

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 6.C

DATE: February 25, 2010

SUBJECT: Course Prefixes

In the past few months there have been requests submitted to develop new course prefixes for subsets of courses within broader disciplinary umbrellas. As these have been considered, it has been determined that there are no guidelines to guide the process.

Within AAC Guidelines, Section X.A. provides a list of approved course prefixes and does identify the institutions authorized to use each of these. Section X.B., Statement of Request for New prefix, is not a live link. In sum, it appears that as the system's course catalog was developed, AAC recognized the need to establish control over the set of prefixes available but this was never fully formalized.

AAC has had a series of discussions about the natural tendencies in play that are fraying the system's catalog of courses and steps have been taken to counteract these (for example, see http://www.sdbor.edu/administration/academics/aac/documents/02-09AAC_6.C_system-level_curric_issues.pdf and http://www.sdbor.edu/administration/academics/aac/documents/04-09AAC_6.G_common_course_guidelines.pdf). While course prefixes were not included in these discussions, clearly establishing and applying different prefixes to unique courses in common disciplines does promote differences rather than similarities. More troubling are those cases in which different prefixes are proposed for common courses since these situations clearly drive differentiation rather than commonality. It could be argued that the set of Common Course Guidelines approved by AAC prohibits this since section II.1. states that common courses shall have common prefixes.

As a note, there are other cases that have come forward where a campus has elected to move an entire set of unique courses from one prefix to another. Often times, these requests are tied to the change in name of a professional program or something similar that is playing out in response to an external driver. As a set, requests of this type do not impact the integrity of the course catalog and staff would recommend that these continue to be accepted and approved.

Members of the Council should be prepared to discuss this.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Establish a working group to draft a set of guidelines for the review and approval of new course prefixes.