

CALS Academic Planning Council

Meeting via Zoom

December 1, 2020, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Attendees: Erika Anna, Laura Hernandez, Michael Thomas, Rick Lindroth, Barb Ingham, Jamie Nack, Dietram Scheufele, Xuejun Pan, Scott Lutz (1:05), William Tracy (arrived 1:10; departed 2pm)

Not Present: Jed Colquhoun, Jill Wildonger, Nicole Perna, Jeremy Foltz

Ex Officio: Kate VandenBosch, Bill Barker, Karen Wassarman

Minutes taken by: Sarah Barber

Joint Meeting – CALS APC and L&S APC

1. Welcome and introductions

L&S hosted the meeting on Zoom. Committee members and staff from each college introduced themselves.

2. Environmental Sciences/Environmental Studies Double Major

Dean VandenBosch provided an update. During the 5-year program review for the Environmental Sciences major in Fall 2018, a joint major between CALS and L&S, the program confirmed its intention to disallow Environmental Studies as a double major with Environmental Sciences due to significant overlap in program requirements. The paperwork needed to make that happen never occurred. We are treating this as a “clean up”. Lumen proposals will be submitted so Guide conveys to students that a double major with Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies is not allowed. We are formalizing our approval of this today with a vote.

The L&S curriculum committee discussed this issue and endorsed it as well.

Motion that students who major in Environmental Sciences may not combine this major (“double major”) with Environmental Studies: Tracy/Hernandez

Vote: 10-0-0

3. Biology Major Program Review (final discussion)

Karen Wassarman provided an overview of the 10-year program review recommendations for the Biology major and the 5-year program review recommendations for the Plant Biology named option.

The last 10-year review recommended a significant restructuring of the Biology Major –which has been implemented:

- *Two home departments (Bacteriology in CALS, Integrative Biology in L&S)*
- *L&S took on the responsibility for introductory biology courses*
- *CALS took on the responsibility for administrative support (i.e advising)*

- *They put together a strong advising unit that is staffed with professional staff advisors*
- *Implementation of the Biology Major Program Committee (BMPC) for governance of the major curriculum –let by co-chairs (one in each college –currently Donna Fernandez for L&S and Jae-Hyuk Yu for CALS. Sarah Kuba is Program Manager)*
- *Increased resources came with this restructuring and has benefitted the program*

Some self-identified struggles

- *Building community in such a large major*
- *Alumni relations continue to be difficult to handle*
- *Plant Biology named option has remained very small –originally planned for 75-100 but enrollment is less than 7*

The review community was comprised of 4 members including David Wassarman (Medical Genetics) chair, Rick Lankau (Plant Pathology), Sigurd Angenent (Mathematics), and Marisa Otegui (Botany). The committee met with leadership, the program committee, advisors and students.

Committee’s findings:

Strengths:

- *The quality of student learning and experiences in the Biology Major is excellent, and they praise the colleges, students, faculty, and staff for what they have been able to accomplish over the past 10 years*
- *The program has been strengthened by the restructuring. The advising and administrative structure is a strength of the major*
- *The broad, flexible curriculum is a strength*

Challenges:

- *The size of the major is a challenge –for community building and to track alumni Not having a single home –especially for faculty engagement in the major and with students*
- *There has been a high turnover in advisors –which has caused a lot of shifts for students in the past 2 years.*
- *First-year students are not engaging with advising as frequently as ideal*
- *There appears to be a lot of competition between students for grades*

Recommendations:

- *The Biology Major should gather data with the goal of identifying and prioritizing ways to improve student learning.*
- *Funding for community building activities*
- *The Biology major should establish systems for faculty, alumni, and peer advising of students to complement the current professional advising system.*
- *Continue to seek new named options that make sense for the major*

Plant Biology Named Option:

- *The named option structure works well, however the plant biology named option has very low enrollment*

- *Recommendation is to discontinue the plant biology named option*

Comment: This is good governance – recognizing that not all things work out as planned.

Comment: Competition for grades continues to bubble up in discussions about large enrollment majors/courses. Specialists in learning suggest curved grading is not best practice, but academic freedom in grading also needs to be considered. Not seeking resolution here, but flagging this issue.

Comment: Students pursuing admission to medical school fuels competition for grades

Motion to approve the review as complete: Hernandez/Tracy

Vote: 10-0-0

Motion to move forward with suspension of admissions to Plant Biology named option with intent to discontinue: Hernandez/Lutz

Vote: 10-0-0

Discussion: Why is enrollment low in Plant Biology? Students have many options - Botany, Agronomy, etc. One of the goals of the plant biology named option was to increase interest in plants but enrollment was not high. There is a difference in the number of students interested in animals versus plants.

4. Discussion around the new Equity and Diversity questions in Lumen Programs

Dean Wilcots provided an overview of the new equity and diversity questions added to Lumen proposals. The questions were added without review by campus. The inclusion of these questions and the questions themselves could benefit from review and discussion.

Will program changes be held up? These questions may not be the right questions to ask for program changes. Are academic planning councils and curriculum committees the right bodies to review these types of questions?

Comments:

- *Forcing departments to review these questions is important. Departments have to confront these questions.*
- *The third question about equity in recruiting faculty and staff is a human resources questions and involves a college-level commitment. To include in Lumen may not be best place because it is complicated and may not be under academic program control.*
- *Clarification question - when are responses to these questions required?*
- *For proposals with greater than 50% changes; one example given is that proposals to change learning outcomes are considered major changes.*

- *Do we defeat the goal if these become a technicality? Will the process in lumen encourage proposers to resort to including standard/stock language?*
- *It is helpful to get this type of messaging through multiple channels. However, there is no question included about how to assess the effectiveness of the adopted diversity and inclusion strategy.*
- *Accountability also is not included in current questions. Responsibility is at the department and at the college level.*
- *For question #3, add the word “help” before ensure.*
- *When planning for new programs these are helpful questions. However, depending on the field, not all questions are relevant to all disciplines. Better to assess during a 10-yr review.*
- *What is the dependent variable? What are we trying to achieve? What outcomes are we going for? How do we enforce this? Committees need tools to evaluate these.*
- *Importance of topic cannot be disputed. Concerned about hurdles for people submitting program proposals. We don’t want to add more work unless it achieves something valuable. On fence. It could be a good way for departments to have these conversations.*
- *Schools and colleges have different processes. CALS departments are asked to address diversity and inclusion annually in their 5-year planning reports. L&S departments submit annual diversity reports and the questions have evolved. And campus has reporting requirements. As an institution our reporting is maturing, but it is not all linked and things can fall through the cracks.*
- *What level of curriculum change sparks the need to answer these questions and where should they be addressed? Program review? Annual reports? Assessments?*
- *How often do all programs go through major changes? Would we expect similar attention needed for programs?*
- *10-year program reviews may have one set of questions. Program changes have another set of questions.*

CALS Only APC:

Consent Agenda

5. Approve minutes for November 17, 2020 meeting
Item 5 approved by consent.

Action and Discussion Items

6. Biology Major Program Review – vote and recommendations
Voting occurred during joint session. No further discussion.
7. Env Sci/Env St - vote and recommendations
Voting occurred during joint session. No further discussion.
8. Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships (WDGF)

Dean VandenBosch provided an overview of the WDFG. The committee is being asked to review the call for two of the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships: Thomsen WDFG (3 will be awarded this year is broader in scope) and the Goetz WDFG (one will be awarded and is more narrow in scope). The Senator Robert Caldwell Fellowship and the Richard M. Heins WDFG will not be awarded this year due to lack of accumulated funds. Let Kate know if you would like to serve on the review committee.

Comment: Some students submit technical abstracts that committee members cannot decipher. In Q4 remove "should" and remove "should" from Q4c.

Comment: Some students in fundamental research have long lists of publications, and students in applied areas have fewer publications. This can be hard for the committee to reconcile.

Comment: Address this by changing Q4b and requesting a letter from the major advisor that states the disciplinary norms and standards of productivity in the student's subfield.

Comment: Yes, this will be helpful. This is a tension that has to be managed, not a problem that will be solved.

Comment: More than 20 applications received last year. Scott Lutz has agreed to serve on the committee. Others who are interested, send an email to Kate.

Informational Items and Announcements

9. Updates on budget

Dean VandenBosch provided an update on the budget cuts. Chancellor Blank communicated in October that, over a 15-month period through the end of June 2021, UW-Madison is facing \$320M in lost revenue or increased costs due to the pandemic. Roughly half of that impacts auxiliaries directly (housing, unions, athletics, etc.). The rest is a reduction in gifts, research funding, tuition receipts, state lapse in funding, and \$50M in increased costs.

Schools and colleges received their budget cuts in early November. There will be a one-time cut to 101 GPR funds from the current fiscal year allocation (these are funds CALS will have to give back). Then there is a base cut for the next fiscal year and beyond. There will also be cuts in 104 funds which come through a different route from Extension. CALS has not received details about the 104 cuts yet.

Today our discussion is about the one-time cut for the current year. Next time we will discuss principles for distributing the base cut strategically.

- *One-time cut: The one-time cut is just over \$2M. CALS administration and centralized support will bear a disproportionately larger share of the one-time cut. The remainder of the one-time cut has been distributed to departments formulaically. The Dairy Innovation Hub will not be a target, nor spared. It will bear same type of cut that the rest of the*

school is facing because if departments were forced to take on a greater burden, it would make it harder for the Hub to carry out its mission.

- *Future base cut: The base cut to the college will be \$2.71M. The plan to allocate the base cut will be coming in January. I'll seek input from the APC on strategic ways to allocate cuts.*
- *Extension 104 cuts: CALS receives approximately \$6M in Extension funds for specialist and staff salaries and supplies. We do not know the amount of the cut yet. Over the years, CALS has had a greater loss in Extension funding than General Program Revenue, GPR.*

Comment: Cutting strategically is hard. If Deans Office has advice on what to consider, strategies to impose that would be helpful. Freezing faculty hires is not the best way to go, but faculty are expensive. How do departments guide conversations about strategic cuts – can Dean's office help Departments with this?

Comment: Are there lessons the college can share for strategic growth and areas that should not be cut? What are Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) growth strategies we should consider? What are creative ways to create income? Examples of departments that have invested strategically? There is no fat to cut, we are going to have to cut muscle, but successes from the past can inform these cuts.

Comment: Mark and Angie are looking at administrative support. What is the right size for a department? Can we be more efficient at pooling resources?

Comment: Need a balanced portfolio. We have to do big things to afford small things.

Comment: There needs to be guidance on how to distribute the extra work due to reduced faculty/staff. A small few cannot shoulder that burden.

Comment: The teaching load policy is one new tool.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm