

CalMessage to Deans/Department Chairs

From: Hans Sluga, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction

04/02/15

Subject: New requirement and recommendations for student-facilitated courses (including DeCal courses)

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) reviews proposals for student-facilitated courses (numbered 98 and 198) offered campuswide. While many of these courses are fine, we have become concerned that some departments are not paying sufficient attention to the courses they sponsor. COCI is concerned that

- instructors of record are not adequately supervising all courses,
- many courses do not have adequate academic content, and
- the workload for some courses does not justify the unit value.

To address these issues, COCI is instituting a new requirement, making a new recommendation, and reminding you of its expectations. We request that deans, department chairs, and program heads share this information with all faculty and lecturers, preferably at a faculty meeting.

- 1) Instructors of record need to make themselves familiar with the responsibilities of supervision and the requirements for student-facilitated courses, before agreeing to sponsor such a course.
  - Instructors are referred to the Faculty Checklist ([http://vcue.berkeley.edu/specialstudies/faculty\\_checklist.pdf](http://vcue.berkeley.edu/specialstudies/faculty_checklist.pdf)) and a new FAQ (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/committees/coci/student-facilitated-course-information/faq-ior-final.pdf>).
  - Additionally, COCI recommends that departments use a signature sheet that spells out the responsibilities of the instructor of record. This is a detailed accounting of the supervision expected by COCI and intended to be answered by question #5 on the proposal form, “How will the instructor of record supervise the student facilitator(s)?” and is available online (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/committees/coci/student-facilitated-course-information/iorsigsheet.pdf>).
- 2) As specified in the checklists, student-facilitated courses are expected to be academic in nature. Specifically:
  - Courses must include explicit academic content and requirements, beyond classroom attendance, for receiving credit. For example, students should read material that places the topic of the course in an academic context; and students should carry out a project, such as a short paper (or papers), a presentation, or creating a website.
  - A complete, finalized syllabus must be submitted, that includes an outline of course content, a reading list, a statement of frequency of class meetings, and a clear description of assignments and requirements for passing the class, along with the other requirements listed on the proposal form.
- 3) In order to ensure that workload requirements (set by Senate Regulation 760 (<http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/manual/rpart3.html#r760>)) are adhered to, effective

for fall 2015 courses, COCI will require the submission of the worksheet to calculate workload and resultant unit value, available at <http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/coci/sfc>. Note that the hours given are the minimum hours required. Note also that any courses offered for two or more units are expected to strictly adhere to academic requirements, as described above. Items listed on the worksheet must correspond to requirements in the syllabus. For courses offered for variable units, a separate worksheet is required for each unit value. (Some departments and student facilitators have already been using this tool; from now on it will be required as part of the proposal.)

COCI reiterates that department chairs are responsible for monitoring the academic quality of all courses in their departments, including student-facilitated courses. Before approving student-facilitated course proposals, department chairs should take care to review each syllabus and verify that the instructor of record will appropriately supervise the course. Departments may set their own restrictions on course prerequisites, facilitator qualifications, deadline for submission, unit value, etc., as long as they do not conflict with Senate regulations and policies.