

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS
of the General College and the College of Arts and Sciences
Tuesday, April 12, 2022
3:30pm – 5:00pm

Attendees: Amy Cooke, Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld, Nicole Else-Quest, Mara Evans, Li-ling Hsiao, Richard Langston, Jennifer Larson, Aaron Moody, Abigail Panter, Valerie Pruvost, Michelle Robinson, Nick Sientopot, James Thompson, Jonathan Weiler
Staff: Genevieve Cecil

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Updates and Remarks by Senior Associate Dean Abigail Panter

Dean Panter provided a quick overview of the meeting agenda and reminded members of the social hour at the Carolina Inn after the meeting. She thanked members who had served two consecutive terms on the Boards and asked those who were on their first term to consider a second.

She noted that all the candidates for the dean search in the College of Arts & Sciences have presented and promised to provide updates on the search as she is able. The testing center will remain open for students impacted by COVID who still need to complete make-up exams. This announcement will be shared with the general faculty shortly and hopefully provide some relief.

With no comments or questions from members, Panter introduced the first agenda item.

Changes to the Carolina Research Scholar Program (CRiSP) requirements

Guests: Troy Blackburn, Anna Krome-Lukens

Professors Troy Blackburn, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Research, and Anna Krome-Lukens, Director of Research Curricula, were invited to share the proposed changes to the Carolina Research Scholar Program (CRiSP) requirements. Krome-Lukens introduced herself and provided a brief summary of her background and new role in the Office for Undergraduate Research. Blackburn then provided a summary of the old criteria and the proposed revisions for the Carolina Research Scholar Program. Currently, students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the designation: 1) completing one designated research course from a curated list; 2) completing two research-intensive courses or a specific combination of coursework and mentored research; 3) attending two CRiSP workshops; or 4) presenting at the UNC Chapel Hill research conference or similar conference experience.

The proposed changes to the criteria include: 1) removal of research-exposure courses as an option, replaced by a curated list of research methods courses and a grading threshold; 2) completion of additional research experiences beyond satisfying the requirements of the Research & Discovery general education requirement; 3) attending a minimum of two Office for Undergraduate Research CRiSP workshops; or 4) presentation of research findings at a UNC Chapel Hill research conference or similar experience, excluding Honors Thesis proposals and defenses and in-class presentations.

These changes are intended to align the CRiSP designation with the demands of the new IDEAS in Action curriculum. The new curriculum requires that all students engage in research, meaning that the current CRiSP requirements will no longer be rigorous enough to recognize students whose engagement goes above and beyond that of a typical undergraduate. The proposal requests that, if approved, these changes be implemented effective July 1, 2022 and that students enrolled after Fall 2022 be required to meet the revised criteria. Students who enrolled in Fall 2019, Fall 2020, and Fall 2021 will have the option to receive the designation under the current or revised criteria depending on their personal situation and preference.

Cooke inquired whether students must meet all four criteria or just one; Blackburn confirmed they must complete all four criteria in order to receive the designation. Langston was curious if the differences in how research applies across the disciplines were considered in the development of the criteria. Blackburn confirmed that his group put significant work into creating a broad definition of what research constitutes to ensure that all disciplines are fairly evaluated.

Panter asked for any final thoughts and questions. Members generally approved the changes and Panter confirmed the Boards will provide feedback to the presenters following the meeting.

New Data Studies B.A. and B.S. Program Requests for Preliminary Authorization

Guests: Kris Jordan, Shankar Bhamidi

Dean Panter invited Jordan and Bhamidi to present the program requests for preliminary authorization of a Bachelor of Arts in Data Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Data Studies. Jordan and Bhamidi presented a brief overview of both the request for preliminary authorization and what the degrees will look like prior to beginning the curriculum development.

Increased accessibility and availability to large digital datasets has generated a fast-growing demand for scientists trained in both the computational aspects and ethical dimensions of managing, organizing and analyzing digital data. Data science degrees in the North Carolina University System are generally offered at a graduate level or as concentrations or certificates; focus primarily on computational and inferential reasoning with limited development of ethical and application dimensions; and are disciplinarily limited. Offerings related to Data Science at the undergraduate level are currently available only as a concentration of the Computer Science major at UNC-Charlotte. A Data Science major at Carolina would fulfill a growing need within and beyond the state by offering an inclusive curriculum that draws on the extensive programs, faculty expertise, and data science-related courses already present at UNC.

A Data Science major at Carolina, under the new IDEAS in Action curriculum, would offer students the following: (1) interdisciplinary environments and learning communities to address the complex reality of real world issues and needs, (2) experience in collaborative teamwork across units and departments through capstone experiences that respond to the diverse ethical, computational, and critical thinking skills necessary for effective data study and analysis, (3) development of an appreciation for and expertise in the practical use of mathematical and scientific thinking and the power of computing to understand and solve problems for business, research, and societal impact beyond Carolina.

Many departments at UNC offer both a B.A. and a B.S. degree, which provide distinct pathways for majors seeking different educational experiences within a field. The B.S. in Data Science provides rigorous core training in computer science, mathematics, and statistics and operations research while the B.A. in Data Science provides a basis in statistics and computing but is intended to appeal to a broader spectrum of students and permit a more flexible and interdisciplinary curriculum. Offering a B.A. allows students to more easily pursue a second major or minor, increasing interdisciplinary studies and broadening the undergraduate experience at Carolina.

The computer science, statistics, and mathematics departments noted that students are consistently putting together an informal degree program with courses from these three majors and felt there would be significant demand for a new B.A. program. The team considered not just informal degree programs but also adjacent existing degree programs and tracks when calculating demand. Jordan noted that existing double-majors represent a significant load on all three departments, so a future constraint would be to require students to select just one B.S. major in order to reduce the administrative load.

Thompson reminded the Boards that they had previously seen a request from computer science to redesign their major with an application system, and wondered whether it was possible to manage

the new degree programs with the current resources given the issues supporting existing programs. Jordan confirmed that the key change will be requiring students to choose a single major from this group of popular double-majors, which will lessen the load on departments since a significant portion of existing demand comes from double-majors. He also noted that the new School of Data Science and Society would hopefully bring additional resources, faculty, and funding, and that the new undergraduate degrees will eventually be housed there.

Bhamidi noted that it is important for tier 1 research institutions to offer these kinds of degrees, but agrees with the concern that there may not be sufficient support just yet. Larson inquired whether it was possible to distribute the curricular load for the B.A. program across different units that were interested in getting into the data science. Jordan confirmed that the intent for the B.A. program is to be more interdisciplinary and less intensive on the mathematics side, similar to the current computer science B.A.. The team felt that given the interest in the new minor, as well as the trends they are seeing among double-majors there is room to grow. Bhamidi noted that the discussions around both degree proposals focused significantly on the form and definition of data science and the extent of its interdisciplinarity. While leadership has recommended focusing on the B.S. program first, all parties have agreed that both majors are equally valuable.

Panter noted the function of the preliminary authorization in communicating to partners within and outside the university that these programs are being developed. Jordan confirmed that part of their hope is to receive the preliminary authorization over the summer, which would allow them to form larger, more robust committees in the fall and progress with the development of both curriculums.

Langston seconded Thompson in terms of feeling concern about the ability of these departments to support two new programs when the existing programs are struggling for resources. Panter agreed to add this concern to the letter to the program development team. Thompson added the caveat that while these programs are an excellent idea, any move that increases student frustration is a move in a poor direction.

Moody asked about the amount of communication between the group developing the new programs and those involved in forming the School. Senior Associate Dean Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld confirmed the two groups have been in direct communication via Jay Aikat, and that both Colloredo-Mansfeld and Senior Associate Dean Jaye Cable were involved in the discussion. This discussion went back to a set of committees convened in fall of 2019 by then Provost Bob Blouin to determine the feasibility of the School of Data Science. While the question of which unit should be the academic home of the undergraduate degree programs remains, all parties concurred that the College will have a significant amount of influence over not just foundational courses, but also high-level practical courses given they are already taught by College faculty and units. Colloredo-Mansfeld noted that the reason the team has moved forward with the degrees is predominantly student demand, but that the intellectual design is based on expertise from those within the College, although there has been input solicited from various professional schools. The benefit that data science has over computer science is the substitutability of certain core courses; in computer science the core course requirements fall solely within the unit, whereas data science is broad enough to allow for additional interdisciplinary support.

Cooke inquired if the team is able to provide the number of dual-degree majors who would be impacted by the enforcement of a single-major model within these three units. Panter confirmed that in the next round of program reviews the group will be asked to provide additional details, but that this request will be included in the Boards' response. She also reminded the group that they had seen a similar case made for the undergraduate neuroscience degree, where estimations of demand proved more conservative than expected after the program launched.

Changes to the Distance Learning Policy

Panter presented revisions to the distance learning policy, reminding members that prior to the pandemic there was a push to revise the definitions of remote courses while ensuring that the imposed limits were well-intentioned and did not prove unusually prohibitive to certain groups of students. The proposed policy revisions ask the dean of each division to determine what percentage of courses and which types of courses can be offered remotely in conversation with department chairs and faculty. The revisions have removed all limits, which increases equity between transfer students and non-transfers, the former of which were always able to transfer credit regardless of course modality. Siedentop confirmed that the student learning outcomes remain the same for the course regardless of the modality, and reminded members that course modality is not included in a student's transcript.

Pruvost inquired about the guidelines for summer school, and whether the current policy will continue to be suspended through summer session II 2022. Siedentop confirmed that if there is support for this policy, it would not be effective until the next academic year (beginning fall 2022). Larson, as the interim director of summer school, confirmed that her unit always coordinates with the professional schools and the College, and that any mode designated during a summer term is determined in alignment with the goals of the division/school in question.

Thompson inquired if there are methods in place to measure the quality of the pedagogy in online classes, as such methods both contribute to a high-quality experience and reduce bias regarding online courses. Langston and Robinson concurred with the need for assessment plans. Panter confirmed that these thoughts are shared by the deans, who have also articulated a desire to assess the effectiveness of all courses, regardless of mode of instruction. Larson confirmed there are some great initiatives going on in Digital and Lifelong Learning to ensure that instructors who are operating in remote modes are well-trained and well-supported. She also noted that part of the current assessment of online classes at UNC is the assessment of community-building and interaction. Larson then inquired about the flow of approval and guideline development. Panter confirmed that the language in the proposal aims to clarify the flow of communication and discussion between all levels of leadership within the College and the University, emphasizing that the senior associate deans will be working in conjunction with the College Dean and provost to render decisions regarding remote offerings.

Else-Quest spoke on behalf of remote instructors who have been facing the pervasive bias that online education is inferior to in-person. Panter noted that part of the bias stems from the emphasis on the residential experience up until this point, which was yet another motive to revise the distance learning policy. Robinson asked about the impact on students who have worked solely online and may not have experience in a physical classroom. Larson noted that while this student may not be the current definition of a typical Carolina student, expanding the remote offerings enables the university to reach different groups who alter the definition of a 'typical' student. Coloredo-Mansfeld noted that this policy is in some ways the result of experiments initiated during the pandemic that allowed truly international classroom experiences, in addition to serving students who may not have otherwise been able to continue their education.

Panter thanked members for their feedback and called for a formal vote. The majority of members voted to approve the proposal; Robinson abstained.

Course Committee Report (James Thompson)

Thompson provided a brief summary of course reviews and approvals from the April Course Committee meeting. He noted the GEOC's new definition of the Natural Science has been narrowed and recommended additional communication between the groups.

Panter thanked Thompson and commended him for his service and upcoming retirement.

Authorization for OUC to approve miscellaneous course changes on behalf of the Course Committee and Administrative Boards.

Sientop briefly summarized the request to allow Office of Undergraduate Curricula staff to review and process miscellaneous course changes on behalf of the Course Committee and Administrative Boards. The Boards approved the request.

Program Report (Nick Sientop)

Sientop then presented the program report for April 2022. He highlighted several changes to existing major programs, and noted cases where course deactivations impacted requirement lists. Thompson inquired whether the School of Business intends to cease teaching BUSI 102, which is one of the few courses open to College majors. Sientop confirmed they have not deactivated it, but rather removed it as a requirement within the program.

Dean Panter thanked everyone for their time and encouraged those who were able to join her at the Carolina Inn for a social hour. The meeting adjourned at 4:54PM.