

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
The Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

Minutes

240 SH

March 7, 2024

Attending: Jill Beckman, Asha Bhandary, Jean-François Charles, Rodica Curtu, Cornelia Lang (chair), Liz Lundberg (staff), Emilie Maurel-Destruel, Cinda Coggins Mosher, Amira Qidwai, Christine Shea, Amy Strathman

Absent: Anita Jung

1. The committee was joined by the following guests: Brad Cramer, Associate Professor and DUS, Earth and Environmental Sciences; Emily Finzel, Associate Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences; and Silvia Secchi, Professor and DUS, Geographical and Sustainability Sciences. Professors Cramer, Finzel, and Secchi presented information about work they have been doing on potential future directions for their departments. They highlighted the ways national and international organizations working in these space are grappling with global challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, sustainable development, and associated issues of access and justice. They explained that siloed structures are not set up to fully address these issues, and that, like some other organizations, they are therefore looking for ways to cut across structural boundaries and use multi-lens approaches, blending natural and social sciences.

Next they compared the structures of Iowa's Departments of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) and Geographical and Sustainability Sciences (GSS) to the departmental structures of several peer institutions. Other universities are grappling with the same questions about the challenges of studying earth sciences, sustainability, geographic information systems, and environmental sciences, policy, and planning. Those programs are blending natural and social science methods and curricula in ways comparable to Iowa's.

Professors Cramer, Finzel, and Secchi also presented the history of their departments and trends in students' interest in these fields; the programs in these departments have been increasingly popular over the last decade and are poised to continue along that trajectory. In light of this background information, the Departments of Earth and Environmental Sciences and Geographical and Sustainability Sciences are proposing the creation of a new School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability that would bring together the work of both EES and GSS. Professors Cramer, Finzel, and Secchi explained the ways such a plan would create a bigger "front door" for their programs of study, including a common core of introductory courses that would guide students in finding their best fit major. This plan would also promote interdisciplinary approaches and student success and community.

UEPCC discussed the proposal and raised questions about employment of graduates, opportunities for collaboration among faculty, the logistics of creating a new school, terminology and naming, and possible effects on graduate programs and students. The next steps for UEPCC are to spend two weeks reading more detailed material from the departments. Professors Cramer, Finzel, and Secchi (along with Maggie Carrel, Associate Professor, Geographical and

Sustainability Sciences) will join the committee again at their next meeting on March 21 to continue the discussion.

2. Next the committee reviewed the proposal recommended by the GE Curriculum Committee (GECC) to grant Values and Culture status to GHS:2100 *Foundations of Health Humanities*, effective Fall 2024. The proposal was received favorably by both committees, and UEPC agreed with GECC that this course should be granted Values and Culture status.

Respectfully submitted,

Emilie Maurel-Destruel
Associate Professor, French & Italian, Linguistics
Secretary, UEPC