11 February 2011 Minutes of the College Undergraduate (UG) Curriculum Committee

Members Present: Terry Adler, Justine Adkisson, Kevin McNelis, Greg Roth, Dennis Clason, Bruce Huhmann and Kathy Brook

Guest: Sherry Mills

Meeting Called to Order at 0730.

This was the first meeting of the Spring 2011 semester. Sherry Mills shared information regarding not meeting expectations of College of Business (CoB) goal 4b on critical thinking. She said that students only attained proficiency in one of the three performance criteria this last semester in ECON 304. The general feeling amongst our committee is that our CoB students could be better at this skill.

The committee discussed our plans for improving student learning in critical thinking:

First, we are going to meet with CoB Department Heads on 18 Feb 2011 to clear up any confusion on what we expect from them this semester based on what we tasked them to do at the Spring 2010 Convocation. Our committee is looking for any ideas or proposals for improving critical thinking. Suggestions are welcomed from Department Heads that could be shared and possibly institutionalized in the CoB core undergraduate curriculum. We are just asking each department to look at how critical thinking is taught and measured in their own specific classes. Sorry for the confusion.

Secondly, we want to improve student awareness of what exactly critical thinking is and when students are actually practicing it. Our belief is that since we teach critical thinking skills in 7 of the 14 core undergraduate courses (i.e., ACCT 252, BCIS 110, BLAW 316, BUSA 111, ECON 252, FIN 341, and MGT 309 as assessed in Fall 2010), we probably do not emphasize when critical thinking is being expected of students. This may be the result of instructors just not emphasizing to students that what they are doing is learning how to critically think.

We would like to give CoB faculty a means for student self-reflection on improving critical thinking skills including self-awareness of when they are practicing this component in a class. We want to use lessons learned from BUSA 111 since critical thinking skills are being done there already and since this is an early introduction for students into our college, what better place to learn critical thinking skills. We also want to cull out lessons learned from ACCT 251 and ECON 251 instructors on what they do in teaching critical thinking. Based on what we find, Denis Clason proposed a motion to provide our faculty with a menu of options of how to teach critical thinking. This was seconded by Kevin McNelis. The relevant information is as follows:

Motion passed 4 yes and 0 no for the proposal.

Meeting Adjourned at 0900. Next meeting is scheduled for 18 February 2011 with Department Heads at 1 pm in BC 134.

Submitted by: Terry Adler, Chair