

The Academic Affairs Committee
October 9, 2009, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Booker House Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

Present: Brandt Allen, Carolyn Callahan, Ted Chang, Chris Ghaemmaghami, Mary Gibson, Robert Kemp, Stephen Patek, Linda Phillips-Madson, and Michael Puri.

Guests: E. Clorisa Phillips – Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
Daniel S. Lefkowitz – Associate Professor and Chair of MESA

Robert Kemp, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed members.

Proposal for New Masters Degree

Clo Phillips introduced **Dan Lefkowitz, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures**. Dan presented to the Committee his proposal for a masters degree in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies. Bruce Holsinger, the Associate Dean for the Arts and Humanities, has written a letter of support for the proposal, which will be brought to the Faculty Senate floor for a vote in November. It has not yet been officially approved by the Provost's Office. On behalf of the Provost, Clo would like a recommendation from this committee.

The masters will be popular with existing Department students who now go elsewhere to continue their education. Great interest exists nationally in masters degrees in regional studies; this program responds to a broad need on the part of students, but also to an expressed need by businesses and governmental agencies for people with masters in these languages. The program will be heavy in language training, setting it apart from many existing masters in regional studies. Many such programs are run through centers rather than by a language department. This strengthens the appeal of the degree outside of the University as well.

Interdisciplinary majors depend heavily on professors from outside, so bringing in grad students would create benefit for these majors. No additional courses will be needed except for the capstone course, the Graduate Research Seminar, that can be covered by existing faculty.

The program is designed to accommodate incoming classes of 10 students, with a cohort of 20. It was approved last year by the College's Committee on Educational Policy and Curriculum. After approval by the Provost, it will be presented to the Board of Visitors for approval, then to the State Council in Richmond. It does not have to be sent for approval to our accreditors in Atlanta because it is not considered substantively different from what the University already does.

What are arguments against it?

Would it take resources from other areas? No, it can be handled with existing faculty and will not create a greater demand for library resources. One possible problem is that, while it would fill small upper level classes (e.g., Urdu), it may burden certain University faculty in this degree path whose classes are large and already full.

There's so much existing interest that there should be no problem filling it right away. **What if interest mushrooms?** Then the program would make claims on additional faculty. But the

department envisions having other kinds of masters degrees; they are motivated to keep this program within certain bounds so they can concentrate on other things.

Does it take students from other programs?

There is no other program like this in Virginia institutions. The Bureau of Labor statistics are compelling. And if we take programs to SCHEV that are related to societal problems and issues, they are usually receptive to that. This could also attract students to come to and stay in Virginia.

Clo's regular job is to interface with SCHEV; she is requesting that this masters program be called a spin-off program to lessen review time in Richmond.

Following discussion, **the Committee voted unanimously to endorse the proposal, and recommended bringing it to a vote before the full Senate.**

Proposed Degree Terminations

Clo reported on **seven degree closings**. Based on SCHEV productivity reviews and the Curry School's own extensive program reviews, **four Ed.D programs** will be closed; these are advanced practice, non-research doctoral degrees. More students are going into Ph.D. programs rather than EDD. (Around 20 programs around the Grounds were identified with flagging enrollments, but a number were exempted because they're the only ones in Virginia or for some other reason.) Curry will also close one degree that was not flagged by SCHEV – **an Ed.D. in higher education**. Two other degrees we anticipate closing are the M.Ed. in Educational Policy Studies and also the **MA in Bioethics** in Arts & Sciences, run by Jim Childress and Margaret Mohrmann. They made the decision because of declining enrollments.

These are fairly non-controversial degree closings; they don't require faculty layoffs, and they've been dying slow death. All are part of stronger Ph.D. programs.

Clo will bring this to the Faculty Senate as a formal agenda item – to close a total of 5 Ed.D.s and one Masters in Curry; and one Masters in the College. This will be strictly a recommendation from the Faculty Senate, either in support or not. The recommendation will then be sent to the President, who will bring it to the BOV, after which it will go to SCHEV. This will assure that the Faculty Senate has had the chance to consider any issues involved. It was pointed out that once a degree is taken off the books, it is very difficult to reintroduce if conditions change. Sometime in the next week, Clo will send out short documents in preparation for the presentation to the Faculty Senate.

Revised Template for New Degree Proposals

Clo will draft a revised template for new degree proposals, incorporating the needs of the Faculty Senate, the State (SCHEV), and accrediting bodies. She offered to facilitate an ongoing conversation about what needs to be included in proposals. She passed out a template she received three years ago from the Academic Affairs Committee on what the Committee looks for in a proposal. That was the last thing she has in writing from the Senate. On the flip side of this document are the kinds of things Clo needs to deliver to SCHEV. If we have to take something to the accreditors, they look for anything that is substantively different, or if we're opening a site away from the University. Clo asked the Committee if the kinds of things addressed in Dan's proposal suit the Committee's purposes.

It was recommended that the proposal address whether the proposed program would look to the greater University for resources. It was also suggested that the proposal keep documentation to a minimum, reserving the details for an appendix.

Clo plans to formulate templates – with the Committee’s input – for a program or a degree, as well as one for a new school, to serve as examples.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.