# ASCRC Minutes 9/29/15

GBB 205, 2:10 p.m.

## Call to Order

Members Present: D. Coffin I. Crummy, J. Eglin, E. Engebretson, P. Frazier, B. Hillman, A. Lawrence, T. Manuel, S. Smith, G. St. George, E. Uchimoto, M. Semanoff, W. Smith, G.G. Weix

Ex-Officio Present: J. Hickman, N. Lindsay

 Members Excused: M. Boller, T. Bundy, B. French, J. Zink

Minutes: The minutes from 9/22/15 were approved.

Communication

* Guests Megan Stark, Undergraduate Services and Outreach Librarian and Kelly Webster, Writing Center Director will be joining the committee at 3:15 to discuss plagiarism.
* Chair Manuel has asked Steve Lodmell to provide a demonstration of what a PLA portfolio review would entail.
* Members should consider any concerns regarding their international students’ language skills in preparation for the visit from Associate Provost Zagalo –Melo and Julie Cahill, Associate Director of International Recruitment.

## Business items

* It was brought to Chair Manuel’s attention that prerequisites for general education courses should still be reviewed. General Education Courses are limited to one prerequisite to assure that the courses are available to most students. The language for policy was revised to the following:
	+ Prerequisite or co-requisite changes on non-General Education courses within the same department or cognate discipline that do not impact other departments’ enrollment or course schedule.
		- Prerequisite changes on General Education courses and prerequisite changes that affect other departments must still be submitted for review.

ASCRC is also interested in streamlining the review of other housekeeping type changes, such as title or number changes that do not change the level of the course. These could be brought to the full committee on a draft consent agenda. If there are questions the form can be assigned to a subcommittee to review. It was agreed that this was feasible. There was a question of whether this change could be used for this review cycle. Chair Manuel will consult ECOS. [One issue is that e-Curr is not designed to organize the forms in this fashion.]

* Chair Manuel received a request from Curriculum and Instruction to consider a level II form (new 2+2 Elementary Education program with Blackfeet Community College) late. There are many complex components to work through in a thoughtful and constructive manner and the C&I department needs additional time. Professor Lawrence provided more information. The prospective students for this program are currently working in Browning and would be taking online courses to complete the program. It is hoped that the details can be worked out by early December. The committee found the justification for the late consideration acceptable.
* Two programs have asked to reinstate courses that were deleted by way of the dormant course list last spring. HSTR 350, Britain Since 1832, will be offered next spring and was granted reinstatement. Geography requested that several courses be retained, but could not confirm that they would be offered. The Committee felt that this was not fair to students who may be counting on taking the courses. ROTC students in particular have had issues when courses are not offered. They are required to have a four-year degree plan and modifications to the plan are not always easy to process. If their time to degree is extended they could lose their benefits and even their commission. GEOG 242, North America, will be offered in the spring and was granted reinstatement. The other courses will be removed from the catalog. The department can ask that they be reinstated when they can offer them. ASCRC will consider an expedited process for reinstating existing courses. The Dormant Course Procedure will be updated to address this issue.
* The College of Humanities and Sciences revised its communication regarding syllabi to include the following language.

**Please be aware:**

The University cautions students that many graduate and professional schools and some employers do not recognize non-traditional grades (i.e., those other than A through F) or may discriminate against students who use the credit/no credit option for many courses. Moreover, students are cautioned that some degree programs may have different requirements regarding CR/NCR credits, as stipulated in the catalog.

ASCRC did not feel that this change was sufficient and voted with one member opposed to send a communication to Dean Comer.

* Kelly Webster and Megan Clark have offered Professional Development Workshops on Plagiarism Prevention. They distributed a handout used in the workshop. The workshop focused on preventing plagiarism via appropriate pedagogy. There are various gradations of plagiarism from willful intent to deceive to unintentional plagiarism. Often students don’t realize that paraphrased content must be cited. Many need to be taught how to properly cite resources.

“Turnitin” is the most well-known tool to check student work. However, it does not prove or disprove plagiarism. Students submit their papers and the software looks for same phrase matches against its own centralized database. It has a web crawler but does not have access to propriety data bases. The result of the entry is an originality report which flags all text matches. It is still the professors’ responsibility to identify whether the matches are in fact plagiarism and is thus labor intensive. A study on the effectiveness of Turnitin found that it missed 42% of plagiarism incidences. It is not as effective as first thought. The simple use of a thesaurus to change a few words in phrases would prevent the software from identifying a match. It can also generate false positives. There have been legal concerns related to student privacy and FERPA. It is the students’ responsibility to remove author identification from the papers, but they don’t always do so. The software has been banned by several schools in Canada as well as Harvard and Princeton. The cost of the service is $4.90 per student or approximately $60,000/yr.

It is useful for instructors to discuss plagiarism in class so students clearly understand what constitutes plagiarism.   There are online quizzes for students that are good teaching tools.  Professor Laurence uses the [test and tutorial offered by Indiana University](https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html) in her courses. This provides an excellent point of departure for the discussion on plagiarism. ASCRC could consider how to get this information out to faculty and students.  Additional workshops can be offered, but it is difficult to get students to attend.  The best approach is to incorporate teaching about plagiarism into course work.  There are a number of online checkers as well.  One of the most effective is the use of ‘Google plus four’ (entering a four word phrase from the paper in Google search).

One issue is that faculty expectations vary. Some feel it is not their job to teach students about plagiarism. The Writing Center can expand its offerings related to plagiarism, but it is a shared responsibility especially in 100 and 200 level courses. The new freshman orientation course includes a learning outcome related to students understanding plagiarism. International students who may have learned very different conventions represent another challenge. The University-wide program-level assessment has identified information literacy as one of the areas that needs work in intermediate writing courses as well.

The Library has a [plagiarism /academic honesty resources page](http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/c.php?g=275466&p=1836245) for faculty. The Library offers [Research and Citation workshops](http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/workshops) for students, faculty and staff. Megan Clark is offering a Workshop on ProQuest Flow on October 8th at 11:10 in MLIB 283. ProQuest Flow is a citation management tool for organizing, annotating, and citing digital references.

* There was a follow-up meeting on changing the process for assisting students with disabilities who are having difficulties with general education classes on Thursday October 1. Since then the group has been working on a procedure for the General Education Committee to work with DSS to approve the course substitutions. The draft procedure is similar to the Graduation Appeals Process. There was some discussion concerning whether a precedent list should be developed. Once the draft is complete it will be shared with ASCRC and Jessica Weltman, Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, to ensure the legality of the process. There was concern that the procedure should have consistency built into it, rather than the formation of another equity court process that evaluates each case independently. Several committee members feel that students that have a verified disability should not be required to attempt a course before seeking a remedy if a sufficient number of students with similar disabilities have been unable to successfully complete the coursework. However, it is not clear that disabilities can be so easily categorized. In any case, there needs to be a mechanism for early intervention that connects these students to support services and an appeal process. Brian French is willing to be involved in assisting students locate additional services that may help. The October 1st meeting also revealed students’ concerns about the existing graduation appeals process. They do not like the non-electronic form, the requirement to make six copies of their appeal, and the lack of recourse if the appeal is denied. The next meeting of the Graduation Appeals Committee is on Friday. Chair Manuel will address the form issue and other concerns at the meeting. It seems an electronic version of the form could be posted on Moodle for the members to review.
* Please remind your colleagues that the curriculum deadline is Friday.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.