

Georgia Institute of Technology
Graduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes
February 11, 2010

Present: Pikowsky (Registrar), Butera (ECE), Corso (PSY), Ferri (ECE), Smith (AE), Potts (Grad Studies), Flowers (ARCH), Silva (ECON), Rosen (ME), Storici (BIOL), Clarke (COM), Singhal (COM)

Visitors: Redding (Registrar), Laros (Registrar), Paraska (Provost), Scott (COM), Hicks (PUBP), Simon (Registrar)

Note: All action items in these minutes require approval by the Academic Senate. In some instances, items may require further approval by the Board of Regents or the University System of Georgia. If the Regents' approval is required, the change is not official until notification is received from the Board to that effect. Academic units should take no action on these items until USG and/or BOR approval is secured. In addition, units should take no action on any of the items below until these minutes have been approved by the Academic Senate or the Executive Board.

Academic Matters

1. A motion was made to approve a request from the School of Public Policy for a new course and to deactivate a course. The motion was seconded and approved.

New Course:

PUBP 6327: Sustainability and Environmental Policy 3-0-3

Deactivate:

PUBP 6320

2. A motion was made to approve a request from the College of Management for an exception to the pass/fail policy, allowing for 4 credit hours of pass/fail courses for the MBA program. The motion was seconded and approved.

Note: This change will be effective Spring 2010 and will be effective for students graduating in May 2010.

3. Information Item – At the last meeting there was discussion about the credit distribution and the mode of presentation for BIOL 7015. Although the course was approved, the Registrar and the School of Biology were asked to clarify these points and finalize the new course proposal form. New course proposal forms have been completed for both the undergraduate and graduate level courses and the confusion has been resolved.

4. The Registrar's Office asked the Committee for some guidance on Special Topics courses. After discussing various aspects of Special Topics courses, the Committee decided to implement some specific guidelines that would be helpful to the academic units in preparing new course proposals.

Special Topics numbers (8800-8899) are graduate –level courses developed by academic units for addressing existing needs for content coverage that is new or experimental in nature, that is taught by resident or visiting faculty experts in specific subject areas not included in regular courses, or that is of timely interest to the profession and is not covered by a regular course.

These courses are intended to provide flexibility in bringing timely content to course offerings and to allow for an avenue for experimentation with what might become permanent courses.

The Committee discussed whether there is a need to require justification for academic units in scheduling Special Topics courses. The guidelines that are being offered should be useful to the academic units in better understanding and keeping track of these courses.

The Committee discussed whether we should require academic units to offer all new courses as Special Topics before submitting a new course proposal. The Committee decided that this should not be a requirement, but should be encouraged. If the course that is being proposed has not been tried in the Special Topics format, some explanation of that is expected when the permanent number is requested.

There was discussion about resources in some units that drive the need for special topics courses. Although the preference might be to not use special topics as often as is now the case, the reality is that unless resources are allocated, this will have to be an option for delivering course content.

The Committee members did voice some concern about the potential over-use of special topics and felt that this could be a potential issue. For now, it appears to be an issue in isolated cases.

The Committee discussed whether there should be a limit on the number of times a course can be taught as a Special Topics before it must be submitted for a permanent number. There was general agreement that requiring this is not necessary, but a guideline that encourages this to occur after a course has been taught 3 times would be appropriate. Some units already limit this to three, and some to two times. There was general agreement that after a course has been offered three times in this format, it should be proposed for a permanent number.

One of the concerns about the special topics courses is that if the secondary title is not used, it is hard for the academic units, the Registrar's Office, and a viewed of the transcript to know what the course was about, this may be of special interest to potential employers and to academic units trying to determine if a course may be used to meet a PhD minor, for example.

It was decided that the following guidelines should be implemented and would be sent to the Committee for an email vote. The results of the email vote will be recorded in the next set of Minutes.

Guidelines for Special Topics Courses

1. Although courses that are being proposed for permanent numbers are not required to be offered in the special topics format before being reviewed by the IGCC, it is encouraged. Offering the course in the special topics format is helpful in adjusting the format and delivery of courses that are being considered.
2. If a new course is being proposed and has not been offered previously in the special topics format, an explanation as to why this is not the case would make the discussion at the IGCC meeting flow more efficiently. This question is routinely raised by the Committee, and should be addressed in the proposal.
3. If a course has been taught 3 times in the special topics format (or two times if that is the academic units internal policy), it is highly recommended that it be presented to the IGCC for a permanent number.
4. The appearance of the student record and degree auditing processes are important considerations in the use of Special Topics courses. Academic units are expected to be mindful of how many special topics courses are being used to meet degree requirements, why this is occurring, and whether it is the best way to address that content.
5. Schedulers in the academic units are expected to use the forms in Banner to record the secondary titles of Special Topics courses. Secondary titles entered on SSASYLB will display on the transcript. They will not show in the Schedule of Classes unless entered on the SSATEXT form. Although the necessity to enter the information in two different places in Banner is inefficient, this is important information. The Registrar's Office will keep this on its list of things to review to improve efficiency in the use of Banner.

Student Petitions

1. Petitions were reviewed by the Petitions Subcommittee and were acted on in the following areas.

All Petitions approved except where noted.

- 1 Change grade mode (Denied)
- 2 Waive minor requirement for the PhD (2 Denied)
- 1 Waive two-semester of full-time enrollment rule

1 Graduate with less than minimum hours - dual degree program

(Note: This fell under the logic of the other blanket petitions that were approved for teach-out of students already in the program.)

1 Readmit 1st drop for the Summer 2010 term

The vote to approve the Petition Subcommittee's actions will be taken in an email vote and reported in the next set of Minutes.

2. A motion was made to deny a petition for late withdrawals from the Fall 2004, Fall 2006, and Spring 2007 terms. The motion was seconded and approved.
3. A motion was made to approve a petition for a late selective withdrawal from ID 8900 from the Spring 2009 term. The motion was seconded and approved.
4. A motion was made to deny a petition to graduate with two Master's degrees with a nine-hour overlap in courses used for the degrees. The motion was seconded and approved.

Adjourned,

Reta Pikowsky
Registrar