ensure fairness of the committee’s review of a certificate.

Steve Shook said that the required credit hours for certificates had slowly decreased over the years (from 21 to 18 to 12 to 7), and he was trying to figure out the goal in doing so. He also pointed out that this policy may be helpful for CTE programs, but there's many Idaho universities that don't offer those types of programs that can now offer seven credit certificates. Referencing a regularly updated job board in his college, Steve noted that certificates were never included as required education, so he wondered if they were demand driven.

Lindsey said that in her meeting with all the registrars in the state in March, BSU and ISU had certificates for nine credits that were mostly technically based, so she wondered if those certificates had already existed, and the policy had been changed to comply. Gwen said she believed the State Board was trying to offer as much flexibility to institutions as possible. Stacey Doumit asked if smaller certificates were considered micro credentials, and Gwen said that they were defined as being different, but potentially stackable.

On addressing Steve's question regarding industry demand, Gwen referenced a conversation she had with the new U of I Career Center director, who said that there's not a high demand for certificates in the humanities and social sciences fields, but there is a notable demand for certificates in some STEM fields. She also said that the director would likely be happy to provide additional data at the committee's request.

Dave asked, moving forward, what a future certificate proposal author would need to illustrate demand or why a certificate would receive approval or not from UCC. Stacy Isenbarger said illustrating a burden of proof could cause proposals to not reach UCC, and she'd like to give programs the opportunity to defend their decisions within proposals. She referenced a certificate proposal that the committee had previously reviewed that required eight credits and the fact that the faculty member said that the certificate would not be able to sustain a twelve-credit certificate, but they could sustain one with a smaller credit load.

There was a brief discussion on how to analyze how well a certificate meets the requirement of being "a coherent body of knowledge."

Kyle Howerton said it felt like gamifying education in that seven-credit certificates could be used to provide reassurance that a student can complete the needed workload, such as if a certificate is added in as part of a program. He also said he understood where this could be useful (such as an engineering student who wants to become a television engineer, so they complete a small broadcasting certificate in JAMM to add on). He suggested committee members write a draft of what requirements may be useful in considering proposals next year, and Stacy Isenbarger volunteered to complete that.

Stacey Doumit reviewed the certificate requirements for another university, pointing out that they limit them in ways such as certificates having a minimum of 9 credits (though most are 12-15) and students being limited to being enrolled in up to two certificates at one time.

There was a brief discussion on whether the committee should require information on the intended target audience for a certificate and how that may impact revenue, and many committee members agreed that was outside of UCC's jurisdiction.

Stacy Isenbarger also pointed out that it could be helpful in situations where a student changes their major to have a credential showing their level of competency in a field, even if it wasn't the field they graduated in.

VII. Dissemination of UCC meeting recordings

Dave Paul explained that someone had requested the recording for one of the meetings, and he wanted to put a policy in place since he wasn't sure of the procedure for doing so. He'd asked why the recording was needed, but he received no response. Jerry Long suggested requiring a reason. Francesca said that it was a public meeting, so anyone could attend. Jerry agreed but added that what was shared at meetings and how it is shared may change based on who is in attendance. Francesca said that at Faculty Senate, the recordings are deleted after the minutes are created. Ted Unzicker said that it was sometimes useful to be able to go back to the recordings, so he'd like to keep them for their value as records.

Jerry suggested they contact Kim Ritter and ask about the rules regarding this issue, and Dave asked that he do so.

VIII. Chair Dave Paul closed the meeting at 5:00 pm.

Sydney Beal  
UCC Secretary