

Student Success Faculty Senate, December 12, 2023

Members Present: Tawny Aguirre, James Rice, Kristian Finlator, John Mullen, Mona Elshinawy, Thaddeus Conner, Tanya Allred, Brian Hampton, Mayra Valedez

Members Absent: Stephanie Lynch

Guests: Rebecca Cambell, Micheala Buenemann, Dean Joseph Lakey

Our final meeting of the semester was devoted to discussion and vote on Proposition 2-2324 Viewing the Wider World.

Micheala Buenemann, who is a sponsor of the bill, described why the proposition was created last semester – to consistently offer all FLIP courses for VWW credit rather than just a subset of them.

A question was posed to Dean Lakey, “If some courses didn’t count before, why not?”

Dean Lakey replied that courses existed independently for Viewing the Wider World courses. There were two course shells that were reserved for assigning credit travel occurs. Apparently, Marissa Fowler of Central Advising has been awarding students VWW credit for FLIP courses on what appears to be an ad-hoc basis. FLIP courses are themselves heterogeneous: some involve 1-2 weeks abroad plus significant extra contact hours back in Las Cruces. In this sense, they are a less expensive way for students to get Study Abroad experience.

Rebecca Campbell stated that the Gen Ed Course Certification Committee already has the authority to certify gen-ed courses, including Viewing a Wider World.

Dean Lakey described that it is a big process to go through the Gen Ed Course Certification Committee and can take up to a year for this process to be accomplished. He also stated that if a department waives a class on a consistent basis that it might need to go through the official application process.

A question was asked by a committee member – “Would there be a more stream-lined process to see if the standard is met?”

Dean Lakey stated the average time is about a year and all have been strong cases for awarding Viewing the Wider World and he understands the hesitancy. The Coordinator of the Study Abroad Committee came to

Associate Dean Academic Council to lobby this Proposition in an effort to encourage more participation in study abroad. If the exchange is four weeks it automatically substitutes Viewing the Wider World. He also stated that it can be costly for students to do an education abroad and not all students have the opportunity to participate. He gave an example of a student getting lost in the Paris subway would be a much more meaningful experience than anything that student could gain in a text-book.

Michaela Buenemann stated that Marissa Fowler of CAASS was in support of the proposition and that with the military waiver they had to take a three-credit class.

Committee Member: That does make sense and is intuitive. Is the only reason that FLIP courses do not go through the General Education Committee is because the time that it takes?

Dean Lakey: The General Education Committee has not been really working like it is supposed to be. If it was there would be no reason to have a double check.

Committee Member: Hesitant to change a policy when it is not addressing why the policy is not working. She is aware of an instance when a FLIP course is not meeting all the required elements to meet a Viewing the

Wider World class. There is a course in Alamogordo where students go to a 5-star hotel, meet three hours a day and never leave the hotel.

Dean Lakey mentioned that if this proposition is not passed, then students will go to Marissa Fowler and it will be up to her as to whether or not it will substitute.

Michaela Buenemann mentioned that sometimes in the Military they never leave the base.

Rebecca Cambell – Not in favor of an end run-around the Gen Ed Course Certification Committee. Stated policy is not addressing academic policy. While there are several things listed in the catalog as to what will meet the Viewing the Wider World, there are no learning objectives listed.

There was a question as to whether a two-week FLIP course would meet the appropriate number of contact hours to meet a 3-credit class?

Committee Member: There is a FLIP class in his department where the students spend two weeks in Germany and after that meet in the class to do projects and presentation.

Dean Lakey – Would hate to see this die as he sees only benefits and is a strong supporter. If the bill is not ready – what would the expediting process take? What could be the minimum standard?

Michaela B. – Her department offers many Viewing the Wider World classes, but feels an international exchange can be more meaningful and is strongly in favor of passing the bill.

Committee Member: Not in favor of changing the proposition, but fixing the system.

Michaela B. – As of right now, the Study Abroad evaluates to see if they meet Viewing the Wider World criteria. Channels – CAASS reviews FLIP Courses, and Melissa Fowler from Central Advising.

There was a question as to what criteria Study Abroad was using?

Committee Member: Study abroad meet at least four weeks, or at least spend two weeks at Museum. If they come back and do work here after the experience is a different experience from spending two weeks at a hotel. Need to look at each course on a case-by-case basis. Sounds like a companion class is not a problem, but a standalone class could be.

Rebecca Campbell: Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws are binding – What we are capable of doing. We have a capacity to make a recommendation to General Education. Come up with an expedited process.

There was a discussion as to how changes to the catalog are made. To the committees knowledge all changes would have to go through the Curriculum Committee and not Faculty Senate.

Committee Member: Doesn't feel that it is Faculty Senates' charge to make changes to the catalog. There are other avenues to make changes to the catalog.

ARP 4.68 was shared in the chat: Classes, all new course, course changes (description, credit, prerequisites, etc.) and course deletions must be recommended by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) and approved by the Office of the provost and chief academic officer.

The committee also felt that not all FLIP courses were the same and should be reviewed on an individual basis.

Tanya Allred made a motion to not accept the proposition. The proposition did not pass by a unanimous vote.

After the meeting there was an e-mail from a committee member recommending the following to the Curriculum Committee:

- Obtain from Dr. Fowler a synopsis of the criteria that she uses to determine whether a FLIP experience should count towards a student's VWW credits. This should be used as a starting point for developing a consistent scheme for assigning VWW credit for FLIP experiences.
- Forward these criteria to the Gen Ed Certification Committee and ask them to develop it into a streamlined mechanism for assigning VWW credits for FLIP experiences.
- Ensure that, once FLIP experiences are approved for VWW credit, this is reflected in the course catalog as soon as possible and encourage academic units to advertise this option to students.
- Once these steps are in place, discourage ad hoc assignment of VWW credit for FLIP experiences by bodies other than the Gen Ed Course Certification Committee in order to ensure consistency.