

FACULTY COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Members present

Andrew Newman, Eric Kessell, Pramod Khosla, Alina Cherry, Jaime Goodrich, Sarah Swider, Chuanzhu Fan, Edward Golenberg, Robert Harr, Shelly Jo Kraft, Zachary Brewster, Ty Partridge, Fernando Charro, Yuson Jung

Attending

Stephanie Hartwell, Paul Clemens, Claudio Verani, Caroline Brzuchowski, Jennifer Wareham, Lori Pile, Sharon Lean

Absent with notice

John Klein, Victor Figueroa, Christopher Trentacosta, Hien Nguyen

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

The minutes of the Jan. 11, 2024 meeting were approved.

Sharon Lean presented the changes to the BA in Political Science, which were approved.

Ed Golenberg initiated a discussion about whether eight credits of computer language coursework could be accepted to fulfill the CLAS language requirement. While not a formal proposal, the topic generated considerable back-and-forth, with Golenberg noting that this would allow students to meet the requirement while developing marketable skills that would often better match their major. It would also align with the university's current college-to-career push.

There were various critiques of the idea: that, in a global world, learning other languages and cultures is increasingly important; that computer languages can become quickly obsolete; that this might drive students away from human-to-human involvement and even more toward tech involvement; and that it would reinforce the sense of a monolingual America.

Dean Hartwell noted that CLAS faculty recently received numerous distinguished faculty awards and encouraged attendance at the upcoming Humanities Center conference.

Yuson Jung began a discussion of the administration of M.A. programs. While there was general agreement that Masters student processes are outmoded, there is not really a viable option that scales at present. Jenn Wareham noted that there is a new graduate student services employee in the dean's office, making this a good time to consider alternative approaches.

Robert Harr and Chuanzhu Fan led related discussions of fairness and of grading standards in online and in-person courses. There were concerns, from Harr and others, of widespread cheating in online courses, leading to grade inflation, and – from Fan – concerns about student attitudes and effort levels in courses where failure is increasingly common.

Lori Pile noted that Physics has had success with a hybrid approach, with exams being in-person to minimize cheating. Harr asked about the possibility of guidelines, given the magnitude of grade inflation in online courses.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30.