

**Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**  
**February 14, 2023**

**Voting Members Present:** Michelle Berry, Joan Curry, Leslie Dennis, Karin Nolan, Amber Rice, Caleb Simmons, Joost Van Haren

**Non-voting Members Present:** Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Cassidy Bartlett, Carmin Chan, Abbie Sorg, Claudia Stanescu, Alex Underwood

**Guests Present:** Jeremy Vetter

**Voting Members Absent:** Jeff Millburg, Richard Vaillancourt

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Chair Joost Van Haren called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. A quorum was established with 5 voting members; two additional members arrived after the approval of the minutes.

- I. **Approval of Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee meeting minutes, 1/10/2023**  
Michelle Berry moved to accept the meeting minutes from 1/10/2023 as submitted. Leslie Dennis seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 votes in favor.

- II. **Discussion Items**

- A. **General Education: Guiding Principles on Course Levels & Accessibility Proposal**  
**Presenter:** Jeremy Vetter

A representative from the University Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) presented a proposal for text addressing whether 400-level courses could be classified as General Education courses under the Gen Ed Refresh, and whether it should be made explicit to potential proposers that these courses should be available to all students (as opposed to major/minor specific). Allowing courses that meet these requirements is beneficial because in the case of niche courses that wouldn't attract enough students from one group (general education, major-specific, or graduate students), allowing students from all groups would provide enough enrollment to make those specialized courses possible. UWGEC has placed this proposal before the subcommittee to determine whether it is necessary to put this information into institutional policy or whether it should be maintained as guidance on the General Education website.

Discussion began:

- Two members clarified that though uncommon, there were 400-level General Education courses under the previous Gen Ed classification system.
- A member pointed out that generally, GE courses should not require pre-requisites, which makes it difficult to include 400-level courses.
  - Other members clarified that there are some GE courses with pre-requisites, such as foundation courses like mathematics.
  - A third member explained that the point is to maintain a balance, so students who haven't satisfied many pre-requisites still have options; but there have always been some GE courses that have pre-requisites.

- Another member thought it would be useful to establish a separate policy to clarify which GE courses should not require pre-requisites.
- It was expressed that transfer students who haven't completed their General Education may appreciate having higher-level courses as options to satisfy the requirements.
- Committee members agreed that as the proposal aims to give guidance while allowing for some variation, it should not be official policy, but part of Quickstart.

**The committee suggested the following changes be made to the proposed language:**

- **The third paragraph is ambiguous; if there are not an overwhelming number of options, then they should be spelled out.**
  - **Rather than referring to math courses specifically, refer to foundations courses, as there may also be writing requirements.**
- **The fourth paragraph should be made more specific to the student rather than saying "any given area of study".**

## **B. Double Use of Courses (Double Dipping) Policy Amendment**

**Presenter:** Abbie Sorg

Continuing discussion from the January meeting, the subcommittee was provided with a refresher of why this policy is being reviewed: under the new General Education curriculum, policy allows for the double use of courses to fulfill up to 9 units of GE and a major or minor. Should this policy be updated to instead allow for triple dipping, where students may be permitted to apply these units towards their GE, major, and minor? Is the current wording appropriate or limiting?

Additionally, the current policy does not address the double use of courses towards certificates, where stipulations differ (up to 50% of units applied toward the certificate may be double dipped according to the undergraduate certificate policy: <https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/undergraduate-certificate-definition-procedures-and-policies>). Lastly, the policy does not explicitly say whether students in accelerated master's programs, students earning their master's and PhD, or students with double majors can apply a course toward both programs/majors.

Discussion continued:

- One member was curious how many courses would qualify to be triple dipped. Many lab courses in the GE are not counted toward a major, but are pre-requisites to get into the major. Is this common in other areas, or would the triple dipping have much applicable use?
- Another committee member mentioned that this policy should be viewed in terms of how many courses should be unique to a major, minor, or certificate in order for it to be awarded to the student. Because double-dipping is also up to the department, the policy is inconsistent and confusing for students who switch majors and then encounter these differing policies. Should parameters be given to prevent students from having to take several of their courses again?

- Multiple members brought up business majors, where there is so much overlap permitted that in some cases a mere two extra courses are needed for a student to double major.
  - One member suggested examining majors with a high overlap in credits instead of the overall double dipping policy, as this may be where the issue is.
- Advising's perspective on the double dipping policy was brought up: it is confusing because there is no consistency across departments. It creates extra work for advisors to ensure students get double credit, because it does not occur automatically. Departments should have autonomy to implement their own policy, but if that weighs on advisors, it likely isn't the best way to go about it. In looking at the policy, it should be determined what serves students and is understandable, and what creates a burden on advising.
- A member felt that if the university wants to continue to encourage students to get double majors and dual degrees, the regulations should be relaxed on this policy and consistent across departments, though this would take much collaboration.
- The subcommittee was informed that in the past it had been discussed to unify the double dipping policy across all colleges, but many pushed back as they felt it would impact them negatively and they wanted the option to individually dictate how many credits must be unique. They pointed out that the benchmarking shows the University of Arizona is already more prescriptive in its overall double dipping policy compared to other institutions which point to the individual department to set the policy. Because inconsistency is the norm, it is difficult to create an overall solution.
- One committee member expressed that advisors are still catching up with the recent changes of the new GE, and should be given more time before changes to the double dipping policy occur. In the meantime, the University of Arizona should be gathering data on double dipping and its outcome on student graduation.
  - Another member countered that advisors from their department would like to see some action on simplifying the policy, as it is a burden.
- It was explained that previously, some majors had a certain number of GE courses that students didn't need to complete because the content within the major itself covered the information. In getting rid of this exemption, the agreement was to allow some double dipping of GE courses so that the number of credits required wouldn't be increased for the students. This was especially important for majors with a high credit requirement for graduation, like engineering and lab sciences.
- One member suggested that a smaller group continue to work on altering the policy.
- A committee member cautioned that telling individual units that they would need to change their current practices may simply create problems in the name of consistency.
  - Another member pointed out that consistency always serves the student perspective because it helps them to know what they can and can't do. Though departments may be upset, the benefit of students is the reason to point to.

**The subcommittee agreed to form a smaller group to look further into updating the double use of courses policy. Discussion will continue at the March subcommittee meeting.**

### **C. Grades and the Grading System Policy Amendment**

**Presenter: Abbie Sorg**

Continuing the discussion that began in the January meeting, the committee was reminded about the possibility of removing the course withdrawal maximum. As this policy is part of the larger Grades & the Grading System policy, there are other aspects that can be improved, including simplifying the overall language, reducing excessive information, and adding all grading bases to the table at the beginning of the policy.

Discussion continued:

- A member remarked that the withdrawal maximum exists to encourage students to complete courses and graduate. If students do not need these guiderails, then there is no point in having a maximum.
- One committee member commented that the few students who have reached the W maximum may instead be turning to complete withdrawal, thereby dropping some courses that they have sufficient grades in just to remove 1-2 courses they are failing.
- A member noted that if the limit on total W grades is removed, it may not be necessary to have a separate WC (complete withdrawal) grade. In cases where a student needs to withdraw from an entire semester, they could do so with W's rather than WC's on their transcript.
  - Another member mentioned that the differentiation between W's and WC's can help students explain their educational history to other institutions and employers. While a W may indicate the student had difficulty with a particular course, a semester of WC indicates that there was a special circumstance in the student's life at that time, external to the courses, which made it necessary to put their education on hold for a period of time.
  - Another member countered that this would require students to share details of their personal lives with the university in order to get a special denotation on their transcript. If students want to explain to other institutions why they received Ws in a particular semester, they have the opportunity to do so in their personal statement.
- The subcommittee was reminded that the W limit was created out of concern for seat availability and grade manipulation (students choosing to withdraw and retake the course later to improve their GPA; often anatomy and physiology). They continued that the low percentage of students reaching the maximum may be due to the fact that the maximum exists.
- A member felt that a W used to indicate personal hardships, but students can withdraw from a course for any reason without specifying. Nonetheless, it seems too complicated to create a separate W grade for personal hardships.
- One member stated that advisors must manually count the 18 units, which is complicated given the term-based exceptions to the maximum rule in recent years.
- It was noted that complete withdrawal is not available for the summer term, which is challenging for students enrolling year round (such as online students).
- In defense of removing the limit, one member felt that the policy should be broad to support as many students as possible, and the institution find an alternative way such as advisor intervention to support students who are earning a large number of W grades.
- Turning the discussion to Optional Pass/Fail, one member said it is misleading that some GEs have the optional P/F, but students could only receive elective credit for the grading basis.

- Multiple members questioned the purpose and need for the barriers to the optional P/F, including sophomore status, a 2.0 GPA, and 12+ units with a regular grading basis, as these stipulations seem to restrict students more than help them.

**The committee agreed to gather feedback from colleagues regarding the W maximum and Pass/Fail option, as well as having the Office of the Registrar gather input from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid regarding how Optional Pass/Fail affects financial aid. A representative of OSFA will be invited to attend the March subcommittee meeting.**

Joost adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on March 14, 2023.

*Respectfully submitted by Cassidy Bartlett, 2/22/2023*