

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
University Committee on Undergraduate Education
DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, November 30, 2023
10:15 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., via Zoom

<https://msu.zoom.us/j/96531712347>

Passcode: 849464

Present: Julie Beaty, Gary Blanchard, Michael Callahan, Allyson Dean (for PattyWest), Kathleen Gallo, Nicole Geske, David Gillstrap, Steven Gray, Ebony Green, Alissa Hakim, Amanda Idema, Andrea Kelly, Marissa King, Mark Largent, Emilia Marcyk-Taylor, Helen Mayer, Justin Micomonaco, Jairahel Price, Vashti Sawtelle, Linda Sayed, Steve Shablin, Robin Silbergleid, Joy Speas, Thomas Summerhill, Antoinette Tessmer

Absent: Stephen Gray, Ethan Voss, Patty West, Antonio White

The agenda was approved as amended by adding the names Gary Roloff and Jim Schneider as representatives available to discuss agenda items 5 – 9.

The minutes were approved for November 9, 2023.

Comments from the Chairperson

Chairperson Tessmer reminded members that the upcoming weeks of the semester will be stressful for students and to be sure to offer mentorship and kindness to students. UCUE's next meeting is December 21.

Comments from the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Associate Provost Largent provided brief updates on the Presidential search and stated that the Higher Learning Commission, MSU's accreditor, will be making a campus visit. He indicated MSU's functions are performing well across the board.

Chairperson Tessmer announced that because agenda items 5 – 9 are related, they will be introduced by the same three representatives from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Item 5 will be voted on separately and items 6 through 9 will be voted on together.

Faculty representing UCUE's curriculum requests:

Dorcia Chaison, Assistant Dean, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Gary Roloff, Department Chairperson, Fisheries and Wildlife

Jim Schneider, Academic Advisor, Fisheries and Wildlife

Request for a Moratorium on Admission to the Bachelor of Science Degree in Fisheries and Wildlife (Action Item) (Attachment A)

The committee granted voice to Assistant Dean Chaison, Chairperson Roloff, and Mr. Schneider. Chairperson Roloff provided background information indicating that after assessing students and employers about the degree, it was not serving them professionally. Students and employers were looking for a more focused degree. He indicated that Fisheries and Wildlife is a very broad department with four focal areas of major study which is the direction students and employers showed a greater interest in. Chairperson Roloff indicated that existing classes still reasonably fit within the new majors

however an introductory and synthesis class was added to guide students in how to be successful in the department.

Mr. Schneider reported that external competitors have moved from a general type of degree to a more specific degree in this field and that change has attracted students.

A discussion was held regarding concentrations within the Fisheries and Wildlife department as well as the 2.0 course requirement in certain courses. A brief discussion was held on the importance of transfer students into the degree program.

Voice was removed from Assistant Dean Chaison, Chairperson Roloff, and Mr. Schneider.

The following motion passed unanimously.

The University Committee on Undergraduate Education duly considered and endorsed the Moratorium on Admission to the Bachelor of Science Degree in Fisheries and Wildlife.

After discussion, UCUE approved the following Requests with one vote (agenda items 6 through 9):

Request for a New Bachelor of Science Degree in Applied Conservation Biology
Request for a New Bachelor of Science Degree in Aquatic Ecology and Management
Request for a New Bachelor of Science Degree in Fish Ecology and Management
Request for a New Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management

Subcommittee Reports:

Course Equivalency for Semester Abroad Experiences

Marissa King, Chairperson

Chairperson King reported that the subcommittee recently met and that Dr. Zierler has meetings scheduled with Global Ideas data scientists, Education Abroad's technology support, and other stakeholders to consider the possibility of an MSU-built, centralized repository of all previously approved education abroad courses. After a review of Big Ten study abroad best practices, it was determined that similar challenges exist among their programs. The subcommittee's goal is to share a policy statement with UCUE at the December 21 meeting.

New Student Perceptions of Learning Survey (SPLS)

Emilia Marcyk-Taylor

Dr. Marcyk-Taylor reported that the campus SPLS team is working through issues including determining who should receive access to course feedback data and implementing variable timelines for courses that do not last the entire semester. Surveys will be open the last five days of the course and students and faculty will receive automated messages about this. A reminder was shared to visit spls.msu.edu for answers to questions. Dr. Marcyk-Taylor stated that the new system is not only a technological improvement for an old system, it should help mitigate bias in teaching evaluations.

Members shared feedback from their colleges that included concerns on how colleges will use the information, necessary training for faculty and evaluators, and how answers to free-response questions will be handled. Members are seeking clarity on how data will be used and quantified.

Vice Provost Largent Mark reminded members that this new platform provides customization at the college level and that a core set of questions will still be asked in every class taught at the University. Results should be reviewed locally where the developmental and evaluative assessments are done.

Dr. Callahan asked for clarity on whether the University is discouraging or not permitting college and department-level evaluations to include free response questions.

Roundtable

Vashti Sawtelle reported that she is currently serving on the University's Survey Committee that reviews the content and number of surveys that are emailed to students. The committee's purpose is to decrease the number and redundancy of surveys that students receive.

Amanda Idema shared that December 8 is Engineering Fall Design Day and invited members to stop by the Engineering Building to see poster presentations from about 450 students.

Steve Shablin encouraged members to submit end-of-semester grades early.

Emilia Marcyk-Taylor reminded members that there will be destressing events such as crafts and food at the Library in the upcoming week.

Submitted by Lynne Frechen.