CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
December 4, 2014
Approved

Members Present: Dr. Ron Buchanan, Dr. Ellen Fancher-Ruiz, Ms. Barbara Gershman, Ms. Frankie Harris-Lyne, Dr. Sam Hill, Ms. Ann-Marie John (by phone), Mr. Frederick Markham, Dr. Mandy Milot, Dr. Burton Peretti, Mr. Edward Perry, Ms. Lisa Riggelman-Gross, Dr. Sharon Robertson, Ms. Maria Rynn, Ms. Judy Snyder, Ms. Kristine Winner, Mr. Scott Wood and Dr. Izanne Zorin

Members Absent: Mr. Joseph Agnich, Ms. Barbara Hopkins, Dr. Roger Ramsammy, Dr. Mel Schiavelli, and Mr. Kevin Simons

Guests: Dr. Jimmie McClellan, Dr. Paul McVeigh, Dr. Willie Pomeroy, Ms. Stacy Rice, Dr. Jennifer Roberts, and Ms. Ruth Takushi

Minutes of the October 2014 Meeting
The minutes of the October 30, 2014 meeting were approved as revised.

New ESL Courses
Dr. Jimmie McClellan (Dean, AL) introduced Ms. Ruth Takushi (ESL, AL). Ms. Takushi explained that ESL 20 English as a Second Language II, a required course for ESL students placing into Level 2, is offered at NOVA for 10 credits. ESL 20 covers reading, writing, and basic grammatical structures of English. The ESL Cluster recommends the creation of two 5-credit courses, ESL 21 Written Communication II and ESL 22 Reading and Vocabulary II. Combined, these new courses will cover the same material as ESL 20, but will provide students the option to concentrate on one skill set at a time. ESL 21 will cover the writing requirements of ESL 20, including composition and basic grammatical structures. ESL 22 will cover reading and vocabulary development. The addition of these two new courses will give VCCS colleges the flexibility of offering either ESL 20 for 9 – 15 credits or ESL 21 and ESL 22 for 3 – 6 credits each; at NOVA, we would continue to offer ESL 20 for 10 credits and we would offer ESL 21 and 22 for 5 credits each.

Offering two 5-credit courses in the place of ESL 20 will ease the financial burden of paying for 10 credits in a single transaction. This serves the community by creating a more affordable option for students entering the college at Level 2 by giving them the same part-time opportunities as students enrolling in Levels 3, 4, and 5. This move is pedagogically sound because language learners tend to acquire different skills at different rates. Allowing teachers to evaluate skills separately aligns with best practices and benefits the students.

Students will still be advised to register for 10 credits, ESL 21 and ESL 22, in the same semester, either simultaneously or in consecutive 8-week sessions. The creation of ESL 21 and ESL 22, however, will allow professors to evaluate student progress in a specific skill area, which parallels the current organization of Levels 3, 4, and 5. Instructors could remove students from one course if testing on the first day of class shows that skills are already adequate in one area. In addition, currently, students who are unsuccessful in ESL 20 are reluctant to repeat and pay for another 10 credits. Students are more likely to repeat a 5-credit course; this will likely increase retention and success rates. However, the faculty are not asking to discontinue the use of ESL 20.
Furthermore, with new Financial Aid regulations, failing a 10-credit course makes it difficult for students to recover and maintain progress in 66% of their coursework. Should students perform poorly in one 5-credit course, they will still have a chance to achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress in their first semester. Ms. Takushi explained that the three courses (ESL 21, 22 and 24) will be coordinated; each will include the use of reading, writing, and speaking, but each course will emphasize a different skill.

Ms. Snyder stated that ESL faculty at all campuses read ESL placement test essays because they believe correct placement is vital. All ESL courses have explicit exit criteria.

This proposal has the support of the ESL Cluster, the five NOVA deans with responsibility for ESL and four VCCS colleges (with no colleges expressing concern).

The Curriculum Committee approved the creation of two new ESL courses, ESL 21 Written Communication II and ESL 22 Reading and Vocabulary II to be effective Fall 2015." Dr. Robertson noted that we do not establish new course numbers, but that the VCCS staff try to assign the numbers we recommend (in this case, 21 and 22). In addition, Dr. Buchanan suggested that the cluster consider developing an ESL “23.”

**International Travel**

Dr. Paul McVeigh (Associate Vice President for Global Studies and Programs) sought the committee’s input on proposed revisions to the International Travel policies and procedures listed in the Faculty Handbook. The updates are related to NOVA’s risk management and Clery Act efforts. He explained that to grant Study Abroad credit, the experience must be very clearly defined. Proposals must explain the benefit of offering the course abroad rather than at NOVA. The proposals must also show how the course objectives will be covered.

There was much discussion about dissatisfaction with Chrome River. It does not work well when the traveler is being reimbursed by someone other than her supervisor. Drs. Buchanan and Fancher-Ruiz stated that they save the paper form in case of questions. It is important to document approval to travel to protect the traveler regarding liability.

The Curriculum Committee supported the proposed revisions to the International Travel section of the Faculty Handbook. Committee members urged Dr. McVeigh to add a description of the committee that reviews Study Abroad proposals.

**Articulation and Guaranteed Admission Agreement Philosophy and Procedures**

Dr. Robertson explained that although she has updated them to use current titles (VP instead of Dean and Associate VP instead of Associate Dean), the actual procedures outlined in the “Articulation Guidelines” section of the Curriculum Procedures Manual have not been updated since 1997-98. Much has changed since then. When these procedures were approved, NOVA developed one – three articulation agreements per year, and guaranteed admission agreements were not a separate category of agreement. The VCCS had done very little with system-wide agreements.
NOVA students now have access to roughly 100 agreements made by colleges and universities either with NOVA directly or with the VCCS.

Developing agreements takes a surprisingly long time and requires a great deal of attention to detail. Dr. Robertson noted that once developed, the agreements must be maintained as our curricula or those of senior institutions change. Because these agreements are so important for our students, Dr. Robertson and Julia Brown, Coordinator for Transfer Policy, requested the Curriculum Committee’s thoughts on the philosophy of and priorities and procedures for development of NOVA’s articulation and guaranteed admission agreements for the future.

Committee members recognized the importance of NOVA in students’ educational pipeline. Priorities recommended included agreements with Virginia public institutions, associate-to-baccalaureate pathways, and keeping existing agreements current—especially those with Virginia public institutions. West Virginia University should be a priority since so many students transfer to it. Program-specific agreements should be considered when possible, but are not as high a priority.

Committee members noted that guaranteed admission agreements are really conditionally guaranteed. Each agreement includes specific criteria that must be met in order for students to be eligible to transfer under the terms of the agreement. For example, some institutions accept any AP credit that NOVA has transcripted, some do not accept it with a score of 3 (as we do), some make decisions on a case-by-case basis, and a few do not accept AP at all. The committee recommended adding a button to the Transfer website to recognize the relationship between dual enrollment and transfer. It would be helpful to be able to easily identify agreements that do or do not specifically apply to students who obtain their entire associate degree while in high school. It would also be helpful to be able to easily find information on specific courses not accepted by certain universities if the courses are taken via dual enrollment. Students should be advised to talk with the senior institution to which they plan to transfer as soon as possible to get institution- and program-specific transfer advice.

Changes to articulation and guaranteed admission agreements should be communicated widely. Students following the requirements of a current agreement should be grandfathered to some extent if the agreement is revised.

The Curriculum Committee recommended retaining the Articulation Committee. The committee should help keep people informed of new information. Membership could be revised to add an academic dean and to include faculty in specific disciplines. It may no longer be necessary to include all transfer counselors.

Dr. Robertson thanked the committee for its advice. She will bring a formal proposal for revisions to the January 2015 meeting.

Revisions to Honors Core Curriculum and Honors Policies
Ms. Stacy Rice (Coordinator for Collegewide Honors) stated that roughly 150 students are in the Honors Program and many more take individual Honors classes. She is working with several universities on agreements that will grant special benefits to NOVA Honors Program graduates who
wish to participate in university Honors programs. Ms. Rice highlighted some of the testimonials provided by Honors Scholars; Dr. Robertson will email the entire document to the Committee. Ms. Rice presented proposed revisions to the statement describing the Honors Program in the college Catalog. Proposed by the Honors Committee, some revisions are editorial, but a few are substantive. Ms. Rice described the substantive revisions and a rationale for each change.

The description of the meaning of “Honors” should be revised to include the REAL (Research, Enrichment, Academic rigor, and Leadership) components of all Honors courses to help students understand how Honors courses differ from other courses. These components have been incorporated into all Honors courses for the past few years, so the catalog should mention them.

Ms. Rice reviewed several revisions designed to make eligibility for Honors clearer and to update approval mechanisms.

- The section on eligibility for Honors courses was updated to include an ACT score in addition to the SAT English examination score as more students come to NOVA with ACT scores than in the past. The score itself is consistent with that approved by the VCCS.
- Placement into ENG 111 and/or MTH 151 or higher with an Honors chair’s approval also was added to this section. The Honors Committee had hoped that the VCCS would establish specific Honors scores, but that appears to be unlikely in the near future. The scores indicate that a student is eligible to be interviewed by the campus Honors chair who will make a decision based on overall preparedness and motivation.
- The committee added the option of using recommendations to identify potential Honors students because often a teacher or other mentor will recognize a student’s abilities.
- The revised catalog narrative separates information into “Eligibility for Honors Courses” and “Eligibility for the Honors Program” because the requirements are different.

Ms. Snyder reported that the Alexandria Campus also has a form with which ESL faculty can recommend students for the Honors Program. The ACT score listed was questioned, so Dr. Robertson will check to be sure that the most current score is included in the catalog.

Ms. Rice also described proposed changes to the narrative describing the benefits of the Honors Program and the requirements of the Honors Core Curriculum.

- A new benefit of the Program, special transfer opportunities to selective institutions, was added to the narrative. This recognizes the MOUs being drafted with Honors programs at selective institutions and the role Honors faculty play in helping Honors students attend selective institutions.
- The Core Curriculum was revised to require students to take a 200-level Honors course, which could include an interdisciplinary capstone if one is available, or the Honors internship rather than the current preference for the interdisciplinary seminar. The campuses have not been able to reliably offer an interdisciplinary capstone seminar. These courses rarely run due to low enrollment and they can be difficult to transfer since many are not equivalent to any particular course. The increased flexibility should increase the number of Honors Core Curriculum graduates without compromising the quality of the Core Curriculum.
- In conjunction with the previous change, students would be required take at least 9 credits of full Honors classes in order to graduate. This is not a change to the current policy, but
phrases the requirement positively rather than negatively. It assures that Honors Core students take several seminar-style Honors courses.

- A new footnote states that ELI Honors courses will be considered on a case by case basis. The Committee values the outreach afforded by ELI, but seminar-style classes are an integral part of the Honors program experience so, as with Honors option sections, the committee believes that students should be required to take most of their Honors courses on campus. This probably will change if we can build a large online Honors presence that includes full Honors courses (not just Honors options).

- The GPA required for completion of the Honors Core Curriculum is increased from a 3.0 or higher in all Honors courses to a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher AND an Honors GPA of 3.275 or higher. This is more in line with the practice at other institutions.

The Curriculum Committee recommended sharing the proposed revisions with the Clusters. It would be useful to provide a list of interdisciplinary courses online.

Ms. Rice stated that the Honors Committee is considering offering a shorter version of the Core Curriculum so that students who do not complete the entire curriculum may still get some Honors designation on their transcript in addition to noting specific Honors classes. Ms. Winner advised against doing this as it would dilute the Honors Program.

The Curriculum Committee approved the proposed revisions as amended for implementation in Fall 2015.