16 and 23 April 2010 Minutes of the College Undergraduate (UG) Curriculum Committee

Members Present: Terry Adler, Kathy Brook, Kevin McNelis, Tim Query, Elliott Willman, Justine Adkisson, Sherry Mills, Tony Popp and Bruce Huhmann

Absent: (Tony Popp--16 Apr 2010 meeting) and (Kevin McNelis, Tim Query and Justine Adkisson—23 Apr 2010 meeting)

Both Meetings Called to Order at 0730.

Renee Brown has now posted business writing resources for students under the title of “Academic Survival Kit” at http://business.nmsu.edu/students. This section includes all the materials discussed to date to supplement student writing learning as part of closing the loop for the College of Business. Kudos to Renee for putting this together.

This committee plans on enhancing the “Academic Survival Kit” reference by developing and producing short 2-3 minute videos of faculty for each College of Business department on the importance of writing. Terry and Bruce have agreed to represent their respective departments of Management and Marketing but we are still looking for volunteers from Accounting, Economics and Finance. Volunteers from these departments are encouraged to contact Terry Adler at: tedler@nmsu.edu.

Bruce presented an “Effective Presentation Bookmark” outline to the committee at the 16 April meeting. The bookmark includes two major sections: 1. How to organize a presentation and 2. How to look and sound. The bookmark also will contain a reference to our "Academic Survival Kit" and thanks to Ed Scribner, a reference to a great site regarding oral communication called www.speechtips.com. Bruce presented a revised bookmark at the 23 April meeting that included all the items discussed in this paragraph. He also ensured the subtitles on the bookmark are consistent with our oral communication rubric used in the assessment process.

Terry and Bruce met with Dr. Patti Wojahn of the English Department to discuss best practices for grading writing assignments and best practices for student assignments. Patti provided us with two documents to facilitate our discussion: 1. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Guidelines on the teaching of writing and 2. Writing Program Administrators (WPA) outcomes for 1st-year composition. The NCTE guidelines are an excellent source for enhancing writing assignments in our core COB courses. The WPA outcomes dovetail nicely with our COB learning goals and demonstrate a solid foundation upon our assessment of written communication.

The WPA outcomes will be discussed at the Fall 2010 convocation to highlight the importance of written communication as an assignment in our COB core classes. In addition, this committee will survey COB faculty to investigate what faculty does with regard to writing assignments in their classes and also have faculty made changes to writing assignments and how have these worked out? Finally, the NCTE guidelines will be provided as an educator resource with appropriate website for our faculty.

In further discussion with Dr. Wojahn, we explored the option of creating an English 303 cross-listed course with English 203 geared to business writing. While the current English 203 already exists, student enrollment is dropping off as most students opt to take English 211. The English 203 course is geared to business writing but students do not like the class primarily because they have not had any business courses yet with the exception of BUSA 111. Thus, students do not appreciate what it means to write a business memo or provide an executive summary. By creating an English 303 course, students would take this later in their studies after say ACCT 252 and thus be able to better appreciate the importance of writing in business. We could make ACCT 252 a prerequisite for an English 303 course. Also, precedence already exists as this has been done with previous cross-listed courses like English 211 and 311. However, the committee decided to leave the English classes the way they are with the intention of working with the English 203 instructors in some way to improve our student’s writing. We also are unsure what the English 303 class would look like and what we would want out of it in our core sequence.
While we will explore this option further in our committee meetings as a way to better improve student learning in written communication, we also realize that given changes to BCIS 338 and other closing the loop activities, student writing may not be as large of a problem as in the past. Thus, the committee decided at the 23 April meeting to wait on the results of the assessment of BUSA 421 and BCIS 338 writing assignments from this Spring 2010 semester.

The Accounting Department decided to not measure writing in their core COB courses, if given the option, choosing instead to focus on problem solving in the assessment process. One of the proposals on the table from our last meeting was to investigate ACCT 251 and ACCT 252 as potential courses to assess writing capabilities of our COB students. We plan to assess student’s written communication abilities in BUSA 421 as this course already has a writing assignment that could be revised to assess student writing. Currently, we assess writing in BCIS 338 but that will transition to BUSA 421 in the 2011-12 school year.

Finally, comments were provided to this committee from the Business Advisory Council (BAC) regarding their views of our BBA assessment process. This summary included comments from the BAC itself and students supporting the BAC meeting. We are addressing these issues as part of incorporating our stakeholders into the assessment process. The Feedback Summaries are online in the Resource Center section of the password-protected AoL pages (password aoldocs):
http://business.nmsu.edu/administration/accreditation/aacsb/aol/resources/seminars

Meetings Adjourned at 0900.

Next meeting is scheduled for beginning of Fall 2010 semester.

Submitted by: Terry Adler, Chair