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The University of Akron Faculty Senate Chronicle

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Faculty Senate Chronicle May 6, 2021

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May 6, 2021

49 pages

SENATE ACTIONS

1. Elections for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary were held. Kathryn Budd was elected Chair, Adam Smith was elected Vice Chair and Angela Hartsock was reelected Secretary.
2. Approved a motion from Academic Policies Committee to add a policy for certificate programs to the Bulletin (Appendix A).
3. Approved the resolution brought by the Computing and Communication Committee regarding the replacement of Qualtrics (Appendix B).
4. Approved a list of proposals from Curriculum Review Committee (Appendix B).

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MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF

May 6, 2021

The meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, May 6, 2021 in Teams. Senate Chair Linda Saliga called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Of the current roster of 45 senators, 40 attended the meeting. No senators were absent with notice. Senators Allen, Gandee, Heifner-Graor, Sahl and Zheng were absent without notice.

I. Adoption of Agenda

There were no corrections to the agenda. There was one addition; a written report was submitted by GEAC. The agenda was adopted without dissent.

II. Adoption of minutes of April 2021 meeting

There were no corrections; the minutes were adopted without dissent.

III. Remarks of the Chair

We are nearing the end of an academic year like no other. We have learned a lot about trying new things and being flexible. Teaching class wearing a mask was strange, but not as strange as walking into a bank with a mask on. One very good change that has occurred is a new feeling of collaboration that has arisen after the Akron-AAUP and the UA administration signed an MOU dealing with shared governance. This MOU, which Senator Schulze will elaborate on in her report, gives Faculty Senate more responsibilities. I told both parties that we will accept the new duties but that they may not be performed by the groups they identified – I'm afraid we won't find anyone willing to serve on our new program review committee if their duties include the additional two tasks being asked of them in

the MOU. The executive committee will discuss this over the summer and bring a recommendation to you in the fall.

All colleges have completed their elections. New Senators joining us in the fall are Charles Beneke and Catherine Stoyhoff from Arts and Sciences; Alper Buldum, Scott Dilling, Nita Sahai, and Ping Yi from Engineering and Polymer Science; Amanda Weinstein from Business; Lori Kidd from Health and Human Sciences. Re-elected are Malik Elbuluk and Ed Evans from Engineering and Polymer Science; and Dana Cole and Jack Sahl from the School of Law. The new president of GSG is Katelyn Frey and for USG is Grace Kasunic. I'm looking forward to working with all these individuals next year. I want to remind everyone that each Senator is required to serve on a committee.

Speaking of serving on committees, today we will elect the chair, vice chair, and secretary, whose terms will begin in September. We are implementing this change so that the officers have time to arrange for their needed course releases. We will also be electing our second representative to the Ohio Faculty Council (the first being the senate chair) and an alternate. OFC meets on the second Friday of each month from 12:30-2:30. Before the pandemic, we met in Columbus, but members could attend the meeting via Zoom if they couldn't make the drive. Of course, we have met via Zoom during the pandemic and are discussing continuing to meet this way. The OFC exists to provide a forum for discussion among faculty from Ohio's 14 public universities and to advocate for the values of higher education. It engages with policy makers and the public to share information about higher education and to partner with ODHE, elected officials, and others to facilitate knowledgeable decision making on issues related to universities. Please consider joining the chair for these enlightening meetings.

This concludes my remarks.

IV. Special Announcements

There were no special announcements.

V. Report of the Executive Committee

Since our last meeting in April, the Executive Committee has met three times.

The EC met to discuss the senate elections and the MOU on shared governance between the university and the AAUP.

The EC met with Provost Wiencek and Chief of Staff Hendricks. We discussed a future faculty handbook; both Wiencek and Hendricks voiced support and intent to aid in development of a handbook. We discussed the MOU on shared governance. We also discussed enrollment and revenue, the need for market analyses to support programmatic changes, and the need for stable and well-trained leadership at all levels of administration.

Finally, the EC met to prepare for today's senate meeting. For more information on these discussions, please contact Angela Hartsock.

VI. Election of Executive Committee officers; Chair (2 year term) and Vice Chair (2 year term), Secretary (1 year term), OFC Alternate (2 year term)

Chair Saliga opened the floor to nominations for Senate Chair. Senator Makki nominated Linda Saliga; Saliga accepted the nomination. Senator Evans nominated Kate Budd noting that Senator Budd is a strong advocate for faculty and those represented by the senate; he expressed confidence that Budd would serve in the spirit of shared governance and would seek input from those who know situations best. He noted her professional approach to problem solving. Senator Budd accepted the nomination. In the absence of additional nominations, nominations were closed. An anonymous poll was conducted by Heather Loughney through Microsoft Forms. There were 35 votes, 25 for Kate Budd and 10 for Linda Saliga. Senator Budd was declared the winner.

Chair Saliga opened the floor to nominations for Senate Vice Chair. Senator Budd nominated Adam Smith noting that Senator Smith is an Associate Professor in Chemistry who has been with UA since 2012. He has been nominated for outstanding researcher, has over 25 peer reviewed articles, is continuously funded by agencies like the NIH and NSF, has attracted over 3 million dollars in research grants, and is a gifted mentor focused on student success. Senator Budd noted that Senator Smith cares deeply for UA and is excited to serve. In the absence of additional nominations, nominations were closed. Senator Smith was unanimously elected as Vice Chair with no dissent expressed.

Chair Saliga opened the floor to nominations for Senate Secretary. Senator Nofziger nominated Angela Hartsock; Senator Hartsock accepted the nomination. In the absence of additional nominations, nominations were closed. Senator Hartsock was unanimously elected as Secretary with no dissent expressed.

Chair Saliga opened the floor to nominations for a representative to the Ohio Faculty Council. Senator Schulze requested clarification on whether this position is a backup/alternate. Chair Saliga indicated there are two representatives, this is not a backup. This person should be attending meetings regularly; we will have an alternate if one of the two elected representatives are unable to attend.

Chair Saliga announced the position will be filled in September. Senators can consider the opportunity and can contact Chair Saliga or Bill Rich for more information. Bill stressed this is an important position and interested senators should contact him for information.

VII. Remarks of the President

President Miller congratulated the elected officers. He recognized Trustee Cindy Crotty who served as chair of the Audit Committee. Under her leadership, the committee has done significant work over the last months to define challenges related to security and IT infrastructure. Miller noted he appreciated her work and guidance. President Miller congratulated Grace Kasunic as the newest President

of USG. He stated he had met with Grace and looks forward to regular meetings to seek input. He noted that Kevin (Feezel) did a great job and student government has been great, staying engaged and generating great ideas.

Commencement: President Miller noted that commencement starts tomorrow (May 7, 2021). He noted that we are excited about it, and he thanked everyone for their participation. There will be a full stage of faculty and President Miller stated the importance for students to see the faculty. He noted the possibility of strange weather and encouraged everyone to prepare in advance. He reminded everyone that there is a well-established incident policy for inclement/dangerous weather events and a procedure to notify everyone and get everyone to shelter. After commencement, John Messina will be polling faculty about the experience of having commencement outdoors in the stadium. It is a bigger facility which would allow for more guests. It will be helpful to have ideas for the future.

Athletic Director: President Miller announced Charles Guthrie to replace former Athletic Director Larry Williams. He noted the committee worked hard to find someone who shares President Miller's views about athletics and its relationship to academics and community. He has worked with Guthrie in a similar environment, and he is excited to do so again.

Athletic Review Working Group: President Miller noted that we hope to have recommendations in the next week or so. Those recommendations will be shared.

Social Justice Task Force: Sheldon Wrice and Julie Zhao published a report from the task force. President Miller stated that the charge was to take a hard look at our processes by starting with our own "house" first, we can then extend to community partners. There were a lot of recommendations. The president noted that some recommendations can be implemented immediately; some recommendations will require time and resources. There will be discussions to prioritize recommendations with a schedule for implementation. President Miller noted that the administration will be in touch with EC and UC to bring them into the process. He noted the value of this information and encouraged everyone to

read the report. He found it to be thoughtful and direct and it identifies our strengths and weaknesses.

Student Trustees: The governor appoints student trustees. UA evaluates student nominees through interviews and then sends a recommendation to the governor. President Miller noted there was a strong group of nominees but only one position open. Typically, the governor chooses from the provided list but is not required to do so.

Coming Back to Campus: President Miller noted that many people are curious about when everyone will return to campus. He stated that guidelines will be in accordance with Summit Co. Health guidance. He noted it is a great partnership. The UA community should expect protocols for coming back to work midsummer. Vaccines are available; President Miller encouraged everyone to get vaccinated. UA is communicating with students to promote vaccination.

President Miller invited questions.

Senator Franks noted the recent slowdown in vaccinations (people choosing not to vaccinate). He asked if the administration anticipates a mandate at the state or federal level requiring student vaccination before returning to campus in fall. President Miller noted continuous decision making but iterated that he does not expect a mandate. The administration is interested in using secure ways to assess campus vaccine rates with the data to be used in aggregate to inform decision making.

Senator Randby referenced the Social Justice Task Force report and asked if there will be an opportunity to ask questions about the document.

President Miller noted that we must have a vigorous community discussion. We will begin by implementing immediate actions, then prioritize the rest. He noted it will come to shared governance groups for discussion. He stated it will take the summer to process the document and going into fall we will be talking about implementation. Comments can be sent to Sheldon Wrice, he can collate those and share them in discussions moving forward.

Senator Dejbord-Sawan thanked the president for taking questions. She noted some ambiguity in discussion about course delivery in fall. Everyone is excited to get back and anxious to return to face-to-face instruction. However, she noted that some faculty are nervous about face-to-face instruction since there is no guarantee that students will be vaccinated. Also, some faculty are teaching popular online courses that were online prior to the pandemic. Senator Dejbord-Sawan noted that in some departments face-to-face delivery in fall is being mandated while in other departments there was an option to pick delivery mode within the context of the importance of face-to-face delivery. She stated her question: Is face-to-face delivery mandated or is a choice provided?

President Miller redirected the question to Provost Wiencek. President Miller noted that we have some guidance or principles guiding our decision making. He pointed to the well-established principle that not everyone has to be vaccinated to ensure safety. He continued that we don't expect to have everyone vaccinated but we do expect to be safe. He noted that some faculty have a legitimate reason for not wanting to be face-to-face. An additional factor is our desire to have excellent online programs and courses. Coming out of COVID we need to learn what works best.

Provost Wiencek followed up by saying that "mandate" is a strong word. The provost pointed to the word "goal" instead and noted that the administration put forth a goal for faculty to re-engage in face-to-face delivery where appropriate. He noted that if we must go back to socially distanced delivery, we can do that and that everything is predicated on getting approval from the health department that our plan is safe. The COVID planning committee is doing the work of determining if the combination of 6-foot and 3-foot social distancing is enough. The administration is committed to giving faculty flexibility and options, he noted there may be confusion among the chairs. The intent is to accommodate people where appropriate; we expect a larger portion of online courses (20-25%), some courses to remain at 6-foot distancing, and some classrooms configured at 3-foot

distancing (although he noted this was not yet approved for fall). He encourages faculty to talk with their chairs if they are feeling uncomfortable.

Senator Dejbord-Sawan thanked President Miller and Provost Wiencek for the answer.

President Miller asked what percentage of UA courses were delivered online prior to COVID.

Provost Wiencek noted 12-15% of courses were online pre-COVID which is well above a typical public research university of our size and status. He noted he fully anticipates this number will be higher after COVID as some courses have proven to be more effective in the online format.

President Miller noted that our student body demands more online learning than some comparable peer R2 universities, so it makes sense to go up a little bit.

Senator Evans returned to the topic of feedback on the Social Justice Task Force Report and suggested using Brightspace to collect feedback so everyone can view it. This is a positive way to collect feedback.

President Miller noted this was a great idea and suggested that Wiencek and Wrice would set this up.

Provost Wiencek noted that Wendy Lampner would be a great resource to help with setting up a forum.

Senator Klein asked if the university will continue the mask mandate in fall and if the university will provide microphones to instructors in larger distanced classrooms.

Provost Wiencek indicated that masks will be required and that microphones will be provided.

President Miller noted that federal COVID relief money could be used to purchase the necessary equipment. Faculty should make those needs known as soon as possible.

Chair Saliga noted that the university could also consider replacing tablets and laptops.

VIII. Remarks of the Provost

Provost Wiencek congratulated the elected officers for senate, Akron-AAUP, and student government. He also extended his thanks to the currently serving officers and noted they have provided extraordinary leadership in a challenging time. He said he enjoyed working with those officers and will plan to continue working with them in the future.

Commencement: Provost Wiencek is looking forward to commencement. He noted that in the past weeks he has been able to meet in small groups mask-free. During the greeting event for the Athletic Director, he was able to meet some people face-to-face for the first time. He is looking forward to meeting everyone.

Enrollment: The freshman class is looking strong. They are tracking and evaluating UA scholarship offerings. This year the university kept the tuition rate stable and offered new need-based scholarships. As they continue to look at future scholarship offerings, they will engage with senate. This will move quickly, and conversations should start soon. Provost Wiencek noted that we will see enrollment decline. The past five or six years of declining enrollment will require multiple years of a consistently larger freshman class to reverse the trend. UA will focus on attracting transfer students to make up for students lost in previous years. The provost thanked faculty and staff for their work and ability to react quickly.

College of Business Dean Search: There were four qualified candidates, however, after discussion with multiple constituents, it was determined there was not a good fit with any of the prospects. The provost said he will meet with COB faculty to address questions and plot a path forward. He noted they do have a plan that will first be shared with COB. They will move forward with identifying an

interim dean to replace Dean Hanlon, who is retiring, and will relaunch the search in fall for a permanent dean.

OAA Reorganization: Provost Wiencek noted that the reorganization is finalized. A search is being launched for a Vice President of Research; this search will be chaired by Aimee deChambeau. The goal is to pull people together into functional groups across the university. The provost noted organizing groups around student success, faculty (RTP and career development), and strategic enrollment efforts.

Strategic Planning: Final recommendations were received from the UA planning group. We will move into a continuous planning process through UC. The recommendations will be reviewed with the president and brought to the board. They will be shared with the UA community once they are in final form. Provost Wiencek noted he is pleased with the work and doesn't anticipate large changes.

COVID Planning: The provost noted that Jennifer Lillard is chairing the COVID planning committee focused on contingency planning for fall semester. We do have a slate of classes at 3-foot social distancing with plans that accommodate changes in delivery mode or a switch to 6-foot distancing.

Provost Wiencek invited questions.

Senator Levin asked about leadership in the Honors College and plans to establish permanent leadership. Provost Wiencek responded that the initial thinking is to assign that role to someone who is also responsible for other student pathways at UA (adult learners, remedial students, etc.). Pam and Gary Williams are open to this idea. The reorganization is the result of a lot of conversations and the desire to implement the ideas that were presented. The provost noted this could be a trial, if it doesn't work well, the Honors College could be pulled back out into a separate unit with a fulltime dean.

Senator Leuttmer-Strathmann voiced an additional request for microphones noting that in many large rooms there are not wireless microphones available. The

equipment can be expensive and needs to interface with software; planning needs to begin immediately to ensure we are ready for fall.

Provost Wiencek thanked the senator for bringing awareness to the issue and said he would reach out to appropriate committees and AV/tech departments. He also noted the possibility of a poll to identify anticipated needs.

Senator Evans followed up on the previous laptop question posed by Chair Saliga. He noted that some faculty have laptops that have seen significant use and need repair. He questioned if this is a widespread issue and noted it might need to be prioritized.

Senator Hreno noted that we need a laptop refresh program.

Provost Wiencek noted that he will look into how this fits into the current refresh cycle and will look at federal restrictions on use of COVID-relief money (not sure if laptop refresh fits).

President Miller voiced his thanks to Chair Saliga for the work she has done as leader of senate. He noted that he appreciates her openness and directness; she has been the chair since he arrived, and they have worked closely together. He considers her an extraordinary colleague; he said he will keep her close and consider her thoughts on important issues. He again thanked her for her service.

IX. Committee Reports

Academic Policies Committee – Chair Klein

Chair Klein noted that APC has unanimously approved a policy item regarding certificate programs to be added to the bulletin. She noted that we want to attract students to certificate programs but there is a need to ensure that the bulk of the work is done at UA.

Chair Saliga invited discussion; no discussion ensued. The recommendation will be forwarded to the president.

Chair Klein thanked the APC members for their work this year.

Computing and Communications Committee – Chair Randby

Chair Randby presented the resolution regarding Qualtrics. He provided two additional comments. One, the amount of feedback received was amazing, he noted the committee has never seen an outpouring like this. Two, there were questions about whether Qualtrics could be renewed without submitting an RFP, he noted that because of the fine work of the Qualtrics committee there is sufficient data to justify renewing the contract without submitting an RFP. He noted that Toni Bisconti chaired the committee and is available for questions.

Chair Saliga invited Senator Bisconti to speak.

Senator Bisconti seconded Chair Randby's sentiments and noted the amount of feedback received.

Chair Saliga invited discussion; none ensued.

The resolution passed without dissent.

Chair Randby noted there is a laptop replacement process, laptops are replaced every 3 years. You can get details from ITS; ITS will try to make sure your laptop is fixed.

Curriculum Review Committee – Chair Kraft

Chair Kraft noted 54 course proposals and 15 program proposals being presented for approval.

Chair Saliga noted that the list was shared. Chair Saliga invited discussion; none ensued.

All proposals were assumed approved without dissent.

University Libraries Committee – Chair Hartsock

Chair Hartsock encouraged senators to read the year-end report. She made special mention of the Affordable Learning Initiative and the affordable learning ecosystem at UA. She encouraged faculty who are using affordable resources to contact the library to become part of the initiative.

COVID Childcare Group – Chair Hartsock

Chair Hartsock pointed out the expanded scope of the group in addressing pandemic challenges. She encouraged everyone to read the report and provide feedback.

Chair Saliga asked for comments and concerns and asked if the recommendation was ready for vote.

Chair Hartsock indicated she would like an opportunity for people to provide input.

Chair Saliga encouraged senators to send comments or ideas to Chair Hartsock.

Interdisciplinary Council – Chair Erickson

Chair Saliga noted that the group was approved not as a Senate committee but as a council to work with OAA. Senate appoints members to the council. The council will update us on their work in a fall senate meeting.

General Education Advisory Committee – Chair Cerrone

Chair Saliga noted this was an informational report.

X. AAUP report—Senator Schulze

Senator Schulze noted this is the last time she will be giving this report.

Senator Schulze addressed the MOU on Shared Governance and noted that it was decided during negotiations to delay work on the MOU until after negotiations concluded. The desire was a shared governance process that had more senate involvement and financial transparency so that all governance bodies receive the same reports provided to the BOT. She noted that in the past, the process for deciding on program investment/disinvestment was unclear. There was a desire to have an informed and transparent process guiding when and how to invest in academic programs. There might be a need to discuss some of the details and determine the appropriate committee to take on specific tasks. She noted that the reason there is specificity in the MOU is due to the passion of the faculty with past experience in reorganization and program closure. There was a desire to have it tied to the program review process to allow a careful study of each program's viability. Senator Schulze noted the need for a transparent participatory process with trustworthy data. Regarding reorganization of academic units, impacted faculty should have input and affected units should have an opportunity to vote on proposed changes. Regarding workload, moving forward there should be clarity on workload. Senator Schulze noted that faculty should know their percentage of load allocation for teaching, research, and service. She noted that faculty do have a right to overload pay in the CBA and if load exceeds 24 load hours in the combination of teaching, research, and service then the faculty member should request overload pay. There is a timeline for departments to submit their workload policy.

Senator Schulze invited questions.

She noted that this is also her last meeting as a senator for the near future. She stated it has been a pleasure and a privilege. She noted it was a pleasure serving as AAUP chapter president. She feels she is leaving the Akron-AAUP better despite challenges. She also thanked Chair Saliga, noting that the work has been hard and that people in leadership positions are not appreciated enough.

XI. Graduate Council report—Senator Hreno

Senator Hreno reminded the senate to read the graduate faculty report distributed by Marnie Sanders and to remember to vote no later than May 11th on the graduate council recommendation.

XII. GSG report—Senator Frey

Senator Katelyn Frey, the newly elected president of GSG, thanked Senator Banik for leadership and guidance during a difficult year that has been particularly difficult for graduate students. The executive committee is adjusting to new roles. She noted that the group does not currently have senators from several colleges and senators can refer interested students to her.

Senator Bible offered assistance for finding a representative from the College of Business.

Senator Frey spoke about her experience on GSG and the initiatives related to mental health. She noted that her agenda moving forward will be related to a health insurance option for graduate students of whom she reported 80% are interested in this option.

XII. USG report—Senator Kasunic

Senator Kasunic provided the report. She noted she is a senior at UA majoring in Biomedical Sciences. She is excited to work with the senate.

XIV. Report of University Council Representatives—Senator Evans & Nicholas

Senator Evans noted that UC has been getting reports from other constituent groups on campus. It is a great learning experience which will hopefully continue. Information will be shared with senate.

XV. Old Business

Chair Saliga called for old business. No items were offered.

XVI. New Business

Chair Saliga called for new business. No items were offered.

XVII. Good of the Order

Senator Evans thanked Chair Saliga for her efforts over the last few years as faculty senate chair. He extended his appreciation for all the work she has done.

Senator Makki echoed the sentiments of Senator Evans. She thanked Chair Saliga and the Executive Committee; she noted it has been a tough year and she welcomes the new officers. Chair Saliga noted it has been an honor to serve and she will help incoming Chair Kate Budd in the transition.

XVIII. Adjournment

Chair Saliga adjourned the meeting at 4:35 pm.

—Angela Hartsock, Secretary.

Questions and comments about the minutes can be emailed to

ahartsock1@uakron.edu.

APPENDIX A

Report of the Academic Policies Committee to Faculty Senate May 6, 2021

Certificate Program Requirements

APC has unanimously approved the following policy, to be added to the Bulletin:
“At least 2/3 of the credits that count towards the certificate program must be completed at the University of Akron. Exceptions may be granted by permission of the director of the certificate program.”

Rationale: A question about certificate-program requirements arose when a student at another university inquired about pursuing a certificate at UA and applying credits from her institution to the certificate. We realized that we did not have a general policy about the percentage of credits that must be taken at UA to complete a UA certificate. We created this policy for clarification.

APPENDIX B

Computing & Communications Technologies Committee Report

The CCTC met on Monday, April 26, 2021.

1. Guest Toni Bisconti presented the report of the Qualtrics Committee. After much discussion, the CCTC approved a resolution for the Faculty Senate to consider.

The next meeting of the CCTC will be during the beginning of the fall 2021 semester

Scott Randby
CCTC Chair

CCTC Qualtrics Resolution

The following resolution was passed by the Computing and Communications Technologies Committee on April 26, 2021. The committee submits this resolution to the Faculty Senate.

Scott Randby
CCTC chair

Resolution

Whereas replacing Qualtrics with the Microsoft Forms, Customer Experience and Power Platform suite of applications would result in a significant loss of functionality, and

Whereas a large majority of Qualtrics users say that Qualtrics is moderately or very important to their professional life with areas of usage split fairly evenly among teaching, research, administrative purposes, and program assessment, and

Whereas the Microsoft suite is missing critical functionality, and that the missing functionality could result in severely limiting the type of research currently conducted with Qualtrics, and

Whereas outside collaborations would be greatly hindered or rendered impossible without the commonality of Qualtrics, and

Whereas alternatives such as SurveyMonkey and Redcap suffer the same defects as the Microsoft suite, and

Whereas using individual licenses for Qualtrics would likely at least double the cost of a university license, and

Whereas Qualtrics is the industry standard in many fields, students in those fields need to know it to compete in the job market, and faculty in those fields need Qualtrics to do their work; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate recommends that Qualtrics be maintained for the duration of the current contract, and that options for funding the purchase of a license renewal for Qualtrics be explored until when and if another product meets the needs of the university Qualtrics community.

APPENDIX C**CRC Report – May 6, 2021**

CRC is bringing forward 54 course proposals and 15 program proposals for your approval.

Course Proposals

| | | |
|----------|--|--------------|
| 2040:242 | American Urban Society | inactivation |
| 2040:247 | Survey of Basic Economics | inactivation |
| 2820:105 | Basic Chemistry | inactivation |
| 2820:111 | Introductory Chemistry | inactivation |
| 2820:112 | Introductory & Analytical Chemistry | inactivation |
| 2850:100 | Introduction to Corrosion Technology | inactivation |
| 2850:200 | Advanced Corrosion Technology | inactivation |
| 2860:260 | Electronic Project | edited |
| 2860:350 | Advanced Circuit Training | edited |
| 2860:370 | Survey of Electronics I | edited |
| 2860:455 | Senior Project | edited |
| 2920:370 | Plastics Design & Process | edited |
| 2980:225 | Advanced Surveying | edited |
| 2980:430 | Surveying Project | edited |
| 2990:468 | Construction Management | edited |
| 3200:504 | Assyriology | inactivation |
| 3700:517 | Environmental Security and Climate Politics | edited |
| 3700:519 | Homeland Security Policy and Process | edited |
| 3750:424 | Myths of Sexuality | added |
| 4300:314 | Foundation Design | edited |
| 4300:471 | Construction Administration | edited |
| 4300:490 | Senior Design in Civil Engineering | edited |
| 4400:401 | Senior Design Project 1- Electrical Engineering | edited |
| 4450:401 | Senior Design Project 1- Computer Engineering | edited |
| 4600:461 | ME Senior Design Project I | edited |
| 4600:497 | Honors Project in Mechanical Eng | edited |
| 5250:498 | Student Teaching Colloquium: Middle Grades | edited |
| 5250:499 | Student Teaching: Middle Level Education | edited |
| 6200:550 | Advanced Applied Analytics and Decision Analysis | added |
| 7100:310 | Motion Design | edited |
| 7100:311 | UI/UX Design | edited |
| 7600:516 | Social Media Content Creation | edited |
| 7600:517 | Social Media Platforms | edited |
| 7750:666 | Global Health Disparities | added |

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 9821:100 | Introduction to Polymers | added |
| 9821:411 | Special Topics in PS and PE | added |
| 9841:101 | Tools for PS and PE | added |
| 9841:321 | Polymer Fluid Mechanics | added |
| 9841:324 | Quantitative Polymer Analysis | added |
| 9841:330 | Polymer Thermodynamics | added |
| 9841:333 | Polymer Thermodynamics Lab | added |
| 9841:422 | Polymer Processing | added |
| 9841:423 | Injection Molding and Mold Design | added |
| 9841:424 | Additive Manufacturing with Polymers | added |
| 9841:451 | Polymer Engineering Lab | edited |
| 9841:496 | Senior Design Project | added |
| 9841:497 | Honors Project | added |
| 9841:499 | Senior Design Project II | edited |
| 9871:265 | Organic Polymer Chem Lab | added |
| 9871:340 | Polymer Characterization Fundamentals | added |
| 9871:350 | Sustainable Polymers | added |
| 9871:403 | Polymer Chemistry | edited |
| 9871:404 | Polymer Physics | edited |
| 9871:460 | Polymeric Biomaterials | added |

Program Proposals

| | | |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| 299103BS | Construction Engineering Tech | edited |
| 300011GC | Global Conflict, Certificate | inactivation |
| 346000MS | Computer Science, MS | edited |
| 347000BS | Statistics | edited |
| 347003BS | Statistics, Actuarial Science Option | edited |
| 347004BS | Statistics, Data Science | edited |
| 375000BA | Psychology | edited |
| 375000M | Psychology | edited |
| 460000BS | Mechanical Engineering | edited |
| 520300BS | Middle Level Education | edited |
| 520310BS | Middle Level Education, Dual Licensure | edited |
| 561204BS | Mid/Moderate Intervention Specialist | edited |
| 570104MA | Educational Administration and Leadership | edited |
| 620004MSA | Accounting, MSA | edited |
| | Strategic Social Media Graduate Certificate | added |

APPENDIX D

2020-2021 Year End Report: University Libraries Committee

Membership: Aimee DeChambeau (ex officio), Michael Graham, Angela Hartsock (chair), Jodi Kearns, Seungbum Lee, Jennifer Lillard, Jon Miller, David Szalay

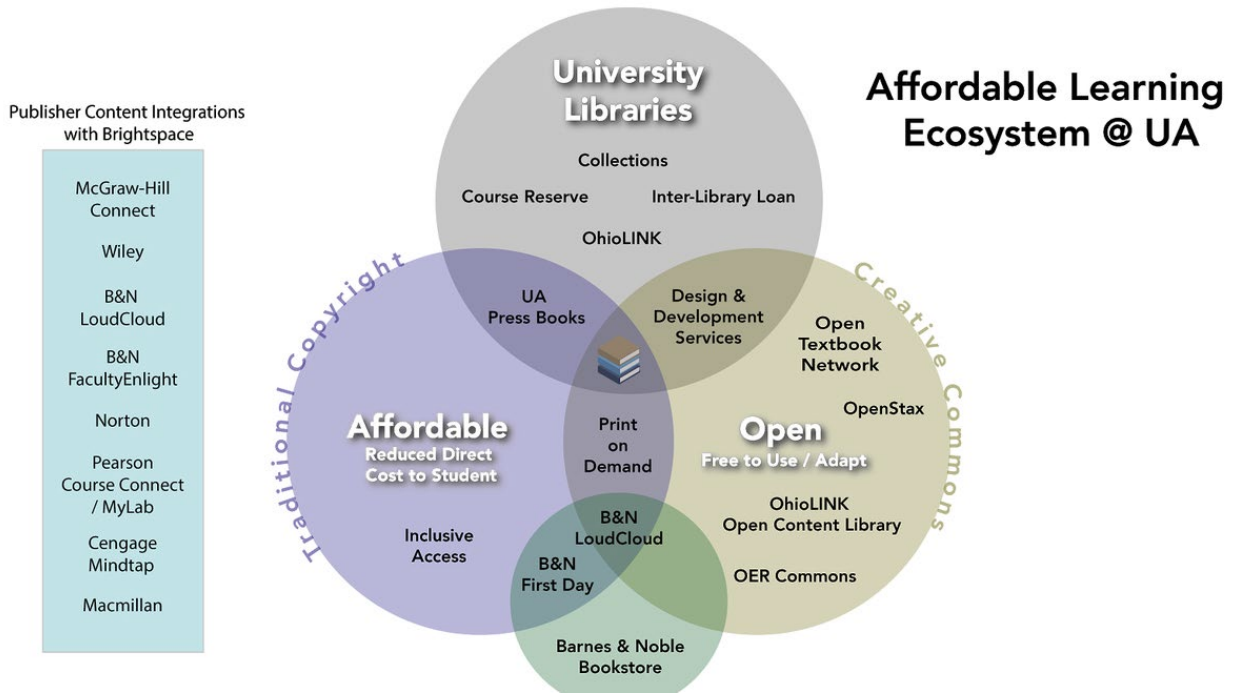
Meetings: University Libraries committee held two meetings this academic year. One in fall semester (October 2020) and one in spring semester (February 2021).

Notable Business:

- Dean DeChambeau has been keeping the committee updated on budget impacts to the libraries.
- At our Spring 2021 meeting the library staff gave a series of presentations focused on budget, collections, the UA Press, and the Affordable Learning Initiative. Presenters included Dean DeChambeau, Steve Kaufman, Jon Miller, Sarah Zornes, and Sean Kennedy.

Key Topic Areas:

- **Budget:** Of note, the library has spent almost their entire FY20 collections budget on e-resources. Budget reductions during the previous fiscal year did require cancellation of some resources (mostly journal subscriptions). This was done using (ongoing) analytics of usage and impact. For the next fiscal year, the library is aggressively negotiating subscription renewals, adding back critical previously canceled subscriptions, and engaging in creative partnerships.
- **Affordable Learning Initiative (ALI):** The committee would like to promote the ongoing ALI. While libraries have always been centered on making learning affordable by providing content and services needed by students, this initiative is about collaborating with faculty and supporting them specifically in the selection and development of low- and no-cost resources for course content, ultimately saving students money. A visual for helping faculty to understand the affordable learning ecosystem at UA is included below.
 - Affordable Learning Initiative <https://uakron.edu/affordablelearning/>
- The committee would also like to promote the following resources to all faculty: University Press (<https://www.uakron.edu/uapress/>), Idea Exchange (<https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/>), and Course Reserves.
- The committee would like to encourage all faculty to act as ambassadors for the library and to reach out to the library for collaboration.



**COVID Child-Care Workgroup
Report to Faculty Senate Executive Committee
April 12, 2021**

Members: Stevie Allen, Laura Conley, Chelsey Elsey, Angela Hartsock, Heather Loughney, Erin Makarius, Pamela Schulze, Jennifer Stanley, Amanda Weinstein

The initial charge of the committee was to consider childcare issues during the pandemic; however, we extended our charge to consider childcare, dependent care, quarantines, and pandemic-related impacts on our jobs and working conditions.

The child-care workgroup would like to make the following recommendations to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for consideration.

1. Assess childcare needs and barriers through anonymous surveys.

Rationale: It is hard to generalize the childcare needs of faculty and staff during the pandemic. An anonymous survey may help to capture the scope of needs and challenges related to childcare.

2. Provide an extended tenure pause.

Rationale: The COVID-19 pandemic has lasted longer than anticipated and has now impacted 3 academic semesters. It is unclear when we will return to “normal” and what that will look like. The productivity of faculty and their ability to engage in research and service has been impacted in diverse and unpredictable ways. We may continue to experience the repercussions of the pandemic for several years.

3. Provide a flexible shared leave bank.

Rationale: Many of our colleagues may find themselves needing to take time off for their own health, to quarantine, or to care for others. The committee would like to recommend that the university consider a shared leave bank for all categories of employee with as much flexibility as possible.

4. Explore an expanded temporary workload reduction policy.

Rationale: Some employees with dependent and childcare may benefit from a temporary reduction in workload/hours. The committee recommends that this option be explored. The current policy does not extend to faculty and the current policy may impede the ability of staff to return to full-time work after opting for a reduction.

5. Explore funding for on-campus childcare.

Rationale: The university previously had childcare on campus. This was discontinued. The committee would recommend exploring future options and possible funding opportunities related to childcare on campus.

6. Establish and promote communication norms.

Rationale: With the move to Teams and more remote work options, work communication can encroach on private time. This can add additional stress at home and for families dealing with increased demands during the

pandemic. The committee would recommend that those in administrative and supervisory roles adhere to guidelines that establish appropriate boundaries and hours for communication with employees.

7. List backup professors of record for courses.

Rationale: Faculty are being impacted by illness and quarantine during the pandemic. In some cases, this prevents faculty from teaching or communicating with students during critical times in the semester. The committee would like to recommend that each course section have an additional professor of record who could serve as a backup in the event that a faculty member becomes ill, needs to quarantine, or is deceased during the semester.

8. Develop and promote work-life balance policies.

Rationale: Many universities publish and promote work-life balance guidelines. Doing this supports the productivity and health of all employees, not just those with children. The committee recommends that HR consider adopting/developing and promoting policies that serve our campus community.

APPENDIX F

REPORT OF INTERDISCIPLINARY COUNCIL, 2017-18

This document reports the progress the Interdisciplinary Council (IDC) has made towards the goals set out in the Executive Summary and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Interdisciplinary Initiatives (see below)

- Maintaining the documentation of interdisciplinary activities on campus
- Developing and maintaining an interdisciplinary web-site as well as other forms of communication.
- Working with the administration to overcome institutional barriers like shared SCH and faculty load and bringing about effective change
- Providing opportunities for faculty to meet and share creative ideas that expand interdisciplinary initiatives.
- Assisting departments in the expansion of interdisciplinary activities and effective use of resources
- Developing interaction with community and potential employers on interdisciplinary needs
- Seeking funding for expanded activities from the community

Starting Interdisciplinary Council (IC)

The initial work to set up the Council took place in the fall 2017 semester. The Faculty Senate provided their representatives by early November, as did the Office of Academic Affairs and Graduate Student Government. The problem was developing representatives of directors of interdisciplinary programs who have four representatives on a rotating basis. Unfortunately there is not a clear definition of these programs and centers and we on the Ad Hoc Committee on Interdisciplinary Initiatives did not provide clarification. Also their directors are not organized into any group to determine a rotation. I worked with Harvey Sterns and Carolyn Behrman from the list of programs we had put together in the AdHoc Committee earlier in 2018 to try to identify institutes and programs and then to find who was in charge of each. We ran out of time in the fall term trying to finish collecting all the information and then getting the directors organized into a group to decide who would be the first four. Given this situation, at the beginning of spring semester I asked the representatives of directors of institutes or interdisciplinary programs who were part of the Ad Hoc Committee whether they would be prepared to initially represent interdisciplinary programs and institutes. As a result, the Council first met early in February.

The Committee for 2017-18 consists of the following, with the representation of stakeholders as passed by Faculty Senate in Spring 2017 :-

Adam Smith (directors), Hazel Barton (directors), Carolyn Behrman (directors), Diane Brown (faculty), Sarah Cravens (OAA), Kitty Endres (faculty), Brian Davis (chairs), Alec Gerred(Graduate Students), Dane

Quinn (faculty), Pam Schultze (Directors), Christin Seher (faculty), John Senko (faculty), Harvey Sterns (directors), Mary Triece (directors). This list is slightly larger than the numbers in the senate resolution ,but given the difficulty of finding a time when all could meet, I included everyone who replied to the request for directors' membership, but kept the voting requirements of the resolution: the others are non-voting members. Undergraduate students did not provide a member for the Council. The Committee met bi-weekly for the spring semester, starting on February 8th and ending on May 10th. The major issues discussed and developed are listed below, with explanation. For further details I will be happy to send you the minutes.

Election of officers

At the first meeting, the Committee elected Elizabeth Erickson as Chair, Dane Quinn as Vice Chair and John Senko as Secretary.

Meeting with Deans on interdisciplinary activities and RTP and performance guidelines.

Concern that a required review of RTP guidelines should include consideration of interdisciplinary research and teaching led to a request by the Provost to present at the Council of Deans meeting on February 27th. The Chair and Vice Chair attended and explained the importance of interdisciplinary activities at the University of Akron and asked the Deans to urge their departments to include interdisciplinary activities in RTP. The IDC had passed a resolution *Interdisciplinary Council respectfully requests that you ask your departments to consider a role for interdisciplinary activities in their re-writing of departmental merit and RTP guidelines. At the moment such activities are usually not included. Each department will view such interdisciplinary teaching and research differently, but appropriate criteria need to be developed to judge the acceptability and quality of such work, so that there are incentives for faculty in participating in it. We would appreciate your help in this matter.*

Later in the semester IDC members sought informal feedback from Departments: did they get a request from Deans to consider interdisciplinary activities in guidelines? What was their response if they received a request? The responses were mixed. Some Guidelines were already reviewed before the date of our request. Others said they did not receive any request from their Dean. Among those who did get the information, some said they already included interdisciplinary activities in RTP, while others said they did not and wanted guidelines on how to consider the activities. The Council agreed that this issue required longer term work and follow up. We have had an initial discussion on developing a set of guidelines, but this needs to be followed up by seeking information from departments on their specific questions, given the different situations involved in each discipline. A suggestion is to survey each department as a part of a direct contact before the rewrite of web pages (see below)

Combining v cross listing courses

An early discussion in IDC related to issues involved with the general issue of cross-listing. A representative from the Registrar's office came to speak with us. We learned that "combining" was a useful method of assigning the same room to classes with different identification numbers but the same instructor (s). It does not require review through the curriculum system. However it does involve specific technical steps which may be confusing. The Registrar's office will give advice or do it for you. "Cross-listing" is when one course has several numbers listed in the Bulletin and assigned to one room: it needs to go through the curriculum system in some way. The Council discussed issues under each method. Students may see cross listing as a clearer method than combining. Institute or program numbers, make scheduling and tracking easier. Clearly combining or cross listing require interactive scheduling and cooperation between departments

SCH have been a problem: it is not clear in either a combined or cross listed class whether SCH for the class were added together. Neither was it clear if more than one faculty member was involved that they received full or partial load hours.(see SCH and load hours below). The details of each method still requires more clarity: IDC is working with a draft of this information to go to the Deans and then to the faculty of each college to help communicate this material.

Other issues related to cooperation in scheduling are those in joint degrees requiring classes in different disciplines: for example how to have a system to allow Chemistry and Biology to schedule Biology classes for Biochemistry, when Biochemistry needs classes that Biology schedules only every 2 years. There are issues of SCH (see below), but this also seems to be a problem needing significant discussion between departments. We have not as yet discussed if there is way for IDC to facilitate such discussions.

Initial materials on interdisciplinary options developed for advisors

The Council agreed early on the priority needed in providing materials on interdisciplinary options to college advisors for fall enrollment. It is first and second year students especially who need to understand that many of them can add interdisciplinary elements to their majors or initially decided degrees. Unfortunately our initial plan to on the development of a flyer with a faculty member and students was not successful, but we were able to prepare by spring break a document outlining options with links to what is at present available on line (see attached). This was forwarded the Office of Academic affairs to be sent on to advisors. Unfortunately the information did not reach the advisors in a number of cases, so this summer we are contacting advisors in each college to get their input and to make direct contact with them. This information will be included in our continuing communication initiative (see below).

Suggestions on SCH and faculty load: in progress

IDC had initial discussions on the issues of SCH and load hours for interdisciplinary activities, based on the report of the Ad Hoc Committee. Departments still stress the SCH generated by their departments in situations like program review. This leads to departments trying to enhance their SCH generation by having their students take as many classes as possible from their own units. You, as Provost, have stated (in University Council) that SCH are no longer of primary interest to the Legislature and should not be as significant at the department level. **IDC considers then that when classes are combined or cross-listed the SCH could be counted in both departments.** It would also encourage combining classes (like introductory statistics) which could with interdepartmental discussion be taught in one class rather than in each and every department. We are collecting feedback on this idea over the summer. I have already spoken with Linda Subich, Interim Dean of Buchtel College who agrees with these ideas. We are still discussing a draft version that includes what IDC could do to encourage and perhaps mediate such cooperation. We have started a discussion about faculty load hours for interdisciplinary courses, including jointly taught courses. In our survey (December 2017) a number of faculty considered that a jointly taught course should give full load hours to both faculty. In some situations in the university this is already the case. An intermediate alternative, suggested by Associate Dean Bill Lyons, is to count load hours over a 2 year (48 credit) load period rather than in single term or annual units. Again we need to do more work finding out what is done in different colleges before we will have a fully developed proposal to present to you and to Faculty Senate.

Communication: web site development and publicity to students

A major initiative for the coming year is effective communication of the interdisciplinary initiatives on campus. This involves first making sure that the information on them is easily available to advisors and students and then publicizing the interdisciplinary initiatives effectively.

The first part of the communication strategy is underway:-

1. Developing material for advisors: an initial set of materials developed and sent through channels; collection of material on advisors and feedback plan to meet advisors developed (see above)
2. Discussion with Bob Kropff on developing web page and other web-based material. Bob told us that there is a plan for the very near future to update the information web pages for all departments. He agreed that departments would be asked to include their interdisciplinary activities. He requested that IDC develop by the early fall a set of questions and format for department chairs to list the activities effectively.

3. Web-site planning: one question is whether the web-site is primarily for advisors and faculty or for students. Feedback from advisors should help clarify this question.
4. With this extra material we plan to carry out a publicity campaign. One part is developing a flyer on interdisciplinary activities and another is developing stories for social media on our exstudents and what they have done with this background.

SUMMARY REPORT ON WORK OF INTERDISCIPLINARY COUNCIL 2018-2019

The major activities of the Interdisciplinary Council during this period related to **Establishing a connection to advisors**

Early in the semester, IDC contacted the group that represents professional advisor: ZADACA. We introduced the importance of interdisciplinary emphasis and the role of IDC in supporting interdisciplinary activities as a short information item at an early November 2018 meeting of the organization. We followed this up with an information seeking/feedback full session to 30 ZADACA members later in the month, led by three members of IDC.

The suggestions from the advisors, who have the most direct contact with students, has been an important input into our planning ever since. In no particular order, their major suggestions were:

- YouTube videos from alumni and/or written material with photos from alumni on importance of considering interdisciplinary options.
- Discussion of appropriate minors at bottom of degree guides with links to contacts
- Checking that advisors have adequate and correct information on certificates, with contacts to directors and suggested sequences of courses.
- Need for better descriptions and materials for interdisciplinary degrees, again with contacts.
- Website on interdisciplinary options
- Effective system to sort minors, certificates and other interdisciplinary options so easier on line
- Continuing Newsletter with updates.

The Council followed up on these sessions with the first Newsletter in March, for the class sign-ups for Fall 2019. It included a restatement of the importance of interdisciplinary activities; the role of IDC; proposed plan for on-line information; new degrees and certificates (Business Analytics, Biomimicry, Health Administration), what is needed to improve interest in interdisciplinary certificates; and a paragraph each on a selection of certificates (Women's studies, Gerontology and Environmental Studies)

Input into 3-year Action Plan

In Fall 2018 the process of strategic planning commenced with requests for 3-year action plans from units and colleges that Fall . The problem is that this planning system is unlikely to include interdisciplinary activities which are across departments and across colleges. It is an issue that was central to the recommendation of Ad Hoc Interdisciplinary Initiatives Committee to form the IDC.

We asked that IDC be considered a unit and to provide a Three-Year Action Plan that would be a complementary method of developing an overall plan which includes interdisciplinary initiatives. It would be the basis of discussion on how these initiatives can be incorporated into department and college actions. The Provost agreed and IDC submitted a plan in December, after discussion and drafts.

Communication campaign

The Chair met with Bob Kropff, in Spring, to plan ways for effective communication using the university website, especially methods for the Bulletin. He discouraged the use of an Interdisciplinary website because it would need significant resources, and in his opinion would not be a very useful tool. Instead, he recommended that interdisciplinary options should be included in the re-design of departmental web pages. He would be sending a survey out to Department Chairs in the Fall and so asked for interdisciplinary questions that could be included. We submitted questions that asked departments to recommend useful minors and certificates that would complement their degrees.

Additionally, the Chair met with Meghan Meeker of University Communication and Media. She suggested a small group of IDC members meet with her to enhance social media presence of interdisciplinary programs. IDC members agreed to identify students or alumni who could be used for videos used by Communications.

Proposed Global Studies Degree

During the Spring semester, URC reviewed a proposal for an interdisciplinary Global Studies degree. In IDC this led to discussion and research on what should be in a high-quality interdisciplinary degree. As a result of this discussion, the Chair presented a request to CRC that further work be done on the proposal. The request argued there were problems with objectives, with integration across fields and lack of a required core of theoretical/method courses and the need to determine the demand for such a degree by N.E. Ohio employers. CRC agreed that a revised version could be considered in the Fall. IDC agreed to present guidelines on what is a quality interdisciplinary degree also in the Fall.

Load credit and SCH issues

The Council discussed and collected information on both specific and general issues related to problems with SCH and load hours in carrying out interdisciplinary activities effectively. The Chair reviewed this situation with several experienced administrators to collect possible solutions to these problems. It was agreed that in the Summer and Fall the Chair should seek solutions by meeting with the Deans (and Interim Deans) of the Colleges and report back to the Council.

Ziptalks

In Spring 2019, IDC explored methods for encouraging faculty to cooperate in interdisciplinary research. Janet Bean (ITL) and ---(EXL) spoke to the Council. Janet Bean promised the support of ITL and --- explained the use of pecha kutchi based on short (5 minute) presentations related a broad theme and most of the time spent on discussion based on the different viewpoints.

As a result, the Council decided to do a first round of talks (Ziptalks) using the pecha kucha framework, with a group of 4 researchers presenting their research as it related to the concept of “resilience”. Initially the idea was to present in a traditional ITL environment, but later the Council agreed that it would be better to schedule at a tavern off campus, after a Faculty Senate meeting (which would give an appropriate time and an ability to publicize to a significant group.

Unfortunately, it took too much time organizing speakers for the event to be put

on calendars before the end of the semester. It was agreed to move the event to the early Fall.

SUMMARY REPORT ON WORK OF INTERDISCIPLINARY COUNCIL 2019-2020

Background to Activities

The academic year began with a new President (President Miller) and new Acting Provost Urgo who took over in a period of declining enrollment and significant financial problems. In the Fall, the President set up a new strategic planning initiative, with the participation of University Council Executive Committee (UCEC) and a Strategic Planning Group (SPG); and based on up-dated versions of the earlier 3-year Action Plan. In the Spring a Drafting and Integration Group (DIG) were to put together the findings of the two committees. However, this process was put on hold by COVID and the additional problems it caused. At the start of the year, IDC was encouraged that both President Miller and Provost Urgo expressed support of interdisciplinary activities; and the last act of Acting (Interim) President Green was the initiation and basic funding of an exciting interdisciplinary project set up through EXL: Our Vision for Akron (OVA). The Council also sent the President and later the Interim Provost e-mails pointing out the importance of interdisciplinary activities at UA and the role of IDC in helping encourage them. In addition, the Chair met with the Provost in person.

Strategic Planning Activities

IDC sent a submission to UCEC on the importance and role of the Council, updating material developed for 3-year Action Plan. It also submitted material to the SWP and then later in response to the UCEC and SWG reports, a submission to DIG. Unfortunately, the strategic planning process had to be put on hold because of COVID.

Support and investigation of OVA

IDC investigated and supported the OVA project developed by faculty associated with EXL. Courses related to a set of specific real-world problems developed in concert by students, the community and faculty with different expertise and viewpoints on a topic, with funding to cover replacements for the faculty reduced load seemed an example of a creative and effective new interdisciplinary cutting edge project. Several members of IDC were involved in its development and reported to IDC meetings on their progress. Council decided that this initiative was an excellent method of getting faculty across disciplines to work together and felt it legitimately should replace Ziptalks. Again the project had to be modified or put on hold due to COVID.

Guidelines for high quality interdisciplinary activities to CRC

After the discussion on Global Studies, IDC continued its discussion and developed a set of guidelines for high quality interdisciplinary degrees which it provided to CRC. The major-----. The Council also started the development of guidelines for new certificates, but this project was put on hold by COVID.

Interviews with Deans on issues related to interdisciplinary activities.

Starting at the end of Spring 2019, The Chair met with each of the Deans and Interim Deans: Linda Subich, Elizabeth Kennedy, Craig Menzsemer, Tim McCarragher and Susan Hanlon. She asked for their solutions to the problems of barriers to interdisciplinary activities, like SCH and Load Hours; incentives to stress and develop interdisciplinary initiatives; and communication of interdisciplinary options. IDC had studied these issues, but hoped that ideas from higher level administrators could suggest feasible solutions. IDC prepared a Report in November for the Deans, reviewing the importance of interdisciplinary emphasis and their suggested solutions to its problems (see attached). Possible action items were listed in the Appendix.

Second newsletter to advisors

A second Newsletter was sent to advisors in November 2019, to help provide information for Spring course decisions. It included the basic information for new advisors, the detailed announcement of OVA, and a second set of certificates explained and with contacts.

Information on presently operative certificates

Members of the Council checked our list of interdisciplinary certificates (from data in the Bulletin) and contacted their organizers to determine whether their certificates were in operation. The Council has not made this available to the advisors: because of COVID we thought we would need to check back with the directors.

Need for high-level administrator in charge of interdisciplinary issues.

Discussion through till mid-March led IDC to develop a recommendation that for changes to be made to the incentives for multidisciplinary activities, there needed to be support of upper administration through someone who had these issues as a major part of their portfolio. The Deans had pointed out that with that upper-level initiative, they could bring changes at the college and department level, but only if the issues were made high priority.

IDC meetings were cancelled due to COVID until a late May, when there was a Microsoft Teams meeting. The Chair was asked to introduce the new Provost to the strategic advantage UA has in interdisciplinary study and to explain the function of IDC and present the request for OAA support.

Re-submission of OAA request

Due to the need to concentrate on decisions related to the immediate future at the UA, because of the effects of COVID, the Provost did not consider our e-mail in May, so IDC sent it again in August.

The Council received a positive reply from the Provost, but he pointed out that any planning for the medium and long-term had to be put on hold until more immediate problems were worked through. IDC agreed to continue addressing issues for the medium and long-run.

Summary of the work of IDC to date (2017-2020)

Attached find the report submitted in Spring to Rex Ramsier, as the OAA representative on the Council, who was unable to attend meetings, summarizing the work of the Committee.

INTERDISCIPLINARY COUNCIL

AGENDA

Introductions of representatives and organization

Consideration of notes on September meeting (attached earlier)

Discussion with Cher Hendricks on IDC and present reorganization

Issues from Spring program review

Information for advisors

New Business

Notes on meeting

BACKGROUND

The University of Akron has stressed its interdisciplinary activities since the report to the Faculty Senate from a subcommittee set up to review the significance of interdisciplinary programs during the presidency of President Proenza. That Report included recommendations to facilitate this work, but for various reasons they were not followed through. In the Strategic Plan for 2020, developed in the same period, interdisciplinary activities were identified as a point of excellence at UA. An Ad Hoc Committee was recruited by the Faculty Senate in 2016 to work specifically on how those recommendations could be made operational. In May 2017, the Faculty Senate accepted the recommendations of that report. An important recommendation was the formation of the Interdisciplinary Council by Faculty Senate, in conjunction with OAA, that would represent all the stakeholders involved.

The Council would consist of five members chosen by the faculty senate, four members representing official interdisciplinary programs (certificates, degrees etc.), one representative of the Chairs, one representative of OAA and two students.

To quote the resolution of Faculty Senate:-

This Council should facilitate and promote interdisciplinary activities by

- *Maintaining the documentation of interdisciplinary activities on campus*
- *Developing and maintaining an interdisciplinary web-site as well as other forms of communication.*
- *Working with the administration to overcome institutional barriers like shared SCH and faculty load and bringing about effective change*
- *Providing opportunities for faculty to meet and share creative ideas that expand interdisciplinary initiatives.*
- *Assisting departments in the expansion of interdisciplinary activities and effective use of resources*
- *Developing interaction with community and potential on interdisciplinary needs*
- *Seeking funding for expanded activities from the community employers*

IDC commenced its activities in Fall 2017. For the first year the provost's chief of staff was a member of the council, but when she moved to another position,

Provost Ramsier was unable to replace her, due to our financial problems. He officially remained the OAA representative until Cher Hendricks became the representative in Fall 2020. Rex still receives all IDC e-mails.

STOP

Introduce members of IDC and explain missing members.

In early 2020 IDC was permitted to provide input to the University Council EC and the Strategic Working Group as part of the new strategic Plan.

Interdisciplinary activities were recommended by UC,SWG and the later DIG committee before the coronavirus.

In May 2020, IDC contacted the new Provost Weinek. It was realized that not highest priority at that time, but replied to supportively by the provost in August.

ALREADY IN REPORT PUT BELOW IN AS WELL

Oct20, 2020

Provost Wiencek, on behalf of the Interdisciplinary Council (IDC), thank you for your positive response to my e-mail in August. I have not contacted you before now, because as you said, there are more immediate issues to be worked out before strategic planning can be discussed in any depth. However, I understand that you are re-organizing the Office for Academic Affairs (OAA), so it seems important to remind you of one of our most important requests: leadership for interdisciplinary activities from

“an Associate Provost or other high- level administrator who has this task as a major priority of his or her responsibilities. This individual should strongly support the nurturing and expansion of interdisciplinary options and removal of institutional obstacles”.

We ask you to include the task of leadership on interdisciplinary activities as you re-assign administrative responsibilities This request relates to present institutional goals, as interdisciplinary activities have already been identified as a point of excellence at the University of Akron, a designation reinforced by college consolidations. However, that strategy still needs administrative priority and support because of the problems that come from a system based on departmental and college silos.

IDC has identified the major tasks for such a leadership portfolio. One of our major tasks has been to identify and investigate the problems of interdisciplinary activities; and to develop possible solutions. An outline of the issues and possible solutions are included in the Submission sent to the Provost in May and its Appendix (attached). We found that it is a matter of changing administrative rules that are barriers to interdisciplinary courses and programs; and giving some priority to effective strategies for communication. These require only a slight reallocation of resources that fit within the present budget of the university and can improve efficiency.

We have also noted that effective interdisciplinary strategy needs the real commitment of upper administration to its importance (the necessary condition) and the active participation of the OAA representative on the Council working with us in bringing it about. (the sufficient condition). Now seems a time where administrative structure and designated duties can relate to the strategic directions of the university.

Why are interdisciplinary issues an important area for the use of limited administrative time? To summarize our argument for interdisciplinary activities as part of the strategy of the university going forward : to get students to come to the University of Akron there should be an innovative set of programs that both highlight interdisciplinary options like EXL and OVA and stress joint degrees, minors and certificates. The University of Akron has these programs but needs to publicize and build on them as a priority.

STOP

For more details on the objectives of IDC, its work, and the issues that need to be solved please refer to the Submission attachment.

Finally, if possible, I would like to meet with either of you to discuss our request and what you think could be achievable just now.

Thank you.

e-mail to Rex Ramsier, OAA member of Interdisciplinary Council

Hullo Rex:

May 22, 2020

By mistake, I left your name off the e-mail I sent to members of the Interdisciplinary Council (IDC) for our virtual meeting on May 21st : I do apologize. This e-mail summarizes the submission IDC made to Provost Wienczek: our proposal for changes in strategic direction under re-organization; the issues and problems addressed by IDC; and the need for resources for IDC in the future.

Proposal for changes in strategic direction under reorganization.

We argue that the university needs to take advantage of the new interdisciplinary college structure to make changes in its programs and courses that would really excite students and attract them to the University of Akron. It should build on its interdisciplinary strengths, publicizing what we already have and developing a more interdisciplinary set of programs and courses relevant to real world problems and to employers. We think this would make a virtue out of the necessity of consolidations. We also argue that to make this strategy to work, there would need to be an administrator who has this strategy as a major portfolio and is able to use directives and incentives to make changes happen. He or she should work with the Interdisciplinary Council, which has experience of the issues and problems involved.

As you can see, this is based on the framework under which IDC has operated these past three years. Over that time, however, institutional priorities had to be modified due to our financial problems, so interdisciplinary changes, even at the margin, understandably became of lower concern. We are arguing that in the new crisis and reorganization, interdisciplinary strategy should be one of the major priorities.

Past Activities of IDC: achievements and problems

In the proposal we mentioned what the Council has achieved over the past three years and what are the problems that remain. I had planned already to provide you with a report on the Council's work, so here is the more detailed review:

- working to provide information to advisors.

We contacted ZADCA and met with them on two occasions. The group appreciated the information on the value of interdisciplinary options and

asked for more detailed material. We then provided the membership with a Newsletter each semester with updates on the importance and availability of specific interdisciplinary options. For example, in one issue we highlighted OVA and the most recent (and delayed) newsletter provides a list of available certificates, with a brief description of each, and comments by organizing faculty on what majors would gain by it.

We realized however that information was a necessary but not sufficient condition for advisors to discuss the options with students. At least as important was the limited time with each student, and the need for them both to access material rapidly. For example, they wanted easy access through the Bulletin and the sheets for each program to what options (joint majors, minors, certificates, projects) would be useful additions. We have not been able to meet this request, due to more general communication issues (see below), instead we have tried through Newsletters.

- trying to develop a strategy for communication to students.
We spent time brainstorming with the university communications team, which had excellent ideas on approaches using social media, as well as understanding the issues raised by the advisors. They added our interdisciplinary questions to their survey for redesigning departmental web sites. Unfortunately, this project has been postponed three times, as things have become more uncertain. Also, general social media campaigns for the administration were a higher priority than publicizing interdisciplinary, so that has not moved forward either.
- attempting to get institutional barriers removed on interdisciplinary activities.
We put considerable time identifying examples of specific barriers related to SCH, load hours, joint courses, small class sizes and cross listing. We then interviewed each of the Deans to find out how they thought these issues could be solved and then sent them a report of the results. Unfortunately, each of the ideas required directives or incentives from upper administration. Again, Deans' limited time and higher priority tasks became a problem.
- Encouraging faculty to develop interactive ideas and finding how to apply them.
With ITL joint sponsorship, the Council decided to host a series of off-campus meetings on a general topic. We set up the first of these on "resilience" in Spring 2019, asking four faculty to give a 5-minute presentation on how their research or teaching related to the topic, then leaving most of the time for discussion. Unfortunately, speakers had time problems and we had to postpone the meeting until Fall 2019. Before then, OVA had been conceived over the summer, and seemed a more effective vehicle for interdisciplinary discussion and action. It was not coincidence, however, that three of the OVA organizers are members of the Council.
- Develop quality standards for interdisciplinary degrees and certificates.
The proposal to URC for a Global Studies degree led us to examine the general criteria for a high- quality interdisciplinary degree, which we then provided to CRC. They used it to suggest that Global Studies needed revision. We were in the process of developing a similar set of criteria for certificates when the change to on-line put the project on hold.

As you can see, we have been able to develop strategies for all the objectives of the Council. The problem has been getting them enacted, or even getting marginal changes, given the needed priorities at the University of Akron during the last three years.

Continued need for IDC and resource issues.

We consider there is a continued need for IDC, even if all the upper administration can do is to authorize marginal changes. We have plans and important experience to provide. If our proposal is accepted in some form, and more changes become possible, then IDC's role becomes significantly magnified. What resources are needed for IDC to work effectively? When we started in 2017, Faculty Senate agreed with our recommendation that the Chair of the Interdisciplinary Council should have a one course reduced load, in order to actually achieve change in an area that the present structure have supported our work by the two load hours you have allocated to me, as Chair, for the last three years and it has been much appreciated. Whether the university can continue this commitment to the Chair during this financial crisis is obviously an issue. Also, finding a Chair from the full-time faculty is difficult at this time, given the uncertainty under which everyone is operating. In our proposal, we said that we understood that payment may not be possible just now, but we requested that the class reduction be reinstated as soon as possible for a Chair from the full-time faculty.

In the meantime, I would like to continue as Chair, as an Emeritus volunteer, both because I think that experience will be necessary for us to move forward at this point, and because the complications of the coronavirus changes have made succession planning so difficult. Would this be acceptable to you? I officially stop being an employee of the university at the end of May, so I also wondered that if you agreed to my request, whether anything needs to be done officially?

Thank you for your consideration.

Liz Erickson,

Chair of Interdisciplinary Council

TO Dean Subich, Quinn, Hanlon, Kennedy, Menzemer, McCarragher

Thank you for speaking with me about the problems and possibilities of interdisciplinary activities on campus. I really appreciated your time and insights. I do have a request based on our conversation. I would ask you to consider interdisciplinary activities while you are discussing with planners the priorities for the Strategic Planning process. I ask for this consideration because colleges plan separately (e.g. Three -Year Action Plans) and interdisciplinary options go across departments and colleges. As we discussed, they often are not considered in college priority decisions, despite their real significance.

Provided at attachment discuss why we should use this important way of increasing the value of a UA degree, a way that adds significant net revenue and complements rather than substitutes for other priorities. I have also included your valuable suggestions on how interdisciplinary activities can be encouraged. I have included an Appendix with possible action items.

I realize that many of these issues need to be considered at a level beyond colleges. I have also contacted the Interim Provost to present this request from Interdisciplinary Council.

Again, thanking you.

Liz Erickson, Chair, Interdisciplinary Council

ROLE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The administration as well as faculty have supported the creation of the Interdisciplinary Council (IDC) to promote and encourage interdisciplinary activities and to help remove barriers that make them hard to carry out effectively. We have been working hard on trying to meet these goals. This planning cycle is an **important opportunity for advancing this objective**

Why is this issue important for our strategic direction?

Our interdisciplinary options have been recognized as a point of distinction in earlier strategic planning. They should remain a priority in the present planning cycle as we strive to identify areas of strength and competitiveness. They are activities that allow us to graduate students with a strong background in one discipline that also have the breadth of knowledge to address real- world problems which are by nature interdisciplinary. Our students can be prepared for this complex world by interdisciplinary degrees (like Integrated Biosciences), Certificates, dual majors, effective use of minors, EX(L) “un-classes” and very importantly, experiential transdisciplinary problem solving like the new initiative “Our Vision for Akron”.

In addition, these interdisciplinary activities add to the value of a University of Akron degree and increase our competitiveness (and revenue) without requiring significant additional or redirected resources. Just minor incentives of support and changes in rules and resource allocation could set up a situation which provides a real incentive for students to study here and grows UA revenue. Yet somehow the topic remains unexamined and unevaluated in a planning environment based on Program Review and Three-Year Action Plans.

How can we support interdisciplinary activities at the College level in this fiscally challenging time?

As set out above, support of interdisciplinary activities complements rather than substitutes for college priorities. Many of the strategies for increased interdisciplinary support and increased efforts to make rules more flexible need discussion and agreement at a level beyond a single college. However, there is groundwork at the college level that complements identified single college priorities and that IDC hopes you are willing to explore:-

**Reviewing what interdisciplinary activities exist in the college:
interdisciplinary degrees and programs, effective minors, certificates, joint courses and transdisciplinary projects.**

IDC recognized that identification of all the available options was not simple. We have developed questions for each department to help with this identification. We did so as part of a planned rewrite of departmental webpages that has been now delayed.

1. If this degree or program is interdisciplinary, describe the participating academic departments and the student benefits of choosing this option.
2. What minors and/or certificates are a good fit for this degree? How would a student benefit from earning that minor/certificate?
3. What double major might be attractive?

Investigating the potential value to be added to degrees by the interdisciplinary options available in your College.

IDC recognizes that evaluating present data can be difficult. There seems to be very limited useful data from official university sources on quantity of minors and certificates earned over time. Also, there is the problem of students not being aware of interdisciplinary options and their value, because of lack of effective communication by departments who need to stress their own programs. Some programs like Gerontology, Women's Studies and Environmental Studies have been able to overcome these problems to some extent, but the reason for under-utilization of these options cannot be determined from just the data on their use. There needs to be further investigation of whether stress on and expansion of interdisciplinary degrees, minors, certificates, courses and experiential transdisciplinary problem solving could add to the value of degrees that would encourage students to attend UA. These options could include free-standing certificates directed at the general community.

Making it a priority for faculty to discuss across departments the possibilities for effective interdisciplinary initiatives, including how they might add to UA revenue through meeting a demand.

In order to make this priority viable, there is the need to provide rewards and reduce barriers to interdisciplinary options. I discussed with you the problems of SCH, load hours and initial class size and how they might be overcome. This discussion also included how to reward developing present and future joint courses and minors and integrating programs in various ways.

Considering within and between colleges how to reduce barriers to encourage and reward developing present and further options.

All of you shared with me your initial ideas on what can be done to add flexibility to load hours and class size for high-value interdisciplinary initiatives. suggestions included small classes being allowed for appropriate interdisciplinary courses, additions to department travel funds, banking of load hours, college funds to allow some hours of those

involved important interdisciplinary teaching or course development to be replaced by part-timers. EX(L) and OVA are important examples of what can be done with more general policies.

Considering how the small increase in costs or reallocation of costs to encourage high potential interdisciplinary initiatives could add to net value and revenue.

Given our financial situation, extra revenue to be gained needs to be greater than extra costs. The analysis we are suggesting would determine the level of costs involved in reallocating faculty and adding to publicity compared to the potential benefit of specific and general effort to support interdisciplinary activities. We agree that the budget needs to be limited, but would argue that a concerted effort to increase support for these initiatives should add significantly to net revenue.

Making clear that SCH is a significant measure only at the university level, that it is of little importance at the college and department level.

In our discussions you agreed that SCH is not relevant below the university level and that the Legislature is now interested in graduation rates. Yet departments and perhaps even colleges have based planning on SCH generation, trying to have students take as many classes as possible from their unit and worrying that they will be penalized if SCH drops. As a result, they have developed separate courses rather than shared joint courses, been unwilling to develop joint programs and exacerbated the minimum class size situation. Given the limitations on faculty resources, departments should be rewarded for incorporating courses from other departments.

Considering a broader role in the longer term for interdisciplinary priorities

Our discussions with some of you considered a broader emphasis on interdisciplinary priorities over time. This emphasis would strengthen our distinctiveness by building on the imaginative efforts to develop experiences of transdisciplinary problem solving like OVA. The idea would be expanding this approach into at present single discipline capstones and team building as found in such fields as engineering, health sciences and business administration. In the long term this might even lead to multi-disciplinary capstone experiences for all UA students. The Gen Ed report suggested that each discipline could use tag courses to work towards a capstone experience. A modified goal could be to set up capstone experiences involving faculty and students across disciplines in capstone experiences.

APPENDIX**ITEMS NEEDED TO DEVELOP INTERDISCIPLINARY EMPHASIS****ITEM 1. STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ALL EFFECTIVE AVENUES FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES**

- A. Convene meeting (say half day) by OA.A and IDC), including IDC members, deans, chairs, certificate stakeholders, students and other faculty (like OVA) to brainstorm ways of integrating present certificates, minors and courses across faculty and disciplines. Make sure students have a significant input.
- B. Use feedback loop to and from potential employers and to and from students and faculty. At Dean level make it required and incentivized by departments and results reported to Provost (for more details, see IDC document sent to Deans). Discussion should be of document coming from A, asking for feedback and additions both by faculty and students.
- C. Provide leadership from top to encourage deans to stress interdisciplinary approaches over the next 3-5 years.

PROBLEM: INSTITUTIONAL DIFFICULTIES RELATED TO INTERDISCIPLINARY OPTIONS

ITEM 2: MARKETING CAMPAIGN ON VALUABLE INTERDISCIPLINARY OPTIONS AT UA

- A. Publicize that UA is known for interdisciplinary activities that encourage the problem- solving and innovation that are needed in today's world. Publicize what we have: interdisciplinary degrees like Integrative Biology, Business Analytics, relevant certificates, significant minors, activities like OVA and EXL where students with different approaches come together in experiential learning that helps solves important problems across disciplines. These activities are examples of how being interdisciplinary can enhance the value of degrees
- B. This objective should involve a comprehensive marketing campaign aimed at bringing in high quality students (strengthens Honors options), those who want team building and learning by doing (like Associates wanting 4-year degrees), adults interested in strong degrees and free- standing certificates of different lengths (our underutilized potential clients). The campaign should include social media as well as more traditional approaches.
- C. Make complementary changes that make it easier for students to access interdisciplinary options. These include but are not limited to cross-listing of courses, a change in SIP numbering, more effective search methods for students to look at interdisciplinary options, a listing of suggested interdisciplinary additions to degree pages and a web page to allow interdisciplinary options search.

ITEM 3: DEVELOP INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE INTERDISCIPLINARY OPTIONS

Suggested possibilities developed in conversations with Deans. More details in document sent to Deans

- A. Deans could be told to undertake 2 interdisciplinary initiatives in next 3 years—may also need incentives like adding it as a performance criterion across all disciplines in college
- B. Require all students to include a certificate (possibly or a minor). Then departments have incentives to generate as need to be interdisciplinary
- C. Turn tag in Gen Ed into requirement that take 2 of 3 different UPPER DIVISION areas in Gen ED that enlarge on their major.
- D. Consider how tags can be used in certificates and or minors
- E. Where resources are scarcer in some areas not others, look at the possibility of joint courses. Development of such courses would need load hour allocation given time and effort needed.

Item 4; MAKE CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES WHICH MAKE INTERDISCIPLINARY DIFFICULT

Issues include:

- A. Perceived use of SCH for resource allocation, that cause there to be similar topic courses in several disciplines and/or colleges and discourages the development of courses or programs with interdisciplinary content. IDC suggests that there be clear information on resource allocation criteria that do not include SCH.
- B. How to allocate load hours, especially where it is difficult to even cover disciplinary requirements. This discourages interdisciplinary courses.
ACTION: USE EXL METHOD OF A RESOURCE FUND TO ALLOW HIRING OF PART TIME OR ALLOW BANKING OF LOAD HOURS FOR 2 NOT 1 YEAR
- C. Class size is an issue with experimental courses that go across disciplines. There needs to be a method of allowing small classes for this purpose.
ACTION: ALLOW SMALL CLASS SIZES FOR EXPERIMENTAL INTERDISCIPLINARY
- D. Issues related to joint appointments. There are problems with effective discussion of requirements and explanations for faculty. There is also a lack of discussion of and incentives for possible interdisciplinary appointments.
ACTION: DISCUSSION BY UPPER ADMINISTRATION WITH DEANS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Item: 5 DEVELOP LONGER TERM INITIATIVES FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM PROJECTS, INCLUDING CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES

This discussion would include exploring the suggestion that Engineering cap stone would be improved by more disciplines involved: and that Honors projects could be in interdisciplinary teams. It could even include the long-term idea of making cap stone experiences interdisciplinary for all students.

Item 6: STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF IDC IN INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES.

IDC has begun the process of being the body that supports interdisciplinary activities. It would be able to have a stronger role if there were requirements that it be consulted on issues like interdisciplinary

degrees (we have criteria for a quality interdisciplinary degree), interdisciplinary programs (we are developing criteria for acceptable certificates). We would like a formal way to encourage changes in institutional problems and provide input to any marketing campaign and provide the expertise on the problems with things like student access to Bulletins. We are taking initiatives on all these issues, but in some cases, it would be more effective if we needed to be consulted.

APPENDIX G

**GEAC
2020 – 2021 Report**

GEAC met regularly through the academic year. We reviewed all of the Arts (4), Humanities (11), Natural Science (14), and Social Science (17) course renewals and provided feedback. We reviewed all new general Education course proposals (19) including those in the new category of capstone (9). Additionally, we updated the language in the Curriculum Inventory Management System to reflect the updates to the General Education curriculum.