**ASCC Natural and Mathematical Sciences Panel**

Approved Minutes

Thursday, October 20th, 2022 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

CarmenZoom

**Attendees**: Barker, Cole, Dinan, Hamilton, Hilty, Kaizar, Ottesen, Steele

**Agenda:**

1. Approval of 9/22 minutes
   1. Kaizar, Hamilton; unanimously approved
2. Physics 5261 (new course cross-listed with ENR)
   1. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the units amend the list of recommended texts (syllabus pg. 4). While the Panel recognizes that this list may be intended to supplement knowledge for students coming into the course from a wide variety of backgrounds, it may be difficult for students to discern which books will be most useful to them. The Panel offers a friendly suggestion to include information about which texts might be most relevant for students who do not have a background in soil science, or which text(s) may be most pertinent to different topics in the course calendar, as well as including information about where to access and/or purchase these texts.
   2. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the units clarify or eliminate the “Pace of activities” section of the syllabus (pg. 3 under “How This Course Works”), as the current language is reminiscent of the college’s recommended language for asynchronous online courses and does not seem to align with the in-person format of the course.
   3. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the syllabus state explicitly that there will not be a final exam in the course.
   4. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the syllabus (pg. 1) identify the course number with BOTH Physics and ENR designations (i.e. “ENR/Physics 5261”) and amend the course exclusions (syllabus pg. 2 under “Course Prerequisites”) to read “ENR 5261 is not open to students with credit for Physics 5261; likewise, Physics 5261 is not open to students with credit for EBR 5261” or similar.
   5. Comment: The Panel observes that the lack of pre-requisites is unusual for a course at the 5000 level. While the Panel understands that pre-requisites may not be strictly necessary, if the units do expect some prior experience with science at the collegiate level, the Panel offers the friendly suggestion that the units include a statement in the syllabus which describes the skills and/or knowledge students should have prior to beginning the course.
   6. Comment: The Panel offers a friendly observation that the Course Description (syllabus pg. 2) begins with a sentence fragment that may be confusing for students.
   7. Hamilton, Barker; unanimously approved with *4 recommendations* (in italics above,) and two comments.
3. Earth Sciences 6101 (new course)
   1. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the unit clarify whether students who turn their CV in early for extra credit (syllabus pg. 5 under “Sept. 24”) will be required to turn in an updated or improved version to earn credit for the standard course assignment on October 29th.
   2. *Recommendation*: Given the course’s focus on the graduate student experience in the Earth Sciences, the Panel recommends that the unit consider limiting enrollment to “graduate students in Earth Sciences, or permission of instructor” so that students from other units would at least need to discuss with the instructor whether enrollment would be appropriate given their field of study.
   3. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the unit add a statement to the syllabus asking that students communicate with the instructor about any concerns or needed accommodations for instruction in an outdoor setting. Additionally, they recommend that the unit carefully consider whether meeting in an outdoor location for the first class of the semester is appropriate, as it may be difficult for new graduate students to locate the class without a building and room number.
   4. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the unit remove the reference to “the Ohio State grading scale” (syllabus pg.2) as Ohio State does not have an official grading scale; instructors are welcome and encouraged to use any scale that works best for their course.
   5. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department replace the Disability Services statement on pg. 3 of the syllabus with the most up-to-date version, which can be found here: <https://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/syllabus-elements>.
   6. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department replace the Mental Health statement on pg. 3 of the syllabus with the most up-to-date version, which can be found here: <https://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/syllabus-elements>.
   7. Barker, Hamilton, unanimously approved with *6 recommendations* (in italics above).
4. Earth Sciences 8871 (new course)
   1. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the “Grading” section of the syllabus (pg. 2) be clarified. They note that the percentage breakdown could be difficult to understand in its current form and they recommend that the unit utilize a table or separate listing for each version of the course. Further, the Panel notes that a separate listing could help to clarify how students who enroll in the 3rd credit hour of the course will be graded on participation, assignments, and the final project.
   2. *Recommendation*: The Panel offers a friendly observation that the “Course objectives” (syllabus pg. 1-2) include both course objectives and learning outcomes, and they recommend re-labeling them accordingly.
   3. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department replace the Disability Services statement on pg. 4 of the syllabus with the most up-to-date version, which can be found here: <https://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/syllabus-elements>.
   4. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department replace the Mental Health statement on pg. 4 of the syllabus with the most up-to-date version, which can be found here: <https://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/syllabus-elements>.
   5. Hamilton, Cole; unanimously approved with *four* recommendations (in italics above).
5. Mathematics 5588 (new course) (return)
   1. The Panel notes and appreciates that the department has improved and expanded the syllabus since it was last brought to the Panel, and they thank the department for their work on the course.
   2. The Panel asks that the department consider providing the students with a textbook or other resource(s) for reference, as they understand from the pre-requisites and the topics covered that students will be learning about new concepts and utilizing new information when working on their group projects. The Panel expressed concern that the outside experts (and the materials that they provide) will be the only reference for students.
   3. The Panel requests that the department provide more information about the peer evaluations. Specifically, they ask that the following concerns be addressed:
      1. The Panel would like the department to provide more information about how students will earn the 20% of their grade that is allotted to Peer Evaluations. The Panel notes that most courses that make use of peer evaluation give credit to a student for completing thoughtful and constructive evaluations of the work of their fellow students, rather than allowing 20% of students’ grades to be determined solely by their peers. The Panel is unsure of which approach is being used in this course, and, if it is the latter, they ask that the department provide information about how the instructor will monitor and, if needed, mitigate grades that they feel are not appropriate.
      2. The Panel asks the department to provide some information regarding the instruction and/or guidance that will be given to students about how to evaluate their peers. Since the evaluation form does not provide students with a rubric or other method to encourage objectivity, they are concerned about subjectivity and personality conflicts influencing students’ grades. They encourage the department to describe in more detail the scaffolding and framing that will support this assignment.
      3. The Panel asks that the department clarify whether students will be evaluating one another on their group work, their individual projects, or both.
   4. The Panel asks that the department provide more information about the length of the presentations, both group and individual.
   5. The Panel asks that the due dates and timelines for both the individual and group projects be included on the course calendar so that students can plan and organize their time effectively throughout the semester.
   6. The Panel observes that this course seems to require significant computing knowledge as well as require specific equipment. If this is the case, the Panel asks that the department include a statement in the syllabus about the necessary skills and equipment to be successful in the course.
   7. The Panel asks that the course objectives (syllabus pg. 1) be articulated more clearly, as the current text under this heading seems to be a course description.
   8. The Panel asks that the department include “Doctoral” as an Intended Rank. Indeed, even though the course is not primarily intended for doctoral students, they could still take the course and, therefore, the course should include “Doctoral” as Intended Rank. (Course Change Request Form Pg. 1 under “Subject/CIP Code”).
   9. The Panel requests that the department clarify the pre-requisites for the course, as the Course Change Request Form (Pg. 1) says students must have “Math 2568, Math 3618, and Math 4530 ***or*** Stats 4201; or permission of department”, while the syllabus (Pg. 1) says they must have Math 2568, 3618, 4530 ***and*** Stats 4201. They note that the topic and level of the class indicate that the department may have meant to include Stats 4202 as a requirement on the syllabus rather than 4201, but in any event ask that the Course Change Request Form and/or the syllabus be altered to reflect the same pre-requisite requirements.
   10. The Panel recommends that the department clarify the language surrounding time expectations for students inside and outside of class. They recommend utilizing the boilerplate language found on the [ASC Distance Learning Template](https://asccas.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-10/asc-distance-approval-cover-sheet-fillable_3.pdf), “*This is a* ***3-credit-hour course****. According to Ohio State policy (*[*go.osu.edu/credithours*](http://go.osu.edu/credithours)*), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average” or similar.*
   11. The Panel recommends that the department clarify the grading scale, as it does not currently include “+” and “-“ grades, such as an A- or a B+ (syllabus pg. 3 under “Grade”). While the instructor is welcome to give only letter grades should they choose to do so, if this is the case, the Panel asks that the instructor state this intention on the syllabus.
   12. The Panel recommends that the department replace the Disability Services statement on pg. 4 of the syllabus with the most up-to-date version, which can be found here: <https://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/syllabus-elements>.
   13. Comment: The Panel encourages the department to consider the inclusion of a pre-requisite of “or graduate standing” so that graduate students will be able to enroll in the course without the assistance of an advisor. Since graduate students’ records are unlikely to display OSU course numbers for pre-requisite coursework, the current listing will require them to seek assistance to enroll.
   14. No Vote
6. Mathematics 5637 (new course) (return)
   1. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department clarify for students what the primary learning materials will be. While they can see that the class notes will be distributed and that there are three recommended textbooks, they ask if there might be one or two sources that could be singled out as most helpful for students.
   2. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department provide a more detailed description of the homework assignments. They recommend that this include information such as the anticipated frequency of assignments, whether the homework will be done alone or in groups, and how and where homework will be submitted. They note that this information was a part of the prior submission, but since the topics of the course have been altered and re-organized, it is no longer a part of the syllabus.
   3. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department provide a more detailed description of the exams. They recommend that this include information such as the dates of the exams (as they are not currently on the class schedule), as well as times/locations, and whether they are online or in-person exams.
   4. *Recommendation*: While the Panel understands that this course is devoted to the study of the underlying mathematical concepts behind statistical learning, they ask that the panel include a statement on the syllabus about needed computing skills and/or equipment, should such skills or equipment be needed for success in the course.
   5. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department provide more information to students about how they are expected to spend their time outside of class, including how much of their time is intended to be devoted to homework, readings, other study or preparation, etc. so that students can better manage their time over the course of the semester.
   6. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department clarify the grading scale, as it does not currently include “+” and “-“ grades, such as A- or a B+ (syllabus pg. 2 under “Grade”). While the instructor is welcome to give only letter grades should they choose to do so, if this is the case, the Panel recommends that the instructor state this intention on the syllabus.
   7. *Recommendation*: The Panel recommends that the department replace the Disability Services statement on pg. 4 of the syllabus with the most up-to-date version, which can be found here: <https://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/syllabus-elements>.
   8. Comment: The Panel encourages the department to consider the inclusion of a pre-requisite of “or graduate standing” so that graduate students will be able to enroll in the course without the assistance of an advisor. Since graduate students’ records are unlikely to display OSU course numbers for pre-requisite coursework, the current listing will require them to seek assistance to enroll.
   9. Cole, Hamilton; unanimously approved with *seven recommendations* (in italics above,) and one comment.