

## COLLEGE OF MARIN ACADEMIC SENATE

### MEETING MINUTES

October 22, 2020

12:45 – 2:00 pm via Zoom Meeting

**Senators Present:** Meg Pasquel, Karen Robinson, Peggy Dodge, Patricia Seery, Jeff Cady, Patricia France, Kristin Perrone, Dave King, Maria Coulson, Kevin Muller, Kofi Opong-Mensah, Joe Mueller, Paul Cheney

**Senators Absent:** Shawn Purcell

**Guests:** Rinetta Early, Gina Cullen

#### CALL TO ORDER: 12:45 PM – Zoom Meeting

- I. Approval and Adoption of the Agenda – **ADOPTED (Robinson/Perrone) with revision moving Discussion item a. to after the report by all Senators present**
- II. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of October 15 – **APPROVED (Robinson/France) with Senators Pasquel, Robinson, Dodge, Seery, Cady, France, Perrone, King, Coulson, Muller, Mueller, Cheney Yes; Senator Opong-Mensah No. Senator Opong-Mensah dissent for the record based on issues raised in earlier discussions.**
- III. Public Requests to Address the Senate on Non-Agenda Items - **NONE**
- IV. Officers' Reports
  - a. President (Meg Pasquel): President reminded Senators of the importance and value to students of submitting midterm grades due today.
  - b. Vice President (Maria Coulson): VP Coulson reported Chancellor's Office Final Opinion on using cameras in Zoom has been issued. Highlights include that cameras should be presumptively optional for live, synchronous classes. If there is an essential reason why cameras are needed, faculty have a procedure to guide them that is found in the Final Opinion document. The document will be included in the AS repository of remote learning information.
- V. Committee Reports
  - a. Curriculum: **NONE**
  - b. Academic Standards: **NONE**
  - c. Other Senate Subcommittee and Governance Committee Reports - **NONE**
  - d. UPM – **NONE**
- VI. Consent Agenda **NONE**
- VII. Invited Guests: Life and Earth Sciences Faculty: Jeanine Williams, Emily Fox, Erick Munoz, Aviva Rossi, David Egert, Rachel Klein, Steven Newton, Becky Brown, Dayna Quick, Tina Christensen, Rebecca Werlin
- VIII. Action Items: **NONE**
- IX. Discussion
  - a. AP Scores: L&E Sciences  
Counselors have been reviewing and discussing COM policy on acceptance of AP Biology at COM. Currently AP Biology scores of 3, 4, or 5 are accepted by COM As a general science credit, not the equivalency of any specific class. Counselors came to unanimous consensus to urge Life and Earth Sciences department to consider accepting AP Biology as the equivalent of COM BIO110 & BIO110L. Reasons for that recommendation were presented earlier.

Life and Earth Science department had a meeting where 11 of 11 present (L&E Sciences) voted to oppose the change proposed by Counselors. L&E Science faculty present at the AS meeting expressed the following concerns behind their opposition:

- Faculty have seen that AP scores often allow students to move ahead to advanced Biology classes, only to have to move back because they were actually not qualified for the content of the advanced classes.
- COM currently accepts AP Biology test scores of 3, 4, or 5. AP score of 3 is equivalent to a C.
- A&E Science faculty have observed that earning a C in BIO 110 is indicative of lower success in advanced courses. Students may drop courses or continue to earn C's.
- BIO 110 and BIO 110L are the foundational material on which advanced biology classes are taught. That material will not be repeated in advanced classes. L&E Science contend that AP scores do not represent that foundational material.
- Some students at COM who took AP Biology and then take BIO 110, have reported that AP class goes too quickly for mastery of the content and that the content is not designed as a foundation for what comes next in the study of Biology.
- There was some concern expressed that it could be unfair to students whose only background is AP Biology with a score of 3 if that were accepted as equivalent to BIO 110 given the success rates of C students in BIO 110 in advanced Biology classes. Students in that situation should at least be warned of the future struggles they may encounter.
- Some L&E faculty stated a position that AP classes prepare students for a test and provide lots of bits of information with the goal that students will pass the test and that it doesn't work in the real world to rush students through. COM BIO 110 provides the experience for students to authentically learn the material.
- Although UC accepts AP Biology, the majors at UC do not necessarily actually accept the units as equivalencies to their own courses. Students then need to take basic classes at UC making the miss out on opportunities to take other interesting classes in order not to bump up against unit limitations for degrees.
- Some science faculty colleagues at UC have indicated that COM transfer students are better prepared than many transfer students. L&E faculty suspect that better preparation is due to higher standards at COM than some community colleges.
- AP course outline of record is not missing BIO 110 content, but outlines don't necessarily represent outcome of taking away the information and being able to apply it. Doing well in advanced biology after AP Biology is not typical. AP Biology is generally taught by instructors with a BA at best.
- Standardized testing itself is not a good measure of mastery and AP tests are graded and developed by high school teachers with college instructors.
- Concerns were expressed that a 3-hour examination doesn't adequately represent understanding of the content of the full semester BIO 110 & BIO110L and that the 3-hour in person test has been replaced by a 45-minute online test.
- The argument made by counselors that COM should accept AP Biology as BIO110 and BIO110L because other schools are doing is troubling. Are COM Counselors basing recommendation on the goal of being like other colleges? Understanding more about why colleges accept AP Biology would better inform our considerations at COM.

Comments and questions from Senators and Counseling guests present in response to L&E Sciences concerns included:

- Departments get to set baseline score for AP acceptance. If the largest concern is acceptance of students with an AP Biology score of 3, the department could set a baseline score of 4 or 5.
- Different scores on AP exams represent different competencies. COM Math department accepts only scores higher than
- Not accepting any AP Biology score as equivalent to COM BIO 100 & BIO 110L slows down our students as it is a prerequisite course for Biology major preparation.
- **In basic skills English and Math classes**, Research showed overwhelmingly that student

success was more negatively impacted by extra time spent. Students who took basic skills classes in community colleges were better prepared but did not go further. Students earning C in foundational courses like BIO 110 & BIO 110L who still struggle in higher level classes may be impacted by the extra time required of them before they have access to higher level classes.

- Even if students earning a C in BIO 110 & 110L struggle in advanced classes, the C grade still gives them credit for the course. If an AP Biology score of 3 is the equivalent of that C, shouldn't those students have the same chance to move on that BIO 110 & BIO 110L students who earn a C have?
- Perhaps a score of 3 on the AP Biology exam is not adequate for success in COM classes that have BIO110 & BIO110L as a prerequisite.
- Students who earn a 4 or 5 on AP Biology test have demonstrated persistence and success as students.
- AP Biology is a year-long course. BIO 110 & BIO 110L are only one semester classes. Students have to apply for AP Biology after taking a general high school Biology class and work hard to complete AP Biology and get a good score on the AP Biology exam.
- Most community colleges and UC believe that AP Biology provides sufficient foundation for study in Biology.
- Accepting AP Biology as equivalent to COM BIO 110 & BIO 110L is also important to students who are not planning to major in Biology or go into a STEM major when they transfer. The example of a COM Psychology major whose transfer per TAG guidelines was delayed because COM did not accept the AP Biology score as equivalent to BIO 110 & BIO110L was shared.
- There is nothing that prevents a student whose AP Biology was accepted as BIO 110 & BIO 110L and finds themselves struggling in advanced classes from going back and actually taking BIO 110 & BIO 110L.
- Is the COM L&E Sciences department objecting to the nationally standardized test that AP Biology students take?
- Concerns were expressed that COM is losing students to neighboring colleges who are willing to accept AP Biology with a course equivalency. Students have worked hard in high school at AP Biology and when they find out it does not count as equivalent to a key COM prerequisite course, they are leaving us.
- Clarification was offered for the L&E Sciences concern that the AP Biology test had been reduced from 3 hours to 45 minutes. The College Board pivoted quickly in Fall 2020 due to COVID and administered a 45-minute online test for AP credit. That change was not intended to be permanent and it is unclear what the testing protocol for 2020-21 academic year will be.

Much of the information shared regarding success of students relative to AP Biology scores as well as information shared regarding COM student experience with delays in transfer due to the lack of equivalency for AP Biology with BIO 110 & BIO 110L is based on anecdotal evidence. The discussion concluded with agreement that Counseling and L&E Sciences will submit queries for actual data from COM and then this discussion will continue. Life and Earth Sciences faculty also have additional topics they did not have a chance to discuss that will be brought up next time

- a) Policies: absentee Senators / President's communications - **DEFERRED**
- b) Creating "List Serve" community - **DEFERRED**
- c) Institutional and systemic racism at COM - **DEFERRED**

- X. New Business – Architects are coming to the AS on 10/29 to present latest information on the new LRC.

XI. Adjournment: 2:00 pm

For questions or information concerning the Academic Senate Minutes, please contact: Peggy Dodge, Acting AS Secretary: [pdodge@marin.edu](mailto:pdodge@marin.edu)