

ASCC Natural and Mathematical Sciences Subcommittee  
Approved Minutes

Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

1:15-2:45 PM

Carmen Zoom

Attendees: Barker, Carlson, Cole, Dinan, Hadad, Lee, Mick, Steele, Vankeerbergen

**Agenda**

1. Approval of 11/21/24 minutes
  - a. Cole, Lee; unanimously approved.
2. Astronomy 1100 (new course requesting 100% DL and GEN Foundation Natural Sciences)
  - a. The Subcommittee asks that the department provide a detailed example of at least 2 of the modules so that they can assess the level and rigor of the course activities. As currently presented, it is difficult to understand how students will be meeting the Goals and ELOs of the GEN category.
  - b. The Subcommittee asks that the department provide a detailed example of at least 2 of the experiential learning assignments so that they can assess the level and rigor of these activities. As currently presented, it is difficult to understand how students will meet the requirement of spending at least 3 hours/week completing the “practical tasks”. The Subcommittee also offers the friendly reminder that in addition to accounting for 25% of student time, experiential learning should also account for 25% of students’ overall grades.
  - c. The Subcommittee recommends that the department consider a math pre-requisite commensurate with the kinds of assessments and activities that will be a part of the course. The Subcommittee understands and appreciates that the department wants this to be an accessible course for early-career students, and they offer the friendly reminder that the pre-requisite could simply be a readiness for collegiate math (for example, completion of Math 1075 or higher or a Math Placement score of “N” or higher).
  - d. The Subcommittee asks that the department amend or add to the course’s assessments so that students are completing further discussions and/or writing-focused assignments and receiving feedback from instructors. They note that many of the course ELOs include asking students to “explain”, “demonstrate” “describe” or “analyze” (syllabus, pp. 3-4); however, it will be difficult for students to demonstrate mastery of these ELOS without assessments that require more robust feedback from their instructors. At this time, it appears that the majority of the course grading will be automated via Carmen rather than graded by an instructor, and that there is a *possibility* that *all* assignments will be auto-graded (syllabus, p. 14).
  - e. The Subcommittee asks that the department provide additional information about how students will interact with one another and the instructor(s) during the course. Given the provided materials and the fact that students can work ahead, it seems that students will only be asked to interact with one another and the instructors once every

two weeks. Additionally, those that work ahead would have very little opportunity to interact with others on these discussion boards.

- f. The Subcommittee asks that the department provide more information about the resources that they expect to be “readily available” to students (syllabus, p. 6). They offer the friendly reminder that students may be enrolled in the course from locations all over the world, so observation of the night sky may be different for each student based up on their geographic location, the weather, the time in the semester, and whether their personal safety could be threatened by being out-of-doors at night.
- g. The Subcommittee asks that the department include in the syllabus a brief, student friendly explanation of how this course, in particular, will meet the Goals and ELOs of the GEN Foundation: Natural Sciences category. This explanation should immediately follow the listing of the GEN Goals and ELOs on p. 5 of the syllabus. This explanation should not simply refer students to the course ELOs, but rather describe how this course will meet those ELOs for the variety of students who may be enrolled in the course.
- h. The Subcommittee reminds the department that any apps, software, or technologies that students will need to use to complete course requirements should be vetted by the [ASC Office of Distance Education](#) to make sure that they aligns with the university’s standards for student privacy and online safety.
- i. The Subcommittee recommends that the department use the most recent version of the Student Life Disability Services Statement (syllabus, pg. 17), which was updated in August 2024. The updated statement can be found in an easy-to-copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#).
- j. The Subcommittee recommends that the department use the most recent version of the Diversity Statement (syllabus, pg. 16), which was updated in AU 24 with additional protected categories. The updated statement can be found in an easy-to-copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#).
- k. In addition to altering the course syllabus in response to the above feedback, the subcommittee asks that the department provide a cover letter outlining the changes that have been made to the syllabus and how those changes address the Subcommittee’s concerns. The cover letter will be valuable for the committee to understand how the department intends to teach this course in order to achieve the GEN ELOs. However, in addition, sufficient information needs to be added to the syllabus so that students will understand their expectations and responsibilities. The cover letter should also outline those changes.
- l. The Subcommittee declined to vote on the course at this time.