The meeting began at 8:00 a.m.

The Chair welcomed the members of the Committee.

Consent Agenda:

The following item remained on the Consent Agenda and passed unanimously.

3. Dept. of Psychology – Changing Restrictions or Credits in a Course
   PSY 4462 (Clinical and Community Psychology)

Agenda Discussion Items:

The following item was discussed and passed by a vote of 13-0-2.

1. College of Psychology and Liberal Arts – Adding a New Course to the Curriculum
   CWE 3003 (Engineering Cooperative Education)
   Tabled from previous meeting

Several issues of concern were raised about this item. First, it was understood that this course was essentially the same as EPE 3100 which passed the Committee in November 2009, however there didn’t seem to be the same amount of preparatory prerequisite “build-up” to this course as there is to EPE 3100, which seems important considering that CWE 3003 can be used to satisfy technical elective credit. It was also asked if, assuming this course passed the Committee, six credits of co-op courses would be allowed to satisfy technical elective credit considering that Chemical Engineering currently uses other co-op courses for that purpose, and would Chemical Engineering change their curriculum to only allow this course (CWE 3003) to substitute for technical elective credit. No answer was supplied about Chemical Engineering’s curriculum, however it was pointed out that programs within the Department of Marine and Environmental Systems (DMES) require six credit hours of summer research experience, and the co-op experience for engineers is at least as valuable for them. It was also suggested in response to the concern about the amount of co-op credit used for technical elective credit that departments and advisors should be left with the freedom to determine if such a credit substitution is appropriate for their students. The question was asked as to who makes the final grade determination, and it was stated that the student’s advisor makes that determination which is then passed along to the co-op office. Finally, it was suggested that the restriction of having completed at least 24 credit hours is not necessary since prerequisites to CWE 3003 already have that restriction. The Registrar’s Office noted that the restriction would be placed in BANNER in any event to ensure students don’t register for this course before they are allowed.
The following item was discussed and passed by a vote of 14-1-0.

2. Dept. of Humanities and Communication
   a. Adding a New Course to the Curriculum – HUM 3212 (Eng. and American Lit. 1)
   b. Adding a New Course to the Curriculum – HUM 3213 (Eng. and American Lit. 2)

The concern was raised that there are a number of existing Humanities courses already in the Catalog at the 1000 and 2000 level that are not frequently offered as electives, and those that are offered are usually over-enrolled, making it very difficult to find Humanities elective courses for students who may not have yet taken HUM 2051 (Civilization 1) and HUM 2052 (Civilization 2). Some statistics from the current academic year were presented to support this position. This is especially problematic when trying to develop full course loads for transfer students. It was felt that offering two additional 3000-level courses would exacerbate this problem, though there was nothing wrong with the proposed courses in particular. It was agreed that this was a problem, however these courses were not being offered as elective courses in lieu of offering lower-level courses, but to strengthen an upper-division sequence for the Humanities Department’s own Literature Concentration within their own program, pointing out that other universities offer similar or more content in equivalent programs. The Humanities Department noted, and several others agreed, that while they understand and have tried to mitigate the problem, they don’t have the faculty to cover all the courses that are both needed and desired, noting the number of required service courses (and sections) they have to teach. It was also noted, in connection with the proposed courses, that the Humanities Department currently has a larger percentage of faculty with literature degrees. It was asked whether the problem might be occurring because a humanities elective was appearing too early in some curricula, but the answer was no; generally the electives appear late in the programs but the problem is usually with transfer students. It was also suggested that part of the problem was that upper-level students, those who are able to register earlier than lower-level students, frequently choose to enroll in 1000- or 2000-level humanities elective courses, blocking lower-level students from doing so due to course enrollment limits. When asked whether restrictions could be put in place to help prevent this, the answer was that it probably wouldn’t work because there would be too many objections to such restrictions. Returning to the question of whether the proposed courses should pass the Committee, it was noted that the discussed problem has been looked at in the past through a UGCC subcommittee, and that improvement has been made, and these currently-proposed courses and the Humanities Department’s own programs should not be restricted because not enough progress has yet been made to fix the problem. Finally, it was agreed that the Committee would consider a resolution emphasizing its concern about this problem to the Administration. Dr. H. Heck (Civil Engineering) agreed to write a draft resolution to be considered at a future meeting.

Other:

The Chair asked the Committee to continue thinking about who will succeed him beginning in Fall 2011.

The Chair also noted that he has been informed of the possibility that the Committee will need to consider some large academic packages at the next meeting. Dr. K. Crooks
(Aeronautics) informed the Chair that he would be presenting a package related to helicopter aviation, and Dr. A. Rosiene (Humanities and Communication) said he would have a package related to communications. The Chair also said he expected a package regarding the Construction program from the College of Engineering. Considering the amount of material expected and in the interest of time for the next meeting, he asked the Committee to try to work out any concerns before the meeting with either the relevant Committee representative or the package initiator. It was asked if the material could be posted to the website earlier than a week before, and the Chair said he would, dependent on when he received the material. It was also asked if the initiators could be invited to the meeting to help answer any questions, and the Chair agreed. It was also suggested that perhaps the Consent Agenda could be broken-up into “sub-Consent Agendas” to facilitate passage of those items within specific packages for which no discussion is needed.

Returning to a topic of discussion from earlier meetings regarding what constitutes “passing” in a “pass/fail” course, it was suggested, in the interest of closure, that the definition of “fail” be left somewhat flexible to accommodate differing situations. While the suggestion was generally well-received, it was also suggested that an exception be made that, in a percentage-grade-based course, this flexibility should not be applied when the threshold of “failure” is raised to greater than 60% because it makes advising students very hard to predict and there are certain instances where such a threshold could cause additional problems. This harkened back to a discussion of remedial courses (where the higher-failure threshold was initially proposed) and it was agreed that a discussion would continue outside the Committee meeting. One suggestion offered to help fix the problem of establishing whether remedial education has been sufficient was to have the students take additional placement exams after undergoing remedial education to help determine whether the student is ready to progress into more advanced courses, or whether additional remedial education was needed. This was thought to be a good idea on its surface, and additional discussion is likely to ensue.

Our next meeting is Friday, March 26 at 8:00 a.m. in the Physical Sciences conference room. Agenda items are due Friday, March 19.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Archambault – Chair