

# **COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**200 BRICKER HALL**

**February 6, 2008**

**3:00-5:00**

**MINUTES**

## **Present:**

Professors: Marcia E. Farr, E. Kay Halasek (Chair), Michael Ibba, Daniel A. Mendelsohn, John M. Robinson, W. Randy Smith (Vice-Chair), Brian L. Winer.

Student Members: Rose M. Babington (Undergraduate Student Government); Robert Calhoun (Council of Graduate Students)

Guests: Jed Dickhaut, Associate Registrar, Office of the University Registrar; David Roy, Senior Assistant Director, Enrollment Services; Dr. John Wanzer, Senior Vice Provost, Enrollment Management; Edward H. Adelson, Associate Executive Dean, Colleges of the Arts and Sciences; Professors Joan Herbers, Dean, Caroline Breitenberger, Associate Dean, College of Biological Sciences, and Dave Stetson, Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON JANUARY 23, 2008**

- Halasek moved approval of the corrected Minutes of the meeting of January 23, 2008. It was seconded by Babington and passed with two abstentions.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR – PROFESSOR E. KAY HALASEK**

- Two proposals for minors, an Interdisciplinary Minor in Evolutionary Studies and a Minor in Survey Research, and a Transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy proposal, will be on the agenda for the next meeting
- Three proposals, the Doctor of Nursing Practice, and the new degrees in Environmental Engineering and Biomedical Engineering, are on the agenda for the University Senate on February 7, 2008.
- Winer will present the summary of Council activities at the next Faculty Cabinet meeting.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE VICE-CHAIR – PROFESSOR W. RANDY SMITH**

- At the University Senate meeting, Executive Vice President and Provost Alutto will be giving his first annual address.
- The three colleges outside the health sciences, with Regular Clinical Track Faculty – Business, Engineering, and law - will be asked to give a status report to Council in May, 2008.
- The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences has yet to submit a revised Clinical Track Faculty proposal from the Departments of Psychology and Speech and Hearing Sciences.
- Meetings have been scheduled with the Colleges of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Humanities, and Biological Sciences to discuss course redesign. Based on the success of the recent redesign of Statistics 135, funding was provided by then-Provost Barbara R. Snyder, mainly in the STEM areas, to redesign large enrollment GEC courses. Mathematics, Physics, Molecular Genetics, Philosophy, and the languages have been chosen in the first round, and are asked to rethink teaching these courses. Funding is provided for release time to develop these courses. Professor Alexis Collier, Associate Provost, and Smith are spearheading this initiative.

## **PROPOSAL TO REVISE THE UNDERGRADUATE BIOLOGY MAJOR, COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES – PROFESSOR E. KAY HALASEK, FOR SUBCOMMITTEE A –**

Halasek noted that Collins, based on time constraints, had indicated that he needed to step down as Chair of Subcommittee A, but will remain a Council member. Mendelsohn will assume the Chair role, but today she will present this proposal.

We do not have details about the Arts and Sciences-level review of this proposal that occurred, except for a short cover letter of transmittal indicating changes to the Core Requirements of the Biology major, and a series of questions from Subcommittee A of this Council, answered by Associate Dean Caroline Breitenberger. The three courses in the revised Core Requirements would be Biological Sciences 320 (Sophomore Colloquium: Biological Inquiry), Biological Sciences 401 (Integrated Biology I), and Biological Sciences 402 (Integrated Biology II). The rationale for these changes is to present biology as a single, integrated body of knowledge. The current major could be viewed as a series of compartmentalized topics that are not necessarily closely linked with each other. The current approach requires that certain basic topics be taught in each group, because students may take the courses in any order. The integrated approach clearly links aspects of biology together and has the added advantage of reducing duplication of materials in multiple courses.

The revised major requires 12 credit hours of core courses, 15 hours of specialization courses, and electives, to make up 45 hours required in the major. Students choose a specialization area in consultation with their advisors. Each specialization area will consist of a series of courses or course options that have been approved by the College of Biological Sciences Curriculum Committee. The rationale for this proposed change is to encourage and guide students toward a cohesive, complete, and rigorous major. These changes do not change the number of credit hours required to complete the major.

Farr noted that the proposal uses the term College of Human Ecology, probably because the proposal was written before the College merged with the College of Education to become the College of Education and Human Ecology. This terminology should be corrected in the proposal.

Halasek had a question about the anticipated decimalization of Biology 320 instead of a single course. Will it be broken down to accommodate various specializations? It was not clear. Winer questioned whether the core courses would be prerequisites to specialization courses?

**DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSORS JOAN HERBERS, DEAN, CAROLINE BREITENBERGER, ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, AND DAVID STETSON, DEPARTMENT OF EVOLUTION, ECOLOGY, AND ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY.**

Winer asked if the revised Core Requirements serve as prerequisites for the courses in the Specialization Areas? No. The new core courses will not be prerequisites to specialization courses.

Winer noted that the argument for adding the revised core requirement is to reduce multiple course offerings because students were taking courses at different times. If the prerequisite is not enforced how is the multiple offering of courses handled? Stetson indicated that specialization courses will come from other departments and they can establish the prerequisites. It will be up to the departments to decide whether to require students to take Biological Sciences 320, 401, and 402.

Herbers added that Biology is one of eight departments in the College of Biological Sciences. The specializations come from other departments. It will be up to the departments to decide prerequisites. This will be a transitional problem until other departments review the specialization.

How do the revised Core Requirements reduce the duplication of material in multiple courses? Currently students can take courses in any order, the faculty teaching those courses are obliged to assume that the students in the course they are teaching have not had any of the other core courses, and deliver the course content accordingly. Students often selected courses and the specialization within the biology major based on expediency, especially convenience in scheduling, rather than disciplinary depth or

integrity. In the revised major duplication of materials will be reduced because the core requirements will present a two-quarter sequence that covers the broad range of biology in a single unit, and incorporates concepts from mathematics, chemistry, and other relevant scientific disciplines as appropriate.

Halasek had a question about the decimalization of Biological Sciences 320 at a future date. Breitenberger responded that 320 exposes biology majors to the methods of biological inquiry as related by active research scientists. Other departments are also encouraged to create similar courses and allow biology majors to take those departmental sophomore seminars. Students do not have to pick a 320 in a specialization. They should be free to take any 320 versions they choose.

Will you be offering a general 320 initially? If they receive proposals from various departments or faculty, they would like to offer different versions of 320. All the 320s will have something in common - the logic of inquiry.

Can students take 320 as many times as they want? They can take it only once but can take any version of it.

Will there be sufficient sections of the courses in the revised Core Requirements to meet the anticipated demand? 401 and 402 are offered only once on trial basis but may be offered twice in autumn and winter or winter and spring. If demand increases, they may be offered three times a year. It is difficult to predict.

There are currently only three specializations. More specialization areas are listed in the revised Appendix 3 distributed.

What are the procedures for the approval of additional Specialization Areas? Specializations come from the departments or faculty and are vetted through the Center for Life Science Education, Advisors, Breitenberger, and Stetson and approved by the College of Biological Sciences' Curriculum Committee.

Halasek indicated that Collins (absent at this meeting) recommended that Part C include an explicit statement that electives are required beyond the 15 or more credits hours in specialization areas to bring the total number of credit hours to a minimum of 45. The specialization hours can go as high as 30 and a student may exceed 45 hours. Breitenberger added that this is clarified in the revised Appendix 3 – as distributed at this meeting. Under Part C, it is clearly stated that some **specializations may require more than 15 credit hours. Note that most students will need additional electives to complete the 45 credit hours.**

Mendelsohn noted that electives in the program have a very loose structure. Where does it specify from where they choose their specialization? This is outlined on page 3 of the revised document. The advisors will advise students on courses based on their interests.

Can you explain the statement “very few students in Autumn 2007 will be ready to take 401 and 402.” Students coming in Autumn 2008 will not have chemistry to start 401. Students coming with AP credit may be ready to start 401.

Halasek had a question about advising. Two advisors advise over 1000 students. There are three honors advisors. There are 1800 majors and 600 of them are honors, so two professional advisors advise 1200 students. Are they able to advise such a large student population effectively? Will there be additional staff? Currently they are not planning to add an advisor.

Farr noted that the proposal predates the merger of Human Ecology and Education. The proposal needs to be updated with the new name College of Education and Human Ecology.

Smith asked for predictions on how large this major will get? Applications are up by 13%. More applications are received and there is better yield. They are also retaining at much higher rate.

What happens to the graduates? More than half of them go into health professions broadly defined; 25 to 30 percent go to graduate school in the life sciences and the remaining students go to a variety of different areas. More and more students are in demand in business and law school. Many with the BS degree become technicians or sales representatives in pharmaceutical companies. Significant numbers go in to science education teaching at high school level.

The revised handout will be substituted in the proposal. Smith suggested that the Council should receive a progress report in Spring 2009.

Smith requested from Adelson that future transmittal materials from the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences include detailed materials on its Subcommittee activities.

Winer was not satisfied with the response to the questions about core courses being prerequisites to specialization. They had not clearly thought through this step. Others expressed concern about two professional advisors advising so many majors. Ibba was concerned about who will teach the core courses.

Subcommittee A moved approval of the proposal. It was seconded by Robinson. The motion passed unanimously.

Smith added that the revision can be implemented in Autumn 2008. No additional level of review/approval is necessary.

**PROFESSORS E. KAY HALASEK AND W. RANDY SMITH –  
SUBCOMMITTEE D**

- **Continued Discussion on the Revised Center Guidelines**

Smith distributed a revised Center/Institute Guidelines edited by him and Halasek and asked for feedback. He also distributed a draft list of approximately 60 approved centers/institutes.

Winer had some changes to item B and C under “Procedure” on page 4.

Mendelsohn moved approval of the revised center/Institute guidelines, as corrected. It was seconded by Farr and passed unanimously.

Halasek and Smith will make final changes and a final copy will be distributed at the next meeting, along with a proposed rule change.

Smith noted that lately we have been having difficulty securing a quorum at most Council meetings. Faculty have other commitments. To date, the Inter-professional Council has yet to provide a representative. Smith will be meeting with the Senate leadership this Spring, when new appointments are being made, with the hope of clearly conveying the workload expectations of this Council so that those asked to serve will be better aware of the commitment being made.

Winer suggested that we have alternates for those Senate members who cannot attend for a whole quarter.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:40pm**

Respectfully Submitted by

W. Randy Smith  
Lakshmi Dutta