

Minutes for the *Carolina Core Committee Meeting*
September 8, 2015, 12:30-2:00 pm
Thomas Cooper Library, Room 204

Members Present:

Pam Bowers, Karen Brown, Mary Ann Byrnes, Kenneth Campbell, Ron Cox, Helen Doerpinghaus, Kristia Finnigan, Kimberly Glenn, August Grant, James Kellog, Kathleen Kirasic, Manton Matthews, Chris Nesmith, Joseph Rackers, Christine Sixta Rinehart, Kimberly Simmons, Nicole Spensley

Members Absent:

Sara Corwin, Daniel Freedman, Andy Gillentine, Brian Habing, Rob Dedmon, James Kellogg, Alfred Moore

Specialty Team Chairs Present:

Sam Hastings, David Hitchcock, Christopher Holcomb, George Khushf, Camelia Knapp, Mary Robinson, Francisco Sanchez

Specialty Team Chairs Absent:

Saskia Coenen-Snyder, Pat Gehrke, Shelley Smith

Guests:

Wayne Buff, Shelley Dempsey

Joe Rackers called the meeting to order. Joe thanked Kris Finnigan for taking over Carolina Core co-chair duties and welcomed Helen Doerpinghaus back to the role. Committee members introduced themselves

Kris reported on changes made to the Carolina Core website, to reflect its change in purpose from training faculty proposing Core courses, to guiding students and advisers. Since 2012, 193 courses have been approved for the Core, including 9 overlay courses. Seven of the overlay courses included a Values, Ethics and Social Responsibility (VSR) component, while the other two contained an Information Literacy (INF) component.

Discussion about overlays ensued, with Sam Hastings commenting upon Midlands Tech's ENGL 102 courses being transferred in and counting as INF. Kim Glenn noted that an Honors Nursing course designated by the Honors College as a Core overlay course was not being counted that way on student records. Joe asked if the group thought more overlay courses were needed. Kim replied that because overlay courses do not count as such elsewhere, for example at USC Aiken and Beaufort, Nursing students are being discouraged from taking them.

In response to a question as to why Aiken and Beaufort do not accept overlay courses from USC Columbia as Core courses, Helen Doerpinghaus mentioned their separate SACSCOC accreditation. We have nearly the same Core, but VSR is not part of theirs. In programs other than Nursing or Engineering, VSR courses might count as electives. She said Committee members have a responsibility to listen to what works and doesn't work with Core, and to share this with the Committee chairs and the group. She encouraged innovation and creativity in

devising courses that can get students through the Core more efficiently, and free up seats for other students. Joe agreed that overlays are the most innovative aspect of the Core.

Nicole Spensley reported on progress with the Carolina Core program review. She described how the process works, starting with creating or revising a rubric, selecting assignments, and then collecting student artifacts for assessment. In facilitating the process, the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIRA) uses Blackboard Outcomes to pull out the artifacts, which are then distributed to assessors. OIRA offers training to reviewers, and calibrates interrater reliability.

This is the data collection semester for 8 sections in ARP and AIU, according to the shifted schedule. Assessment will follow next semester for these learning outcomes. For CMW, SCI, CMS, and VSR, the data are already collected. All sections are now participating in regular review in GSS and GFL. Henceforth, only 3-4 sections will be gathering data each semester.

Christine Sixta Rinehart asked about the composition of assessment teams, and was told by Nicole that it encompassed Specialty Team members, as well as anyone teaching in the disciplinary area who might wish to. She encouraged those in the discipline to consider teaching courses under review, noting that involvement strengthens both course and instructor. Regarding the results from SPCH (CMS), student artifacts aren't written, but rather spoken. Their rubric was particularly detailed, and would be a good example for others. There were 6 sections piloted: PHIL 325(1) SAEL(2) SPCH 140(3). However, interrater reliability was low, due to the fact that faculty members did not have calibrated training by the OIRA office. A video component possibility needs to be discussed, also for AIU.

Helen would like to see higher interrater reliability, to ensure more informed judgment, and more favorable comparison with peers. Faculty will expect stronger results. Sam asked whether it was required to have to have 3 rating categories of unsatisfactory/satisfactory/excellent. Nicole replied that it was up to the Specialty Team to decide. Joe pointed out that the more rating categories one has, the harder it will be to achieve reliability. Sam noted that once you have training, it becomes easier to distinguish rating categories.

Helen commented that as we celebrate the third anniversary of Carolina Core launch, it is incumbent upon us to revisit the Core, and see what changes might need to be made. She asked that discussion groups look at these three broad points:

- 1) What are you hearing from colleges?
- 2) What are achievements we're proud of, challenges?
- 3) What have we learned from program review?

Discussion Group:

Ken Campbell pointed out that an outcome revealing that students are "learning nothing" would certainly need to generate discussion. Manton Matthews commented that Engineering has two courses in the Core, and have an interest in more. These are not involved in the pilot studies currently underway, and rubrics would be needed for VSR and ARP.

Chris Nesmith reported that courses not taught in a while on the Columbia campus are now finally getting approved as Core courses. There is good collaboration between the two-year campuses and the four-years to this end. Looking at what we have learned from pilots, Nicole is concerned about what the results mean. We need to develop benchmarks, which is the purpose of Carolina Core assessment summative reporting, as well as use the results to make improvements. Chris asked where the reporting goes. Nicole emphasized the need for care with the use of results. Whose responsibility is the dissemination of results? Passwords provide some measure of internal protection.

The SCI reviewers shifted how they identified artifacts. Chris said that the exercise requiring demonstration of learning outcomes helps. Nicole argued that one should be careful about matching the rubric to artifact, and Ken said people need to take care not to apply their own standards in the review process.

After the meeting was reconvened, groups shared what they had discussed.

Sam Hastings' group was concerned about the paucity of offerings, and the ability to offer the Core at Palmetto Campus (PC) campuses. Sam said that information for advisors needs to be pushed constantly to alleviate misperceptions. There should be more incentives and grants to support courses becoming part of Core. More instructors are also needed, and the length of the approval process should be addressed. The standard cap for the Core should vary by discipline, and it would be helpful to hold another faculty update forum, on where we are with the Core.

Some units have had very large curriculum changes because of the Carolina Core. It has changed nature of the discipline, in some cases. George Khushf mentioned that Philosophy was a case in point; the Core has had a very significant impact on how many courses are taught, and how they are taught. PHIL is still adjusting, and it takes time to make adjustments. It makes Chris Holcomb nervous that assessment is driving curriculum in PHIL: shouldn't it be supporting the curriculum instead? What happens to results? Manton wondered whether we were just changing course offerings, but not necessarily the curriculum. Sam argued that the changes offered opportunities for Graduate Assistants.

Mary Ann Byrnes stated that the Core has had a big impact on Arts & Sciences. There have been more courses in some areas, and less in others, and the College Gen Ed had to be revised. There were winners and losers; anytime you have changes in course lists, money moves from one unit to another. It needs to be carefully planned. For example, Statistics will need more resources, due to the DMSB changes that are coming forward. Should Philosophy be crippled, as a result? George stated that Philosophy still does not know the full ripple effects yet, with regard to VSR growth. The distribution of faculty based on earlier world is not applicable now. Kimberly Simmons noted that Anthropology is not seeing as many students, and the department is wondering: is it because of the Core? Mary Ann argued that it is great to have multiple courses available, but it splits the effect.

Helen said she is hearing that there is a need for "enrollment management". Sam stated that we need to get the message out that the Core is organic, and very much a living entity. Helen asked how best to accomplish this – through a Gamecock article? Provost announcement? Sam

avored the Forum idea. Christine Sixta Rinehart thought a Palmetto College Faculty Senate presentation would be helpful. We need to have a plan for how to use the results, in Nicole's view. Helen said she would make this an agenda item for the next Carolina Core meeting. A report on what we've done and where we are could be distributed at departmental faculty meetings, argued Sam. Helen agreed, saying it could be posted online for all professors to use.

Joe adjourned the meeting, noting that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10.