

## Minutes of the Carolina Core (General Education) Committee Meeting

June 8, 2010  
12:30-2:00 p.m.  
107 Osborne

### Members Present:

Cheryl Addy, Pam Bowers (ex-officio), Mary Ann Byrnes, Helen Doerpinghaus (ex-officio), Kris Finnigan (ex-officio), Lacy Ford, Susanne Hicklin, Carolyn Jones, Joseph Rackers

### Members Absent:

Elise Ahyi (ex-officio), Jim Burns, Kimberly Glenn, Mary Hjelm, Stuart Hunter, Phil Moore (ex-officio), Sheryl Kline, Gene Luna, Michael Matthews (co-chair), Patrick Nolan (ex-officio), Susan Parlier, Terrie Smith, Rick Stephens, Irma Van Scoy, Virginia Weathers, David Tedeschi, Jennifer Vendemia (ex-officio)

**Faculty Content Consultants Present:** Erik Doxtader

Handout materials:

- Agenda
- Carolina Core Distribution Requirements Proposal - May 20 Draft
- Carolina Core Course Approval (DRAFT) Form
- New Course Proposal Form

Minutes of the May 11 meeting were approved, with the following correction: "Hand-audits (graduation checks) of current overlay courses in Arts & Sciences are required, due to differences in degree program requirements."

Susanne had cautioned the group, in an email response to the distribution requirements document draft, that SACS requires that the general education program constitutes a minimum of 30 semester hours (see Core Requirement 2.7.3 below). The current distribution requirement draft suggests 28-43 hours, depending on language placement tests and use of overlay courses. A minimum of 28 hours would be a violation of SACS standards.

### SACS Core Requirement 2.7.3

In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses.

Since the integrative course that will be part of the Carolina Core will be major-specific and usually taken in the junior or senior year, it seems that it would not be appropriate to count this course as part of the general education hours, as defined by SACS Core Requirement 2.7.3.

Cheryl suggested that the problem could be resolved by limiting each student to no more than 2 overlay courses, or a minimum of 30 hours taken to meet Carolina Core requirements.

Discussion shifted to the intentions for the integrative course and how this course is similar to or different from a capstone course. The following comments/observations were made:

- Some colleges/degree programs already have capstone courses, but some deans have stated that it is not feasible to create capstone courses in all their programs.
- Capstone courses are the logical place for the integrative component to be added, for those programs that already have capstone courses.
- The integrative course is intended to intentionally thread Carolina Core learning outcomes throughout a major-specific course.
- Many capstone and/or major-specific, upper level courses probably already do this, and it will just be a matter of articulating this activity and documenting it through the Carolina Core course approval process.
- A capstone course, to some, means a cumulative, formative experience in the major.
- Some colleges have a core course that all students in all majors the college must take.
- Some programs may not have one course that all students must take, but may offer students a choice among a few courses – it was suggested that all options (2-3 courses) could add (or articulate) the integrative component, to assure that all students in the major participate in an integrative course.

There was general agreement that the integrative course requirement would not create too much of a burden on departments, and that it will enrich existing courses without adding hours to degree requirements.

Launching overlay courses will require time for faculty to prepare. Eric said that the speech/VESR (values, ethics and social responsibility) overlay course will require training for faculty, but the two areas are already conceptually close, so training will not be as extensive as it might be in other areas. He said the envisioned speech/VESR overlay course would include 5-6 cumulative oral presentations on VESR thematic issues/topics. Other comments about this proposed course and general overlay concerns:

- The committee agreed last meeting to propose that overlays will be acceptable within the following parameters:
  - o among speech, information literacy (IR) and VESR learning outcomes, two of these can overlay in one course;
  - o one of these three can overlay with one other Carolina Core learning outcome in one course, or
  - o one of these can be a stand-alone learning outcome in a course.
  - o faculty content consultants will help develop requirements for overlay course approval
- overlay idea might be much more difficult if natural fit does not exist in other areas, such as seems to be the case for speech and VESR

Discussion about anticipated demand for the envisioned speech/VESR course led to realization that we need better information about how many students are already taking speech and philosophy courses that are aligned with these learning outcomes. Mary Ann agreed to collect data about these courses for discussion at the next meeting.

Helen will edit the draft distribution requirements document to be sure it appropriately states the group's intentions about overlay courses.

The concern was raised that some faculty may resist teaching sections of a Carolina Core course for which some course learning outcomes have been pre-set (to meet Carolina Core learning goals), rather than allowing all learning outcomes to be determined by a individual faculty member for his/her section of the course. We will need to clearly articulate the benefits to students and the institution of this systematic approach to general education.

The group reviewed drafts of forms that will be used to determine whether or not a course will be approved as a Carolina Core designated course. The following comments were made:

- it would be useful to offer some suggestions in the document about what will be used to determine the course's status (what are the expected components for a course to be approved)
- letters of concurrence (mentioned in the form) are used to assure that all campuses are in agreement about a course – changes affect all system campuses
- Kris will edit the draft form based on our comments, we will review again as we move forward

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next meeting is Tuesday, June 22, at 12:30-2:00 p.m., 107 Osborne.