

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD  
Academic Quality and Workforce

## **Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee**

April 20, 2018

### **Summary Notes**

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**Members present:** Daniel Brown, Edward Byerly, Janna Chancey, Elizabeth Garcia, Homer Guevara, Elizabeth Howard, Marilyn Kaplan, Elva LeBlanc, Stephanie Legree-Roberts (via phone), Teri Longacre, Nancy Martin, Richard Miller (Co-Chair), Julie Penley (Co-Chair), Norma Perez, John Quintanilla, Esther Rumsey, Janet Tareilo, Monica Villarreal

**Members absent:** Sonia Flores, Sheila Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, William Harlow, José Rojas, Kerry Schindler, Kristin Spizzirri

**Visitors:** Larry Abraham (UT-Austin), Dawn Remmers (Austin College), Rissa McGuire (Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors), Jennifer Morgan (UT-Austin)

**Coordinating Board staff:** Reinold Cornelius, Assistant Director, James Goeman, Assistant Director, Rex Peebles, Assistant Commissioner, Stacey Silverman, Deputy Assistant Commissioner

#### **1. Call to Order and Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Julie Penley at 10:00 a.m., followed by member introductions.

#### **2. Consideration of Summary Notes From the September 15, 2017 Meeting**

Dr. Penley noted that the draft of the Summary Notes erroneously listed Janna Chancey as co-chair. Esther Rumsey made a motion to accept the summary notes from the 2017 September meeting as corrected, seconded by Janna Chancey, and the committee voted unanimously to accept.

#### **3. Consideration of Potential Changes to The Texas Core Curriculum**

Co-Chair Julie Penley reported on the workgroup meeting for the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC). There were two issues considered: the general education requirement for the Foundational Component Areas (FCA) and requirements of the Component Area Option (CAO).

Reinold Cornelius explained that the workgroup recommendation was to allow only lower-division courses in any FCA but to allow upper-division courses in the CAO, if they are substantially different to lower division courses in the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM). The workgroup also recommended against implicit approval of all approved FCA courses for fulfillment of the CAO, but to give institutions a choice to list all courses. The workgroup recommended to uncouple the Option B of the CAO from the requirements of FCA definitions and to remove the restriction for not more than three Semester Credit Hours (SCH) in Option B. This would allow two-course sequences, such as introductory language courses, to be taken together in Option B.

Members discussed clarifications that under the workgroup recommendation all approved FCA courses would still be allowed in the CAO, if an institution would opt for this, but that an institution would not need to do so. Dr. Quintanilla suggested to change the bullet-point

summary of the workgroup report to a positive statement, such as "institutions may request any course listed in their FCA to be included in the CAO, if they wish to do so."

Members discussed clarification that there was no limit for the number of courses listed in the CAO. The fact that six Semester Credit Hours (SCH) are allowed in the CAO, does not mean that only two courses are allowed.

The Committee discussed the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS), its connection to the ACGM, and the questions of the meaning of the common course numbering system as a requirement for ACGM courses or lower-division courses.

Reinold Cornelius explained the staff recommendation to not allow upper-division courses in the FCAs, as the workgroup had recommended, but also not in the CAO. In addition staff recommended wording for Option A of the CAO that courses listed in either an FCA or the CAO may not be applied to the other, if not listed there as well. Staff recommended for Option B, in addition to the workgroup recommendation, that courses would have to fall into one of two groups of special interest to the institution. Staff was concerned that without such restriction, an institution could include the entire course inventory in Option B, which would be against the intent of giving institutions options for their students' needs.

Julie Penley stated that the staff recommended wording for Option A agreed with the workgroup recommendation that courses listed in the CAO must be explicitly listed there.

Members discussed implications of having upper-division courses in the TCC. Upper-division courses, without prerequisite requirement, may add depth to breadth and may be more challenging for majors. The point of having upper-division courses were higher expectations and a more engaging presentation of the material. Upper-division courses help students to fulfill advanced-hour requirements set by the institution, which program courses alone may not fulfill. Upper-division core courses that are program requirements however pose problems to transfer students if a transfer course is applied to the core curriculum only and not to the program.

Members who were part of the workgroup said they looked at a list of upper-division courses currently approved for the TCC and without a provision of upper-division courses, hundreds of courses would be disallowed. That could be a major disruption.

Members discussed that upper-division courses used for the fulfillment of the TCC were not a problem for student using reverse transfer.

Larry Abraham asked to speak and said that the presence of upper-division courses for his institution's core curriculum does not mean that lower-division courses were not available or not applied to the students' program requirements. He said that the statute did not mean the TCCNS, since it referenced a non-capitalized common core numbering system without the word Texas in front. The sole purpose of the requirement was facilitating transfer using common numbers. Introductory level upper-division core courses provide increased learning through their depth. He said that a "broad breadth" was not part of FCA descriptions. Breadth was established for the TCC by the variety of required FCAs. (Staff Note: breadth is also required by the general education requirement for the Core Curriculum.)

Following this discussion, committee members decided to consider the proposed changes for the Component Area Option first. Esther Rumsey made a motion to accept the proposed staff version and Nancy Martin seconded. During discussion members wrote out the phrasing and Esther Rumsey and John Quintanilla made amendments for text changes and Elva LeBlanc and Esther Rumsey seconded, respectively. Committee members accepted motion and amendments without opposition or abstentions. The final wording for the proposed rules reads:

Rule 4.28 Core Curriculum

(b) Texas Core Curriculum

(4) component area Option (6 SCH)

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, each course designated to complete the Component Area Option must meet the definition and Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas outlined in paragraph (3)(A) - (H) of this subsection.

(i) A course listed only in a Foundational Component Area may not be applied to the Component Area Option.

(ii) A course listed only in the Component Area Option may not be applied to a Foundational Component Area.

(B) As an option of the Component Area Option, an institution may certify that the course(s):

(i) meet(s) special interest(s) to the whole institution, and which are defined by the institution to fulfill foundational education needs of its students, and

(ii) include(s) a minimum of three Core Objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining Core Objectives of the institution's choice.

(C) For the purposes of gaining approval for or reporting a Component Area Option course under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, a course is not required to be aligned with specific foundational component area(s) outlined in paragraph (3)(A) - (H) of this subsection.

Next, members discussed what to do with upper-division courses. They also discussed the requirement of negotiated rule making for rule changes for the TCC.

Members asked why the issue of upper-division courses was discussed. Rex Peebles explained that it was an issue of reconciling statute to rules or rules to statute. Statute trumps rules. The statute is consistent with the TCCNS. At the time, back in 1990, the TCCNS was the only common course numbering system in existence. Dr. Peebles reported to have been asked by members of the Senate Committee on Transfer why there is more than one core curriculum, when statute states the Coordinating Board shall develop a recommended core curriculum. He was asked why different institutions have a different core curriculum that are not alike. He also was asked to explain why there are upper-division courses in the TCC, when they are not allowed, following the logic of statute.

Dr. Peebles then asked how we can create seamless transfer for students between institutions. Theoretically, of the 42 SCH of TCC, only 12 SCH, the government and history courses, must be applied to a degree program. Since student transfer is growing, as well as dual credit earned, the statute and rule must be reconciled to facilitate seamless transfer.

Esther Rumsey made a motion to reject the wording of the staff recommendation to disallow all upper-division courses. Nancy Martin made a motion to table the consideration and this motion was seconded.

Julie Penley asked for a time-line for tabling. Elva LeBlanc cautioned not to drag out the discussion. Reinold Cornelius explained the Committee may meet more often than twice a year. Esther Rumsey made a motion to amend the motion to table until the September meeting. Reinold Cornelius suggested the Committee might consider ideas for directions to take instead of actual word changes, since negotiated rulemaking would be involved.

Committee members discussed that they hadn't seen the staff proposal prior to meeting and that they did not have time to consult with their institution leadership. Members also recognized that there is a time constraint. The list of hundreds of upper-division courses should be shared. Materials should be shared prior to a meeting, so that members would be prepared for the fall meeting. Members discussed the options for postponing action to the fall meeting or to meet in the interim. A summer meeting would be difficult because of members' time commitments, however it was suggested that the issue could be discussed at the institution in the short term and could be resolved within a month. Rex Peebles said that institution feedback would be important but also that a Committee decision would be important for going forward, given that the Board had a heightened interest in transfer.

Members discussed the two questions: Is there something wrong with the current requirements and do they harm students and does the language of the rule conform to statute. Members argued that they were not in a position to make a decision on the matter of statute. While the statute requires consistency with the common course numbering system, it also includes "recommendations" by the Coordinating Board.

Members discussed that they needed clarification what the law requires. The Coordinating Board's legal counsel could be asked. Once they had clarification, wording for changed rules could be discussed. If upper-division courses were to be included, parameters of inclusion should be specified.

John Quintanilla moved that the Committee let stand the rule as is for the moment, which shouldn't prevent future consideration if it is clarified that statute requires a change. Nancy Martin seconded and withdrew her earlier motion to table the action. Committee members voted in favor of the motion, except for member Edward Byerly, who voted against, and member Elva LeBlanc, who abstained.

Members expressed the wish for further information, including a list of presently approved upper-division courses. If the Committee could create guidelines for upper-division courses, that could be helpful also for the discussion with the legislature.

#### **4. Discussion on Marketable Skills and Potential Consideration of Marketable Skills Initiatives**

Co-Chair Richard Miller reported on the workgroup meeting for marketable skills. He summarized that institutions need to have a process for find marketable skills. The workgroup outcome includes a number of recommendations to make public on how to go about this initiative. For example, there is the marketable skills transcript idea, which would come from the institution and not from the student. The idea is to communicate marketable

skills to students, who are not aware of their marketable skills. Sometimes faculty are not aware of what marketable skills they are teaching. The ideas serve to improve the situation. Also updates are necessary. Creating partnerships allows to work together with many different people on this issue.

Members discussed whether marketable skills had been identified by now but the process is still in progress. Each institution has to come up with their own information. Members asked about who was the audience for this work. Faculty were in charge of marketable skills. The recommendations are meant as starting point for institutions. Rex Pebbles said that the Coordinating Board developed guidelines and this feedback could be included and could be helpful. For people who haven't worked with the issue of marketable skills for some time, the ideas expressed would not be obvious.

Elva LeBlanc moved to accept the list of recommendation and Homer Guevara second. During further discussion Daniel Brown suggested to soften the language to clarify that noting marketable skills on transcripts was an option, not a requirement. Also, tying the update of marketable skills to the catalogue process should be seen as on possible option. The phrasing "established institutional processes" could be used instead. The Committee accepted the list of recommendations unanimously, with the suggested language changes.

Dr. Kylah Torre, research assistant at the Coordinating Board, gave an update on the agency's work on a new Student Handbook for Career Readiness. The target are newly enrolling students, who should receive this information during orientation. The book shows what students can do to improve their employability in accord with what employers expect. The handbook includes activities and resources for students at two- and four-year institutions. The handbook can be broken into pieces for the purpose of advising and the work of career services. The draft of the handbook is available on the Coordinating Board's website for the April 2018 Marketable Skills Conference.

## **6. Update and Discussion on Coordinating Board Initiatives**

Reinold Cornelius gave an update on the planned Coordinating Board's Liaisons Meetings for university and health related institution liaisons (July 18, 2018) and for community, state and technical college liaisons (October 22 and 23, 2018). He reported on Low Producing Program review and the ongoing review of changes to the Texas Core Curriculum. Dr. Cornelius provided a walk-through for the newly designed agency website, which is to be launched in early May.

## **7. Consideration of Future Work and Meeting Dates**

The third Friday in April in 2019 would fall on the Good Friday holiday. Staff will propose an alternate meeting date.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.