

UCAP Annual Report for 2001-2002

University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP)

ANNUAL REPORT

2001-2002

Chairperson: Jon Sticklen

(Meetings every other Thursday throughout the academic year.)

All UCAP material is available on the UCAP web site.

Executive Summary

2001-2002 was a productive year for UCAP. The academic year unexpectedly started with the tragic events of 9/11, and a reexamination of a number of security and response-to-emergencies issues. Subsequent to the trauma felt by all of the MSU family as a result of 9/11, UCAP went on to deliberate a number of major issues, as well as the standard types of issues routinely examined by UCAP. The specific actions of UCAP are detailed in the section below.

Major items held over from the previous academic year (2000-2001) were (a) continued oversight of the SOCT process and procedures and (b) development of guidelines for group work.

Following recent UCAP practice, a number of subcommittees were organized at the beginning of the year. Each subcommittee was charged with considering a major UCAP item and with developing initial UCAP positions for discussion in the committee of the whole.

Major UCAP efforts in 2001-2002 were to (a) complete development of guidelines for group work, (b) examine issues of MSU crises response vis a vie the instructional program, (c) continue development and oversight of the SOCT instrument, website and its analysis, (d) examine issues involved in enhancing the perceived importance of the instructional mission, (e) examine issues involved in effective evaluation of instruction, and (f) continued oversight of the content and implementation of the MSU Computer Requirement.

Specific UCAP issues and actions discussed or finalized in 2001-2002

(dates indicate UCAP meeting dates on which actions were taken)

1. UCAP unanimously approved a request from The School of Hospitality Business that for admission and accreditation purposes, the school would be viewed as independent from the College of Business. (Sept 27)
2. UCAP approved a motion declining to react to an ECAC referral concerning representation of staff on Academic Council. The reasoning leading to the UCAP action was that the item did not relate in any direct manner to the academic program of the University - the major charge of UCAP. (Sept 27)

3. UCAP invested substantial effort to hone plans for the "Student Opinion of Courses and Teaching" (SOCT) web site. UCAP approved a motion to set three types of comparisons which units could select for a given course. The three options to be offered were
 - a. comparison among lower division [100 level + 200 level] courses and upper division courses [300 level + 400 level],
 - b. comparison among all courses within the same number range [100's, 200' ;s, etc.], and
 - c. comparison among courses within the same subject code and course number when a course was taught by at least 5 different instructors.
4. Individual departments will select which of the three comparisons is most appropriate for courses taught in their department and subject areas under their administration. (Nov 8)
5. Continuing on the SOCT issue, UCAP further approved a motion to set the default comparison standard in the event a unit makes no decision as to comparison group. Option c was set as the default condition, except in the case that the "5 different instructors" criterion is not met. In that case, option b will be the default. Further, if there are not 5 courses within the same number range, then option a will be the default. The intent is to make the default the most specific case that can be applied in a given case. (Nov 8)
6. UCAP anticipates revisiting SOCT in Fall, 2002 based on feedback from students, faculty, and staff regarding first year experience with the instrument and the process. (Nov 8)
7. UCAP expressed strongly the need for all members of the community to recognize that SOCT is not intended for purposes related to faculty evaluation. (Nov 8)
8. UCAP by formal motion denied a request from the Family and Consumer Resources program (Family Community Services) to set a minimum grade of 2.0 in all individual major courses for students in the program. Recommendations to the proposers centered on examining the stance of departments/programs in like situations. (Nov 29)
9. UCAP denied a request for a change in the name of the current Telecommunications Department. Specific recommendations were made to the proposers. This item was referred to UCAP by ECAC. (Jan 24) UCAP in a second round action again recommended to ECAC that the proposed name change in the current Department of Telecommunications be rejected. (Feb 21)
10. UCAP unanimously approved a request from Registrar Linda Stanford and Office of Financial Aid Director Rick Shipman in a letter to Dr. Steidle dated 21 January 2002. The proposal was to change the Academic Standing of Undergraduate Students (ASUS) policy. The accepted changes separate the federal financial aid components from

the college academic standing components. The Office of Financial Aid will assume responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the satisfactory academic progress regulations for students who receive federal financial aid. College responsibility will be limited to occasionally providing supporting documentation for students who cannot self-document an exceptional circumstance when a determination of federal aid ineligibility is made. (Jan 24)

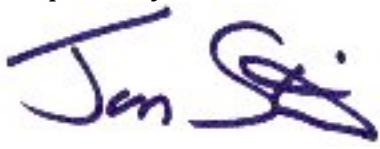
11. UCAP passed unanimously a motion to allow a moratorium on admissions to the BS degree in Manufacturing Engineering for two years, or until such time as program dissolution takes place. (Apr 11)
12. UCAP worked towards a position on how to enhance the importance of instruction and towards suggestions for effective evaluation of instruction. Central to both issues may be the concept of "active learning." Although a subcommittee drafted report (available on the UCAP website) was made and discussed in full committee, the issue remains open and will be carried forward to next academic year. (Apr 11)
13. UCAP unanimously passed by formal motion a set of Guidelines for Group Work. This was done in response to the growing use of group work in classes, and done not as binding rules for instructors, but as a suggested set of working principles. (Apr 25)
14. UCAP unanimously passed by formal motion a resolution relating to the response of the U to crises events. This action was prompted by the tragic events of 9/11, a review of the responses made by MSU at that time, and a long subcommittee discussion on the impacts to the academic program that such crises events engender. The general result of UCAP discussion on this issue was that the key response of the University save for those of physical safety should focus on dissemination to the campus community of timely, specific, and accurate information about the crises situation. Four specific points were included as follows. (Apr 25)
 - a. The continual development and updating of a website for disseminating information for faculty and staff in dealing with response in the event of a crisis. Information on the specific event, responsibilities and duties of the faculty and staff, and options for conducting instruction should be included within this site. A timely reminder should be sent to faculty and staff with the URL included.
 - b. There should be a plan to convey the information described in item a to faculty and staff to allow for effective crisis response by the university community during an event where computers are unavailable. The thrust was the importance to identify a procedure for units to follow in the event computers are down.

- c. The implementation of a direct channel of communication between administration to faculty and staff (Provost => Chair => Faculty/Staff). This line of communication will allow the administration to disseminate vital information in the event of a crisis that interrupts instruction.
 - d. UCAP commends the work of the College of Education in developing a website devoted to dealing with the crisis on September 11, 2001 (<http://ed-web3.educ.msu.edu/sept11/>). Provided in this website are links to campus resources for both faculty and students, lesson plans for discussing the crisis, and numerous other aids in helping educators to approach the delicate subject of the attacks. It would be appropriate for this website to be attached to the campus wide crisis website previously mentioned.
15. UCAP performed a review of APERTIF (Admission Policy Entrance Requirements Task Force). This was the standard five year review of this report that attempts to measure the academic preparedness of freshmen in reference to courses specified for admission. There was general improvement in the percentages of students meeting each of the stated subject area requirements. However, some stark percentage differences were noted for some groups. (Apr 25)
16. UCAP officers for academic year 2002-2003 were selected by vote of UCAP as follows. (Apr 25)
- a. Chair: Bridget Behe,
 - b. Vice Chair: Juli Wade
 - c. MEAC Representative from UCAP: Winston Willkinson.

Carry over items to UCAP 2002-2003

1. Review issues with the academic calendar that may be brought forward.
 2. Continuing oversight of SOCT with a possible early autumn review including obtaining and analyzing feedback from the university community.
 3. Resolve issues with the tabled motion for Guidelines for Documentation Given to UCAP to support Academic Unit Creation or Dissolution.
 4. Discuss broad issues involved in dealing with issues of cheating and plagiarism.
 5. Continuing oversight of the implementation and content of the MSU Computing Requirement.
 6. Continue work from draft report of subcommittee on Enhancement of University Community Perception of the Importance of Instruction/Assessment of Instruction.
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Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Sticklen". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a cursive "S".

Jon Sticklen
2001-2002 UCAP Chairperson