

**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE****October 29, 2015**

Approved

**Members Present:** Dr. Barb Canfield, Dr. Nate Carter, Mr. Paul Chapman, Ms. Mary Charleza, Dr. Ellen Fancher-Ruiz, Ms. Barbara Gershman, Ms. Frankie Harris-Lyne, Dr. Sam Hill, Ms. Mitra Jahangeri, Mr. Frederick Markham, Dr. Ann McGowan, Dr. Mary Moseley, Dr. Burton Peretti, Ms. Lisa Riggelman-Gross, Dr. Sharon Robertson, Dr. Mel Schiavelli, Mr. Fernando Seminario, Mr. Scott Wood, Dr. Izanne Zorin.

**Members Absent:** Dr. Ron Buchanan, Dr. Roger Ramsammy, Dr. Alias Smith.

**Guests:** Ms. Julia Brown, Ms. Kara Buenafe, Dr. Abbas Eftekhari, Mr. David Epstein, Mr. Andrew Cornell, Dr. Beth Harper, Dr. Willie Pomeroy, Dr. Jennifer Roberts, Ms. Christiane Silva, Ms. Joan Zanders, Dr. Tatiana Stantcheva, Ms. Christiane Silva.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

**Minutes of the September 2015 Meeting**

The minutes of the September 3, 2015 meeting were approved as distributed. Dr. Robertson provided an update on the status of the proposal to revise the Historic Preservation career studies certificate.

**ASAC Update**

The committee discussed issues being considered by the VCCS Academic and Student Affairs Council (ASAC). It was noted that 10 NOVA administrators are members of ASAC; at least one NOVA representative is on each of the five subcommittees (Educational Programs, Educational Technology, Faculty Issues, Institutional Effectiveness, and Student Services).

Dr. Robertson reported that proposed revisions to general education in the VCCS Policy Manual were approved at ASAC, but not approved by the VCCS Advisory Council of Presidents (ACOP). ASAC will discuss this again at its November meeting.

The Curriculum Committee was especially interested in plans to develop an Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) degree for the VCCS. Once developed, NOVA plans to use this type of degree and will probably discontinue use of the AAA. A subcommittee of the Educational Programs Committee met and recommended that the system office host a drive-in meeting for colleges interested in the AFA to establish general education distribution requirements. The drive-in meeting for interested VPs is scheduled for December 1. NOVA's deans with responsibility for fine arts have been involved in system-wide discussions about the AFA.

**Guided Pathways and General Education Courses**

Dr. Schiavelli discussed the purpose of the upcoming VCCS Student Success Leadership Institute (SSLI) and AACC Pathways Project. A team from NOVA will participate in the SSLI, which is designed to help VCCS colleges develop clear curriculum pathways.

Dr. Schiavelli presented "Curriculum by the Numbers." He noted that the NOVA catalog lists many courses that are rarely offered. Twenty-five courses accounted for 50% of the total enrollments in Fall 2015. Of the 2309 courses listed in the catalog, over the past eight terms 62 courses accounted for 2/3 of all enrollment. Over that same time period, 33 general education courses accounted for 75% of all general education enrollment. The committee also reviewed a chart showing the percentages of transfer programs that can be met by the 30 highest-enrollment courses, a chart showing the enrollments in each of the past 6 terms of all NOVA general education courses, a chart showing how those courses transfer to five universities, and a chart listing the 49 programs that produced 5 or fewer graduates in 2014-2015.

To illustrate the need for improving curriculum pathways, Dr. Schiavelli distributed a comparison of NOVA's Business Administration AS, which includes 7 electives, to the courses Mason recommends that NOVA students take if they hope to enter Mason's business program. The committee expressed interest in possibly creating a subcommittee to look at general education course offerings, especially as they relate to transfer. Dr. Schiavelli also emphasized that guided pathways will help students use their financial aid efficiently. He also reported that anything we can do to increase program completion is in NOVA's best interest because performance funding will depend on more completions.

Mr. David Epstein, who chairs the Academic Deans' Council, asked if it is okay to say no. Dr. Robertson assured him that deans and the Curriculum Committee can say no, and in fact *should* say no if they do not support a proposal.

Dr. Carter noted that this is different from the philosophy of being comprehensive and offering a broad range of courses. Dr. Zorin suggested that NOVA could promote that "we're here to help you succeed." Dr. Mosely asked why some classes are allowed to run with fewer than 9 students. She strongly recommended that a rubric outlining key measures of a program's effectiveness accompany any proposal sent to the Curriculum Committee. Assessment of programs needs to be program wide. Ms. Harris-Lyne stated that MEC faculty could help others with program assessment. The committee agreed that there is no college wide leader for multi-campus programs. Dr. Hill suggested that to remain a comprehensive college, more enrichment courses could be offered through Workforce.

### **Physics Discipline Review**

Supported by Dr. Abbas Eftekhari (Dean, AN), Dr. Tatiana Stantcheva (PHY, AL) outlined the Physics discipline review process. Begun in 2011, the review included representatives of all comprehensive campuses. During the review, the faculty completed several actions: they developed SLOs, refined their goals, and officially removed a course sequence that had not been offered in several years.

Dr. Stantcheva noted that students tend to take physics because it is required for their program. About 67% of students failed an assessment of math they need the first day of a Physics course. This is true despite students having met the math prerequisite. The Physics faculty are researching ways to help students with weak math skills.

Dr. Stantcheva reported other discipline review highlights. There is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for the content of online Physics courses. Students responding to a survey were satisfied

with their instruction. Funding for supplies and equipment that cost less than \$500 is a recurring problem since Physics labs use large quantities of low-cost supplies. One faculty member runs small seminars that serve the needs of Honors students.

Dr. Zorin, who served as the Reader of the entire discipline review report said the report was thorough and practical. She reported that the physics enrollment has more than doubled since the last review. Physics is now taught at every campus and at ELL, with full-time faculty at each comprehensive campus. Dr. Zorin commended the Physics discipline review committee for their thorough examination and evaluation of Physics courses, teaching modalities and teaching effectiveness. She recommended that the committee approve the discipline review report.

The Curriculum Committee accepted the Physics Discipline Review Report and its action plan.

### **Competency-Based Education**

With the support of Ms. Kara Buenafe (Publications Specialist, CS), Dr. Willie Pomeroy (Director of Academic & Student Services Compliance) and Ms. Joan Zanders (Director of College-wide Financial Aid) briefed the committee on the possibility that NOVA will participate in an experiment with Competency-Based Education (CBE). Ms. Zanders explained that NOVA has been selected by the U.S. Department of Education as an experimental site for CBE. CBE allows students to advance based on their ability to master a skill or competency at their own pace, so the competencies needed for a program are taught in modular form rather than in standard 3- or 4-credit courses. Dr. Pomeroy explained that students would be placed in a program but not in courses, except perhaps some general education courses.

Most frequently used for career-technical programs, CBE is designed to provide employers with clear information on skills they can expect graduates to have. The LPN program, currently offered through Workforce Development, would be an ideal candidate for this approach if the program were to be offered for credit. Credit IT programs are a likely place for NOVA to start. Ms. Zanders, Dr. Pomeroy and Ms. Buenafe represented NOVA at a CBE meeting on October 21, 2015 sponsored by the System Office. At that meeting, Danville Community College representatives stated that they are exploring CBE with certificates in IT, Advanced Manufacturing – Metrology, Industrial Maintenance, and Precision Machining. Loudoun Community College (LCC) representatives reported that they are already running CBE programs in AST, IT including Cybersecurity, HIM, and Coding. These career studies certificate programs do not have general education components.

Credit for prior learning is an important component of CBE since its purpose is to streamline students' education. There are, however, transfer issues associated with CBE in general and the transfer of credit for prior learning in particular. Mr. Andrew Cornell (Dean, MEC) asked if students would pay for credit for prior learning to generate funds to pay faculty to evaluate non-traditional learning.

Several challenges to the implementation of CBE have been identified. Since LCC is offering CBE programs, the VCCS is aware of problems with transcribing, approvals (who needs to approve this approach?), financial aid, funding, registration, and policies. LCC colleagues have offered to share with us the prospective the sent to SACSCOC for approval to grant college credit for CBE programs. Ms. Harris-Lyne stated that the Radiography program has software that tracks students'

competencies. Curriculum Committee members recommended specifying how faculty load would be calculated and how many times a student can try CBE modules before being advised to take regular classes. Dr. Canfield noted that this kind of approach is likely to be attractive to veterans, so it will be important for them to be able to use veterans' benefits to pay for CBE programs. The committee also was interested in the possibility of incorporating an apprenticeship or internship into a CBE program.

Many current CBE programs are offered online, so ELI administrators have been alerted that NOVA may participate in CBE.

Dr. Peretti observed that the book Redesigning America's Community Colleges does not speak favorably of CBE.

### **Spring Meeting Dates**

Ms. Christiane Silva (Academic Services, CS) will send the committee a Doodle poll to select the first Spring meeting date, which will be either January 28 or February 4, 2016. The committee also will meet March 24 and May 5.