SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

MINUTES

September 12, 2019 ~ 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm
W.A.C. Bennett Library Room 7200

Attendees: W. Parkhouse (Chair), E. Elle (Vice-Chair), K. Nordgren (secretary), S. Birnie, S. Chorney, D. Hik, P. Kingsbury, C. Murray, P. Pasquier (via BlueJeans), S. Spector, N. van Houten, K. Whittle

Regrets: M. Crouch, K. Oldknow, K. Pathania

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Chair welcomed everyone to the new academic year and introductions were made for the benefit of the new members. The Chair introduced Kelli Whittle, who has stepped in to help the office of the University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison. The Chair recognized Susan Rhodes (not in attendance) for her expertise and many years of commitment to SCUS. All the best to Susan in her new role at Continuing Studies.

C. Murray added that Peter Hall will be the new member representing FASS for SCUS and will attend a future SCUS meeting as an observer.

Two items were added to the agenda under ‘Other Business’: Calculation of Program GPA and the CODE transition.

The Agenda was approved as amended.

1. Approval of the Minutes of July 4, 2019

The minutes were approved as presented.

3. Open Discussion

A question was posed regarding how new WQB requests will be managed until a new Director of University Curriculum is in place. The Chair responded that Student Services has been tasked to develop a proposal to evaluate these requests going forward. The Chair noted that there will be a review of the WQB, and proposed to place an informal moratorium on any new WQB courses until this process is complete. The members agreed and added that if the review takes longer than expected, SCUS will revisit this issue and decide at that time on next steps.
a. SCUS sub-committees

The Chair emphasized the importance of balancing the creation of new courses and with the deletion of courses not offered. He commented on recent construction delays, which meant limited classroom availability – initially impacting 112 courses. After considerable creative collaboration with Facilities and the Registrar’s office, space was found to accommodate the majority of these courses, leaving only three classrooms requiring space. The Chair noted that some departments have their own spaces in which courses could be taught. The Chair expressed the seriousness of this problem, his concern that departments are holding space for classes that would not be offered due to lack of enrollment, and noted that a review of operations is needed, along with a review of courses across faculties.

The Chair proposed to create two SCUS sub-committees: a **Policy and Regulations committee**, which would focus on policy, procedures and processes – such as Calendar language and policy interpretation issues – and would make recommendations for changes to SCUS; and a **Programs committee**, which would review new programs and the processes related to new programs – e.g. new program reviews after four or five years. This committee would also look at double minors and certificates. The Chair thanked the members in advance for volunteering.

4. Old Business

a. Faculty of Environment (SCUS 19-51)

The following course change, effective Spring 2020, was approved by delegated authority.

1. Department of Geography

   (i) Temporarily withdraw GEOG 323 and 383

The Chair requested an analysis of the increasing catalog of courses, compared to those courses withdrawn/deleted. He noted the practice adopted in FASS where, for every new course created, one is withdrawn and suggested this is a practice that should be used across all faculties.

5. New Business

COURSE CHANGES (SCUS 19- 52)

The following course changes, effective Summer 2020, were approved by delegated authority.

a. Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

1. School of Interactive Arts and Technology

   (i) Prerequisite change for IAT 395
b. Faculty of Environment

1. Department of Geography

   (i) B-Hum designation for GEOG 100 (already designated B-Soc)
   (ii) B-Soc designation for GEOG 386
   (iii) Description change to GEOG 213 (Fall 2020)
   (iv) Description and prerequisite change for GEOG 312 (Fall 2020)

c. Faculty of Science

   (i) Description change for MATH 190

5. Other Business

   a. Double Minor Degree Options – FENV

   P. Kingsbury spoke to this item, providing the members with the background and rationale to this proposed program change. He noted that the Faculty of Environment will bring a formal program change to a future SCUS meeting for approval. The proposal was to mirror the calendar language of the Bachelor of Arts degree for the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Environment degrees offered by the Faculty. Discussion ensued with focus on the benefit of double minors for students. Questions were asked whether they are useful or are they complicating the student’s academic career at SFU? All agreed a further in depth discussion is required in order to fully understand how many of these programs exist, if they are still beneficial to students, and if a full review is in order. There was also concern regarding terminology used for programs, such as “stream” and “concentration”. All agreed to add this item to a future SCUS meeting for discussion as it would be useful to have clear policy and definitions.

   b. Graduation – program GPA

   There was brief discussion regarding the program GPA policy interpretation and calculation for graduating students. All agreed the policy is open to interpretation, with differing applications between the faculties. Students need accurate information regarding graduation requirements in order to complete their programs in a timely manner. There are two main interpretations of the program GPA calculation: one is to include only courses which are used to complete specific program requirements, and the other includes all courses completed during the student’s career. All agreed clarification is needed by January 2020 in order for students to get accurate advice prior to graduation. The issue would be referred to the new Policy/Regulations sub-committee.

   c. Transition of CODE

   E. Elle spoke to this agenda item, seeking advice from the SCUS members on how to best communicate with their respective faculties regarding the transition from CODE to faculty-led distance education.

   There was brief discussion with members providing contacts and suggestions. One suggestion was to form a committee to help with the communication.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm
Minutes prepared by R. Balletta