

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

Minutes

240 SH

January 23, 2025

Attending: Cornelia Lang (chair), Asha Bhandary, Rodica Curtu, Megan Gogerty, Liz Lundberg (staff), Emilie Maurel-Destruel, Julianna Pacheco, Sanvesh Srivastava, DeAndre Steger, Amy Strathman, Rachel Young

Absent: Noelle Franzone, Anita Jung

1. First the committee reviewed and approved the minutes from December 5 and December 12, 2024. All approved minutes can be found [here](#).
2. Next, Associate Dean Lang gave some general updates about the status of curricular updates the committee discussed during the fall 2024 semester. In particular, several of the larger changes need approval from the Iowa Board of Regents, and Associate Dean Lang reminded the committee about the timing and process for those types of changes.
3. Next, Mona Maalouf (Associate Professor of Instruction and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Chemistry) joined the committee to discuss proposed changes to the Chemistry BS program. Based on some feedback the department has received from students and advisors, faculty have decided to change the advanced lab requirement in the major to create more flexibility and choice for students. These changes are in keeping with trends in undergraduate science programs, workforce needs, and graduate school preparation. They will also help students complete their degrees on time more easily, while keeping Iowa's Chemistry BS rigorous enough that it still exceeds American Chemical Society (ACS) requirements.

Specifically, students in the Chemistry BS currently take five required lab courses at the advanced level: CHEM:2021, 2420, 3530, 3440, and 3430. Under the proposed change, students would be required to take four of these labs rather than five, and they would have more options built into the requirement: they would take CHEM:2021; either 2420 or 2410; and two courses out of 3530, 3440, and 3430. The number of semester hours required for the major would go from 47 to 44. Students would still be able to take more courses if they wish.

The committee discussed the rigor of the program. Professor Maalouf explained that students currently complete 450 hours of in-person Chemistry lab work, not including Principles I and II, and under the new requirements they would have 365 hours of in-person Chemistry lab work, which is still above the current ACS requirement of 350 lab hours. The committee also discussed the role of research for Chemistry BS students, including ways for them to participate and receive credit as well as standards and assessment for these opportunities. There was also some discussion of the outreach the department does to their students, including sessions on research opportunities and career preparation; they

also plan to hold sessions explaining the change in lab requirements. UEPCC was supportive of this change to the curriculum.

4. Finally, Liz Lundberg (Associate Director for Curriculum and Instruction, CLAS UP) presented an issue potentially in need of a policy. When a course has scheduled obligations outside of the time set for the course, and students don't know about that requirement until after the course begins, those obligations can interfere with students' other courses, jobs, and family responsibilities. CLAS provides policy guidance for conflicts with exams outside of class time, but currently does not provide guidance for performances, dress rehearsals, attendance at readings, plays, cultural events, conferences, etc. One of the difficulties of this situation is that often instructors don't know the dates and times of these events until after courses have begun. Another is that without a policy to guide them, instructors (and students) do not know which types of outside obligations should excuse students from these kinds of requirements or qualify them for an alternate assignment.

The committee discussed two possible policies for further consideration. One idea discussed was having a flexible policy, where instructors would be expected to *either* provide details about scheduled course requirements outside of course time early enough that students could still drop and replace the course, *or* provide an alternate assignment for students who cannot attend the event. Another idea was to ask instructors to indicate in the MyUI course description and syllabus if their course includes these kinds of obligations (not the specific dates and times, just that there is this type of requirement, especially if it will be in the evening, when it could conflict with another course). There was some discussion about phrasing of the policy, instructors sending information about these kinds of requirements to DEOs, and instructors providing documentation about these obligations to students to share with their other instructors. Liz will draft some more specific policy ideas and bring them back to the committee for further review. (This topic is still early in the discussion phase; no CLAS policy is forthcoming at this time.)

Respectfully submitted,

Asha Bhandary
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy