

**Annual Report from Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (APCC)
2015-2016**

Submitted by Lauren Montgomery, Chair
May 20, 2016

Committee members: **Faculty:** Jeff Cohen (Social Work); Anthony Falit-Baiamonte (Urban Studies); Evelyn Shankus (Milgard School); Jenny Sheng (Institute of Technology); Kathy Beaudoin (Education); Eric Bugyis, Lauren Montgomery & Jane Compson (IAS); Robin Evans-Agnew (Nursing); **Ex-Officio:** Andrea Coker-Anderson (Registrar); Patrick Pow (IT); Justin Wadland (Library); Lorraine Dinnell (Advising); Omer Adam (ASUWT). Also present: Ruth Ward (Faculty Assembly Program Administrator).

In 2015-2016, the work of the APCC consisted of:

- 1) Monthly reviews of the curricular and program proposals that constitute the main activity of the committee. (See chart below for numbers and comparison to last year)
- 2) Development of a policy for Distance Learning and Hybrid courses for our campus.
- 3) Review of the UW residency requirement for graduation in consideration of the unique needs of our campus.
- 4) Review of graduation petitions from students requesting exemptions from various graduation requirements.

Each of these will be briefly summarized below.

1) Proposal Reviews – Sept. 2014- June 2015

<u>Type of Proposal</u>	<u># Reviewed in 2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>Change</u>
New Grad. Programs	1	4	+ 3
Changes to Grad. Programs	0	0	0
New Undergrad. Programs	7	2	-5
Changes to Undergrad. Programs	12	35	+23
New Courses	131	87	-44
Courses Changes	40	28	-12
Diversity Designations	21	6	-15
Graduate Petitions	6	12	+6

This academic year saw an increase in new graduate programs and a decrease in new undergraduate programs. However, there was a distinct increase in undergrad. program changes this year. In terms of curricular proposals, there was a large decrease in both new courses and course changes this year compared with last, as well as a decrease in new diversity designations. All of these trends are consistent with a picture of a slowing growth in our undergraduate offerings, and the refinement of the existing ones, with an expansion of our graduate program opportunities for students. The increase in graduation petitions corresponds with renewed enforcement of the

residency requirement for graduation. In the past, although DL courses did not count as “residency credits” this was not enforced. Once we began enforcing this a number of students needed to petition to graduate on time. However, now that the advisors know the policy is going to be enforced, this problem should be minimized in the future.

2) The main policy work of the committee this year centered on Distance Learning. Our first step was to research the history of Distance learning on the Seattle campus, and the rationale for the change in their policy last spring. (Seattle went from defining a DL course as >50% off campus, to >99% off campus.) Once we understood the reasons for their policy change, we surveyed the seven UW Tacoma academic units through their respective councils and gathered feedback, preferences and recommendations from our entire faculty. In collating and integrating the various perspectives of the units we were mindful of creating a policy that was minimally restrictive to pedagogical freedom yet transparent to students and with sound processes for quality control of our online offerings. In the process, we divided the issue into two policy proposals; 1) the definition of Distance Learning (DL) and Hybrid (Y) courses, and 2) the quality control and review of both types of curricula. We ended up with a recommendation to EC to create a new “Hybrid” designation (to be labeled “Y” in the Time Schedule) for courses where between 40-99% of the classroom time is substituted with online content, and to define a DL course as one where 100% of the classroom time is substituted with online content. We further recommended that every faculty member who teaches either a Hybrid or a DL course be trained through i-Tech Fellows, and that the review of individual courses by the Office of Academic Technology no longer occur, other than those developed during the i-Tech Fellows trainings. This shifts the quality control of online learning on our campus to the training of faculty, rather than the review of individual courses. Both of these recommendations were approved by a majority vote in the Executive Council.

3) In response to a sharp increase in graduation petitions this year we looked at the residency requirement for graduation (45 of the last 60 credits must be taken “in residence” on our campus) in relationship to the Distance Learning courses. While UW policy clearly states that DL courses DO NOT meet residency requirements, this policy was not enforced over the past 5 years. This year, this policy began to be enforced and quite a few students found themselves needing to petition for exception to this graduation requirement. Advisors were strongly in favor of changing the policy to allow DL courses to count toward residency requirements, and there are good arguments for this on our campus. However, in reviewing all the considerations, APCC realized that if we departed from the UW Seattle policy on this, we would be in violation of stipulations from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Thus, APCC concluded we would leave the Seattle policy in place for our campus. This issue was not brought to EC because no policy change was recommended.

4) The past two years in a row have seen a doubling of the graduation petitions: from 3, to 6, and now this year 12. Each year there has been a different emphasis. Last year it was the language requirement, with petitions by students with DSS contracts. This year, most the exceptions were being requested for the residency requirement in DL

courses as described in 3 above. These should decrease in the future as described above. If the trend of increasing graduation petitions continues next year, we may want to work with advising to reverse it. Graduation petitions also need to be accompanied by a letter from an adviser, a DARS report, and a typed, preferably well argued request from the student detailing exactly what exemption is being requested and why. Very few petitions actually have all of these elements, and this is another issue that APCC may want to address with advising next year.

Finally, in the May 11 meeting, Jeff Cohen was voted in as Chair of APCC for the 2016/17 academic year. EC may want to consider amending the Bylaws to make the APCC chair position a two year commitment. It would provide more continuity to the committee, though might narrow the pool of candidates.