

DRAFT cover note to Senate:

University EdPol has considered and unanimously approved the CBE's proposed curricular changes (attached). While the vote was unanimous we would like the Senate to be aware that significant discussion arose regarding two issues that, while EdPol did not believe warranted halting the new CBE curriculum from proceeding, merit mention for their potential precedent and university-wide implications.

These are:

(1) Implementation of non-integer credits.

Four 1.5 credit courses are proposed. Approved by EdPol in the spirit of fostering curricular innovation, these fractional-credits nevertheless are a significant change in how the university counts undergraduate academic credits. The change could have multiple levels of impact from, e.g., course and curriculum design and minimum acceptable depth or work load expectations, to transfer credit policies and a range of other spillover effects for which we will need to establish guidelines and policies. These effects are presumably manageable, but some may be non-trivial and we must remain vigilant about unintended consequences. Moving forward, EdPol will begin to consider other potential impacts and suggest policy where appropriate.

Prior to the meeting representatives from EdPol did have discussions with the RAS office and others to identify and begin to plan for known technical and administrative processing issues. In anticipation EdPol also approved modifications to credit-load rules in R&P 3.2.4 to accommodate fractional credits. Other interests at the university may be affected as the RAS indicates the adjustments needed to accommodate the CBE's fractional credits will compete for attention against other ongoing issues in the RAS office.

At the meeting representative from RAS confirmed that the proposed curriculum will require technical changes and that they can make those revisions.

(2) Removal of English 2 (3 credits) from the CBE core, and the effect on amount of writing instruction.

Addition of new classes in the business core to respond to changing business landscape and business accreditation pressures, while maintaining the overall credit load, necessitated the elimination of the requirement of English 2 from the CBE core (English 1 remains). The CBE proposes to implement a sequence of business communication courses (1.5 in first year + 1.5 in third year = total 3 credits) to replace English 2. The new courses are admirably designed with more attention to skill development in not only writing but also in oral and visual communication, communication about data and business-specific contexts and styles. Writing remains part of these new courses, but because the overall credits remain the same, the emphasis on writing is more skewed

towards business applications. Some members of the committee felt that this resulted in a diminution of commitment to writing.

The CBE Dean and core curriculum redesign committee recently met with the English department to address concerns, and earlier had adjusted the proposed timing and semester sequencing of English in the CBE core to address capacity challenges raised by CAS. The Dean also welcomed input from the English writing program, as well as the Director, Writing Across the Curriculum, on the hiring of the new Director of the Rauch Center for Business Communication.

In addition, our recent Middle States accreditation feedback noted one potential area of weakness was Lehigh's lack of clarity on universal expected learning objectives across all students, in part stemming from the absence of an overall core undergraduate curriculum. The two-course English requirement has been one of the very few common expectations and the proposal will change that expectation. Some members of the committee voiced disagreement with interpreting the two course English sequence as a common undergraduate core and noted that a number of Lehigh undergraduates use AP credits to place out of English 1 and even 2. The CBE Dean offered to monitor the number of students placing out of English 1 and, if substantial, to address the issue in consultation with the English department.

At the meeting members of the writing program registered concern but indicated that with adjustments in timing and continued interaction between English and CBE they voted in favor of the proposal.