The meeting began at 8:02 a.m.

The Chair welcomed the Committee.

Before reaching the Consent Agenda, the Chair noted a few changes/corrections to the following forms:
- Agenda Items 2a and 2b were renumbered to CSE 3231 and CSE 3242, respectively.
- The listed prerequisite to CSE 4683 (Agenda Item 2c) was corrected from CSE 3241 to CSE 3421.

There were no objections to these changes prior to proceeding to the Consent Agenda.

All items remained on the Consent Agenda and were unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda:

College of Science
1. Department of Biological Sciences
   a. ANC – BIO 4102 – Advanced Molecular Biology

School of Computing
2. Department of Computer Sciences
   a. ANC – CSE 4231 – Computer Networks
   b. ANC – CSE 4242 – Advanced Algorithms
   c. ANC – CSE 4683 – Formal Methods

Tabled Consent Agenda Items:
The following item was discussed and unanimously approved, as amended.

College of Science
1. Department of Physics
   a. CRC – PHY 2091 – Physics Laboratory 1 (Tabled 9/23/16)

At the prior meeting, there was confusion as to what the pre/co-requisite string was to be. Dr. Palotai (Dept. of Physics and Space Sciences) clarified that it would read “Prerequisite: PHY 1001 OR Corequisite: (PHY 1001 OR PHY 1999).” The purpose of this change is to accommodate those transfer students who come to Florida Tech with credit for PHY 1001 (Physics 1) but still need to take PHY 2091. In the past, this required pre/co-requisite waiver forms, and this change obviates the need for the paperwork.

Discussion Items:
1. Modification of the University Core Curriculum – Dr. Archambault

The Chair explained that at the previous meeting, the Committee discussed the proposed core competencies that might be adopted with a new Gen Ed. core, and those were briefly summarized. He noted that no changes had been proposed except that Dr. Rosiene (School of Arts and Communication) suggested that perhaps he would like to modify the wording of the outcome related to the humanities. The Chair also introduced a document produced by Dr. Rosiene that correlated the existing core competencies with those
being proposed. Dr. Rosiene explained that each of the competencies that are tied to the core become outcomes that must be measured for accreditation purposes, and that it is important that the wording of the competencies be such that they can be assessed without ambiguity. It was described that the wording of the current competencies was the result of much (and sometimes heated) debate. He also commented that the competency related to communication currently included writing and reading skills, but the corresponding proposed competency removed “reading” and added “oral communication.” Also, it is important to ensure that “social sciences” do not get lost in the outcomes, as it is necessary to include such a course per the SACS requirements. He noted that there seemed to be agreement that the competency related to computer literacy could be removed. Finally, Dr. Rosiene pointed out that the proposed competency related to the scholarly inquiry was directly related to QEP 1, and that really isn’t part of the Gen. Ed. core. He explained that the Gen. Ed. core are the courses that should be completed within a student’s first 60 credits, while the University core is the Gen. Ed. core plus programs such as FYE 1000 (University Experience) and QEP1 and QEP2.

In response, the Chair agreed that, because he wrote them, any wordsmithing of the proposed competencies was welcomed as he believed others were better suited to that task. Second, regarding reading and oral communication, he explained that he felt reading was part of written communication (thus the wording in the proposed outcome), and that some felt that oral communication was sufficiently important that it should be in the core. It was asked whether that would mean requiring COM 2370 (Speech), to which it was answered that while that was the course being envisioned, it doesn’t necessarily mean that it must be required. It was further asked if oral communication could be addressed in other courses, such as COM 2223 (Scientific and Technical Communication) or the freshman English courses, to which the response was “perhaps,” though that might present some challenges. Additionally, it was asked if oral communication could be assessed in courses other those with a COM prefix, such as capstone project courses where presentations are frequent, but the response indicated that this would a program-level assessment, rather than a core assessment.

The Chair also explained that his proposed “global society” competency was a nod to both the social science requirement of SACS and QEP2. In response, it was again emphasized that it is important not to minimize the aspects of social and behavioral sciences. The Chair also asked how the existing competency related to college algebra was assessed if a program does not include mathematics lower than calculus, which is addressed by another competency. It was also asked why the math competencies were split into two. In response, it was explained that there are 6 required math credits, and that the “split” competency was created to address 3 credits each. Also, it was explained that college-level algebra is assessed in calculus courses, thus even if a program doesn’t explicitly require college-level algebra courses, the outcome is still being assessed.

It was suggested that perhaps the easiest approach would be to start with the existing competencies and reword them as necessary, rather than start from scratch. The Committee was in general agreement with this approach, and after some additional discussion, it was decided that the existing competencies that might need addressing are the three related to communication, the humanities, and social and behavioral sciences. It was agreed that the computer literacy competency could be eliminated.

A discussion ensued on assessment, and how certain courses are used to assess particular outcomes because they are taken by a large number of students. All need to be aware that if the Committee does implement a categorical course approach to satisfying the core competencies, the ability to assess becomes more
difficult. The Chair reminded the representatives that while the assessment aspect of this undertaking is important, and that the Committee can assist in that process by wording competencies to facilitate assessment, the task of the Committee is to review and possibly modify the core, including its competencies, form, and requirements, after which it becomes the task of other committees to determine how to assess the outcomes that the UGCC recommends, and thus the discussion of what a new core might look like should not be driven by the requirements of assessment.

Returning to rewording the existing competencies, it was asked if the one related to the humanities needed additional wording to encompass more courses that might be permitted in a new core. For example, if students will be allowed to select courses on topics of history, literature, art, and/or film (to name a few), is the existing language of “...an understanding of the intellectual and historical changes...” sufficient? It was suggested that trying to fit all the humanities courses into the competency might be premature, after which it was suggested that the School of Arts and Communication present at the next meeting those courses that it envisions might be appropriate for the core. It was also suggested, and generally agreed to, that the rewording of this competency be tabled until the Committee decides what types of humanities courses it wants in the core, after which the competency could then be re-examined.

Related to the social science competency, it was asked whether QEP2 was required. It was believed that QEP2 implementation was optional, but the Committee was unsure. It was further unclear whether, if QEP2 was mandatory, at what level. In other words, should it be included in the Gen Ed. core, or at a higher level? It was suggested that Dr. Baloga (Chief Academic Officer) might be able to answer this question, and the Chair agreed to email her and seek her guidance on this.

As to the communications competency, discussion centered on whether and how to add “oral communication.” It was suggested that perhaps only the word “communication” be used, attempting to encompass all forms of communication yet be flexible enough for the programs. It was also suggested that perhaps the wording might be something akin to “reading, writing, and/or oral communication,” providing a choice. It was agreed that the Committee should think on this, and that it will be discussed at the next meeting.

Finally, the Chair noted that another topic that was discussed at the previous meeting was the size of the core. Summarizing the discussion from that meeting, it was explained then that Florida Tech has a lower number of credits in its core than many of its peer institutions, and while there is no requirement that the Committee raise the number of credits, it was felt that this should be discussed before moving on to other matters. It was also suggested that if the core were to be increased, to be more aligned with our peers, that increase ought to come in the form of additional credits of humanities and/or social science courses, an idea that the College of Engineering was likely to reject as they felt it would reduce the technical content in their programs, reducing their attractiveness.

The discussion continued at the present meeting, and it was suggested that there is no reason to increase our core size just because our peers have larger cores. It was also expressed that while the programs within the College of Engineering do not want to see an increase in the size of the core or in the number of humanities or social science credits, nor does it advocate for a reduction in either. Others also reminded the Committee that the core represents the minimum for all programs on campus, and that programs are free to go above the minimums as they see fit. It was noted that other institutions may be able to successfully use a categorical approach, but they also have more credits in their cores allowing them to more easily
assess their competencies, and the concern is, again, that assessment could become more difficult. Because there seemed to be agreement that the core should remain at its present size, a motion was made to that effect which passed on a vote of 10-0-1.

Our next regular meeting is Fri., Nov. 18 at 8:00 a.m. in the Physical Sciences Bldg. conference room (OPS 202). Agenda items are due Fri., Nov. 11.

The meeting ended at 9:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Archambault – Chair