

**Minutes**  
**University Committee on Courses and Curricula**  
**1 November 2000**

**PRESENT:** Thomas G. Althen, Keith L. Belli, June K. Breland, David H. Bridges, James A. Bryant, Jacquelyn P. Deeds, Merrily S. Dunn, John A. Gillentine, B. Keith Hodge, James D. Jones, David C. Lewis, Ben A. Needham, Sharon K. Nobles, Kevin Rogers (for Benjamin F. Blair), Traci L. Rowe, Walter T. Smith, Charles A. Sparrow, Tim P. Wasyluka, Clyde V. Williams, Nancy M. Ziegler

**EXCUSED:** Gail A. Bishop, Julie C. Fulgham, Clyde E. Herring, Fred Lehman, Eugenie J. Looby

**UN-EXCUSED:** Amy L. McKee

Belli called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m. in 247 Allen Hall.

In response to a letter from Dr. George Rent (attached), the committee discussed the issue of the transfer of “D” grades to satisfy the core course requirements at Mississippi State University (MSU). Nobles provided an overview of the current policies by college or school (see attached handout). Belli pointed out that there was a difference between transfer of courses to MSU and application of those courses to a degree program. Discussion followed, focusing on three primary concerns:

1. Core courses must require a quality and quantity of work sufficient to prepare MSU students for their upper-division courses and to ensure that MSU students can compete with their peers at other institutions.
2. Core courses and students’ academic performance in core courses should help students to perform well on tests designed to measure academic accountability and assessment at MSU. [The context of SACS’ concerns about assessment/evaluation/accountability informed much of this discussion.]
3. Existing college policies and practices concerning transfers of D’s might or might not have resulted from faculty participation. A college’s reaffirmation of its current policies or its changing those policies requires active, substantive engagement of each department’s faculty.

Deeds moved, seconded by Jones, to recommend that:

Colleges and schools continue to be allowed to set the applicability standards for transfer courses, and colleges and schools should be encouraged to discuss the issue of transferring courses with “D” grades to either reaffirm their current policy, or develop a policy appropriate to their degree programs.

The motion passed with a vote of 13 for, 2 against.

Two student members of the Committee (Mr. Needham and Mr. Wasyluka) also insisted that a transfer-of-grade-policy (current or future) must not dilute the value of and integrity of an MSU degree. While supporting the motion, Mr. Needham noted, “I encourage colleges not to accept D’s [in core courses, for credit applied to graduation requirements].” In opposing the motion, Mr. Wasyluka noted that, given varying current policies, a student could “shop around” for a major and evade curricula that refused to accept D’s on transfer. Mr. Wasyluka favored a standard university-wide policy to not allow the transfer of courses with “D” grades.

Gillentine (the other dissenting vote ) favored not allowing any courses with “D” grades to fulfill core requirements, regardless of whether the courses were transferred, or taken at MSU.

The report submitted by the Terminology Subcommittee (attached) was discussed. Deeds moved, seconded by Lewis, to accept the proposed terminology and incorporate it into the *UCCC Guide and Format* as a requirement for future additions and modifications of degree programs. A friendly amendment was accepted to change the term “specialization” to “emphasis” and to insert the word “usually” into the last sentence of the report so that it would read:

If completed within a degree program it is *usually* considered a minor.

The motion passed unanimously.

Belli provided copies of a memo from Dr. Dan Embree (Robert Holland Faculty Senate Chair) reporting senate endorsement of a UCCC recommendation regarding the MSU Core Curriculum (attached).

The committee discussed the development of criteria for the inclusion of courses in the MSU Core Curriculum. In addition to topic-related criteria for the core categories, the committee agreed that wording needed to be developed, by core category, to describe the overall purpose and expected outcomes of the courses in terms of knowledge and skills. The development process will proceed as follows:

1. Belli will contact faculty with expertise in each of the core categories to solicit input

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- on the purpose and outcomes for that category.
2. The input will be synthesized in a draft that will be discussed and revised by the UCCC.
  3. The revised draft will be distributed to the chairs of the college and school curriculum committees for review.
  4. Input from the chairs will be incorporated into a final draft by the UCCC.
  5. The final draft will be sent to the Faculty Senate for review.
  6. Input from the senate will be incorporated into the criteria by the UCCC.
  7. The revised criteria will be forwarded to Dr. Rent for administrative review and approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.