Academic Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2024

**Voting member present**: Allison Lee, Christopher Domin, Michael McKisson, Dana Lema, Lisa Rezende, Moe Momayez, Melissa Goldsmith, Bobby Torres, Jennifer Schnellmann, Marie Wallace.

**Non-voting members present**: Jeffrey Shatzberg, Toni Sparks, Ola Lundemo, Karen Zimmerman, Christie Kerr, Melanie Madden, Bryanna Andrade

1. **Lisa Rezende called meeting to order at 3:31 pm.**
2. **Approval of the**[**November 19, 2024, meeting minutes**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/APS-November-2024-minutes.docx)
   1. Minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **New Action Items**
   1. [**New Certificate: Healthcare Business Management (Eller)**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/Proposal_UG-Cert-Healthcare-Business-Management_0.pdf) **by Jeffrey Shatzberg**
      1. Some time ago, we decided to explore how we could enhance the academic experience for our students who are already taking several healthcare courses. We thought it would be beneficial to formalize their efforts by creating a certificate program that would appear on their transcript. This idea also seemed relevant for some public health students. Essentially, we wanted to codify and recognize something many students are already doing, which we believe could also encourage others to pursue this option once they see the value it adds—potentially helping them in their career paths.

The motivation behind this initiative was purely to benefit students, not to generate revenue, although there’s a possibility for growth in the future. At its core, this is about giving students something tangible that acknowledges their efforts. The certificate would require 12 credit hours, some of which could overlap with their major requirements. Since we already offer these courses, the cost of implementing this program is minimal.

We see this as a dominant strategy to provide a valuable academic option for our students. Public Health was contacted, and they were enthusiastic about the idea. They even expressed interest in contributing to the program by delivering some courses, as they also saw its potential benefits for their students.

From there, we built the proposal and have been working to move it through the system. I’m happy to discuss any aspect of the program further, but that’s the essence of our goal.

Allison Lee motioned to approve. Michael McKisson seconded. Motion carried unanimously with 9 yeas.

* 1. [**New Emphasis: BS in Education MMDI (Education)**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/Substantial-Change-Request-BSED-Mild-Moderate-Final-Version-signed.pdf) **by Toni Sparks**
     1. The Kazakhstan project has been an incredible opportunity—one we didn’t initially anticipate. For context, I learned that the State of Arizona has maintained a diplomatic relationship with Kazakhstan since the 1960s or 70s. Over the years, there have been numerous exchanges and collaborations, so this project naturally landed within an international scope.

Over about a year, Kazakhstan sent several delegations—four or five, in total—to explore potential dual degree programs with American universities. Education emerged as a key focus. I’ve personally made three trips so far and will be traveling again in the spring to further develop these opportunities. As outlined in the proposal, this dual degree program involves educational psychology, elementary education, and speech-language majors in partnership with Northern Kazakhstan University. Our primary goal is to introduce inclusive education practices. Currently, Kazakhstan segregates students with disabilities into separate "correctional schools." Their approach is reminiscent of where we were in the U.S. back in the 1970s.

This program will produce the first graduates who will work to integrate students with mild to moderate disabilities into general education settings. These graduates will also collaborate with teachers to shift the country’s overall perspective on education.

This isn’t just a dual degree program for us; it’s a meaningful collaboration with forward-thinking faculty in Kazakhstan, aimed at transforming their educational system. It’s a passion project and an incredible chance to contribute to meaningful change in how education is delivered to students with disabilities in Kazakhstan.

**Q**: I was wondering why it’s required for them to take Political Science 210, which covers the U.S. Constitution and the Arizona Constitution.

**A**: The requirement stems from state regulations for programs that lead to terminal certifications. This is mandated by the State of Arizona. However, these students are not earning a certificate to teach in Arizona upon completing their degree. We were very intentional about ensuring that this distinction was clear, as we anticipated scenarios where students, especially those on ministry scholarships, might ask if they could remain in the U.S. and teach in Arizona after graduation. Sarah Knepper, who worked closely with us, emphasized the importance of making this distinction. The focus of this requirement is primarily on our main campus, terrestrial students, rather than on certifying these students to teach in Arizona.

**Q:** Regarding the potential for domestic students enrolling in this particular emphasis—do you see a place for that? What is the expected shelf life of this project? While it seems tailored to a specific niche, I’m curious about the residual value of the emphasis once the project eventually sunsets, whether that’s in a few years or even decades from now.

**A:** The first question is relatively straightforward. There isn’t a place for domestic students in this specific program because it doesn’t result in terminal certification in the State of Arizona. Offering it to domestic students would essentially mean presenting them with a program that doesn’t align with their certification needs. However, domestic students still benefit from this initiative. When the Kazakh students come to Arizona for the “Study Arizona” semester during their senior year, they’ll take courses and interact with our terrestrial students. This creates an incredible opportunity for cultural exchange and learning on both sides. We’re also collaborating with the Russian and Slavic Studies Department to involve the Russian and Slavic Studies Club, ensuring the Kazakh students see reflections of their own culture and language on campus. These efforts are designed to support a smooth cultural transition for the Kazakh students who choose to participate.

Regarding shelf life, I’m optimistic. Extensive MOUs have been signed between the universities, with general counsel at the University of Arizona ensuring these agreements include a commitment to ministry scholarships for at least 10 years. Moreover, recruitment efforts have expanded significantly. Initially, students for this program came from only 8 regions of Kazakhstan, but now applications are coming from all regions—a testament to the growing reputation of the program and the messaging efforts by the university in Kazakhstan. The program’s sustainability also hinges on the outcomes. As students return to Kazakhstan and implement what they’ve learned, their impact will likely strengthen the program’s value and encourage continued investment. Additionally, we’re partnering with NKU on research opportunities to further understand and enhance the program’s effectiveness. It’s also worth noting the strong support from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Kazakhstan. The minister’s active involvement, including celebrating new scholarship recipients, highlights the government’s commitment to this initiative. As a faculty member, witnessing the gratitude and tears of joy from these students receiving their scholarships is profoundly humbling and reinvigorating. I believe this program has the potential to extend well beyond the initial 10-year commitment. With the collaboration, outcomes, and governmental support, I’m hopeful it will achieve real sustainability and long-term impact.

Dana Lema motioned to approve. Allison Lee seconded. Motion carried unanimously with 9 yeas.

* 1. [**New Certificate: Sustainable Tourism and Management (CALES)**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/Proposal_UG-Cert-Sustainable-Tourism.pdf) **by Ola Lundemo**
     1. Let me share the history of how this initiative came about. It started with a course in ecotourism during the 2020-2021 academic year. In the first semester, I had nine students in this fully online course. By the next year, enrollment tripled to 33 students, and this semester, the number has grown to a remarkable 97. Clearly, there is a growing interest in tourism, and this course has become a prelude to a larger goal: establishing a major in tourism.

Dean Burgess has expressed strong support for building an ecosystem around tourism, and we are the only university in Arizona without any tourism programs. Starting with a certificate is a natural step—what we call the "low-hanging fruit." We’ve demonstrated significant local interest, but the program began with a global focus.

To explore opportunities for an online program in tourism and entrepreneurship, I traveled to several emerging economies, including Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and South Africa. I found substantial interest among potential partners through Arizona International. These conversations helped shape the content of the certificate.

Since then, I’ve visited Kazakhstan and met with four universities there, announcing plans for the certificate. We’ve already signed an MOU with one university and are finalizing agreements with the others. A survey of my current students revealed even more local interest than I anticipated—over half expressed interest in the certificate. Many students frequently inquire about other tourism programs, but unfortunately, the University of Arizona currently offers none. Given the strength of Arizona’s tourism industry—48 million visitors annually and over $8 billion in export value—there is a clear need for this program.

The certificate is an excellent starting point. It leverages existing courses and resources. I’ve developed two courses for the program: one I’ve been teaching for seven semesters, and another focused on assessing nature-based tourism opportunities, which is nearing final approval. Currently, there are two professors teaching in the ecotourism program, including myself and another CALS professor.

Additionally, I’ve explored potential partnerships in Peru and Indonesia, where there is evident interest in the program. Just this morning, I met with the director and president of Visit Tucson, the destination marketing organization for Tucson with over 500 partners. They were enthusiastic about our plans for the certificate and the eventual major.

This initiative, starting with the certificate, is not only well-timed but also addresses a critical gap in tourism education at our university. It provides an opportunity to tap into a thriving industry while creating meaningful local and global partnerships.

Bobby Torres motioned to approve. Dana Lema seconded. Motion carried unanimously with 9 yeas.

* 1. [**Modification: BA in Design Arts Practice Print Emphasis to Visual Design (Fine Arts)**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/UG_Emphasis-DAP-Visual-Design_CA-Approved.pdf) **by Karen Zimmerman**
     1. We’d like to propose changing the name of one of our sub-plans to streamline the program and improve clarity for students and advisors. When we originally designed the BA in Design, Arts, and Practice, we included sub-plans for “Print and Screen,” thinking it would help students focus on either hands-on print and publishing or screen design.

However, after running the program for a couple of years, it’s become clear that the distinction is confusing for students and advisors due to overlapping courses. After brainstorming, we landed on the title “Visual Design,” which is more inclusive and better reflects the interdisciplinary spirit of the program.

We’ve also simplified the curriculum, allowing students to select from a broader range of electives. This change makes the program easier to navigate, improves communication between advisors and students, and provides more flexibility for students to tailor their path to graduation.

In essence, this change aims to clarify the program, enhance student satisfaction, and align with our overarching goal of fostering a broad and interdisciplinary approach to design.

Bobby Torres motioned to approve. Dana Lema seconded. Motion carried unanimously with 9 yeas.

* 1. [**New Minor: Musical Theater (Fine Arts)**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/Proposal_UG-Minor-in-Musica-Theater_0.pdf) **by Christie Kerr**
     1. We are proposing the introduction of a musical theater minor. Previously, we offered a BFA program in musical theater, but it was discontinued two years ago and is now in its sunset phase. However, we still have dedicated faculty and consistent student interest in musical theater courses and productions.
        1. The minor aligns well with our new BA in Live and Screen Performance, offering students an opportunity to continue musical theater training. While it is not as immersive as the former BFA program, the minor provides substantial training in voice, musical theater dance, and acting. Students will also integrate these skills through song analysis, scene work, and smaller-scale workshop productions or cabaret performances.
        2. Additionally, the minor is designed to be flexible and accessible to students across disciplines. It allows majors in areas such as dance, music, or even non-arts fields like chemistry to pursue their passion for musical theater without committing to a full BFA. With only 21 credits, the minor complements other academic programs and encourages interdisciplinary engagement.
        3. This initiative ensures that musical theater remains an integral part of our offerings while broadening its accessibility to a diverse student body.

Dana Lema motioned to approve. Marie Wallace seconded. Motion carried unanimously with 9 yeas.

1. **Meeting adjourned at 4:36 pm.**