Curriculum Committee Meeting
Approved
December 5, 2013

**Members Present:** Mr. David Epstein, Dr. Ellen Fancher-Ruiz, Ms. Barbara Gershman, Ms. Barbara Hopkins, Mr. Edward Perry, Ms. Lisa Rigggleman-Gross, Dr. Sharon Robertson, Ms. Maria Rynn, Dr. Mel Schiavelli, Mr. Kevin Simons, Ms. Judy Snyder, Ms. Kristine Winner, Mr. Scott Wood and Dr. Izanne Zorin.

**Members Absent:** Mr. Brian Foley, Ms. Ann-Marie John, Dr. Julie Leidig, and Dr. Barbara Saperstone.

**Guests:** Ms. Christine Schull, General Education Council Representative, Ms. Christina Hyde, Associate Director for the Community College Initiative Program and Mr. Syedur Rahman, Director of International Sponsored Programs.

**College Recorder:** Norie Flowers

**Minutes of the October 24, 2013 Meeting**
The minutes of the October 24, 2013, meeting were approved as distributed.

**Reduce Number of Years Students May Graduate from Discontinued Programs**
Dr. Robertson explained that NOVA policy currently allows students to graduate for seven years after a program is discontinued. This presents difficulties for deans who must either continue to offer the courses required for the discontinued programs or be willing to make substitutions for some or all of the required courses. In addition, this policy allows students to graduate from programs that were discontinued because they were no longer providing preparation for current employment or transfer opportunities; in most cases, these students would have been better served if they had been advised to follow a more up-to-date curriculum. SCHEV will automatically stop accepting graduates of baccalaureate programs seven years after discontinuance; that is probably why NOVA chose to allow students seven years, but our programs are considerably shorter than baccalaureate programs. There is no VCCS policy that dictates the number of years students may graduate from discontinued programs. She proposed that the policy be changed to allow students to graduate for no more than 3 years after a program is discontinued.

Data in OIR Fact Books clearly show that very few students graduate from discontinued programs even one or two years after discontinuance. For programs closed in Fall 2002 through Fall 2011, there were no graduates from any program seven years after it was closed. Only two AAS degrees and one certificate program produced graduates four years after discontinuance. Most career studies certificates yielded no graduates one or two years after they were discontinued. The Curriculum Committee discussed allowing students to graduate from degree programs for 4 years and from certificates and career studies certificates for only 1 or 2 years, but decided that would be confusing to students and their advisors.

The Curriculum Committee approved the proposal to reduce the number of years students may graduate from discontinued programs from seven to three, to be effective Fall 2014.

**Council for General Education Update and Proposal to Revise Cultural and Social Understanding General Education Goal**
Council representative Ms. Christine Schull (CHD, AL) provided background on the mandate of the NOVA Council for General Education that provides oversight and guidance for all matters related to general education at the college. Specifically, it is concerned with the overall purpose, structure, and quality of the college’s general education program and the extent to which NOVA degree graduates attain the broad-based competencies they need for success in further education, employment in their career fields, and informed
and committed involvement in the lives of their communities. The Council promotes understanding within and beyond the institution of the criticality of general education as part of collegiate learning as well as the importance of general education in achieving the college’s strategic goals related to teaching and learning and excellence.

Council representative and Curriculum Committee member Mr. Simons pointed out that the Council includes an eclectic mix of members representing a broad range of disciplines and administrative roles including Academic Assessment. Council members study course content and how each course fits into institutional goals. They also map disciplines to the general education goals. As a result, some courses have been found not to meet general education goals; others were added after the courses were mapped. The Council looks at which student learning outcome/SLO is attached to which course. It is easier for students to make wise decisions if the course content summary has the general education goals mapped to them. The Council is currently considering assessing oral communication teaching methods across disciplines.

Dr. Schiavelli discussed the importance of mapping where the General Education Goals are being met and assessed in all courses, not just general education courses. It would help faculty articulate what is expected of our students – the competency of our students - not just a focus on course content.

For more than three years, the Council for General Education has discussed NOVA’s General Education Goals. The Council found that the final objective listed under the Cultural and Social Understanding Goal uses some outdated language and does not adequately convey the global nature of the cultural systems in which our graduates will live and work. Research conducted by the Council showed that peer institutions have replaced the term “worldwide” with “globalized.” The Council unanimously agreed to the change shown below at its November 20, 2013 meeting.

Cultural and Social Understanding (p. 20 of the 2013-14 catalog)
Students will demonstrate the ability to
• assess the impact that social institutions have on individuals and culture—past, present, and future;
• describe their own as well as others’ personal ethical systems and values within social institutions;
• recognize the impact that arts and humanities have upon individuals and cultures;
• recognize the role of language in social and cultural contexts; and
• recognize the interdependence of distinctive worldwide and globalized nature of varied social, economic, geo-political, and cultural systems.

The Curriculum Committee approved the proposed revision to the last objective under the Cultural and Social Understanding General Education Goal, to be effective Fall 2014.

**Educational Enrichment and Professional Advancement Certificate**
Ms. Christina Hyde, Associate Director for the Community College Initiative Program, and Mr. Syedur Rahman, Director of International Sponsored Programs, presented a proposal to request that the Curriculum Committee be open to discussions for the creation of an academic certificate program for students from underrepresented and underserved communities in select developing countries.

Since April 2010, NOVA and its seven partner institutions (Community College Consortium/CCC) have received the Community College Initiative Program grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. This grant supports students from underrepresented and underserved
communities in selected developing countries to be hosted at CCC institutions for a one year non-degree academic and cultural program. Ms. Hyde stated that there are some 68 students at NOVA from the grant’s work with Brazil. These are not degree-seeking students. As a result of the academic and related program strengths and successes of the last three years, the Community College Consortium, under NOVA’s fiscal and administrative leadership, is now the prime recipient of the Community College Initiative Program grant.

Currently, students at NOVA under this program are given certificates of completion. The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is currently exploring the possibility of providing participants with credit certificates. Mr. Rahman stated that a credentialed academic certificate would assist by providing students a competitive advantage in the job markets in their respective countries. Ms. Hyde added that in order to be competitive with other colleges in the consortium, NOVA needs to be able to provide something bigger – such as the certificate. She indicated that it might also be possible for first generation residents of Northern Virginia to take advantage of this type of program. The program objectives are to prepare community college students to:

- Acquire a field of study concentration
- Navigate and prosper in a global environment
- Enhance understanding of U.S. culture and society, especially that the U.S. is an individualistic and entrepreneurial country
- Develop focused professional skill sets: project management and business planning/entrepreneurship

The courses that have been offered thus far are not for credit. The program requires 100 hours of community service. All of the students have TOEFL scores and take ACCUPLACER. Some need to start in ACLI. These students are here on a J visa. Students are selected through a competitive process in their country and/or the U.S. Committee members asked who the supervisor would be for such a program. The presenters indicated that they did not have the expertise to explore that part of the equation at this juncture.

Committee members suggested looking at specific educational tracks, but also supported continued discussions about this type of certificate.

Curriculum Philosophy and General Discussion of Whether or Not to Provide Greater Guidance for Courses and Programs

Dr. Robertson led a discussion on the possibility of the Curriculum Committee beginning to think more strategically about the college’s curriculum as a whole. Dr. Schiavelli commented that out of the 650,000 job openings in the Northern Virginia region, 49% are in STEM fields, and 8 out of 10 IT jobs require a bachelor’s degree. We need, he advised, to think about how to get students into degree completion programs. Recent national data indicate that giving students too many choices tends to impede degree completion. It is equally important to look at how all course proposals fit into the goals of the college.

Dr. Robertson recommended that the Committee be more rigorous in considering what senior institutions require. She mentioned that the OIR Fact Book provides good information on program productivity; this information can help the college determine which programs are no longer relevant. It is a challenge to help the campuses agree that programs that are no longer viable should be discontinued. Every three years the VCCS conducts a productivity study of degrees and certificates and the number of graduates of those programs and program FTES. If NOVA is low on both indicators, we must either close the program or explain how the program will be revitalized.
Information Items

Changes to the VPT English Placement Test
Changes to the English portion of the Virginia Placement Test (VPT) were announced in November. The English essay questions (writing prompts) have run their course. It appears that the questions were shared, thus allowing students to prepare their essay ahead of time and compromising the integrity of the test. Also, one prompt tended to yield higher placements than the other. As a result, both prompts will be discontinued before the end of the Fall 2013 semester. They will be replaced with 2 new prompts, with regular alternation in the future. These new prompts have been vetted and approved by faculty as well as determined to have matching, consistent means. The essay switching was scheduled for November 25, from 7-10 p.m. The System Office consulted with colleges and attempted to pick a time when many testing centers either would not be open or at least would have few VPT testers due to the holiday. Another change in the essay structure will be coming in the next few months.

VCCS ASAC Update
Dr. Robertson stated that ASAC liked the proposal to change the policy on final exams. Currently, the policy states that if giving a final exam, instructors have to schedule one hour for each credit up to 3 credits. Instead, it will now say that if a final exam is planned instructors are asked to schedule at least 50 minutes of evaluation time per course and not to exceed 150 minutes.

Spring 2014 Curriculum Committee Meeting Dates
Dr. Robertson distributed the Spring meeting dates: January 30, March 20, and May 1, all at 1:00 p.m. in the Large Boar Room of the Pender Administrative complex.