

**University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Faculty Senate  
Committee on Academic Policy and Planning**

**Minutes of the CAPP Meeting on January 23, 2013  
Hawaii Hall 208, 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.**

**Present:** Todd Sammons (Chair), Xu Di, Cengiz Ertekin, Thao Le, Maya Saffery, Carolyn Stephenson (SEC Liaison), Annette Wong, Katya Sherstyuk.

**Guest:** Monica Stitt-Berg, Assessment Officer

**Absent (excused):** Stacey Roberts (Academic Procedures Committee Representative)

1. **Meeting Call to Order.** Todd Sammons (Chair) called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
2. Todd asked Di Di to be the minutes taker for the meeting and she accepted.
3. **Review of November 28, 2012 minutes.** Carolyn made a change to the last sentence of the first paragraph on p. 2 as follows: “Carolyn further suggested that we should examine the question of shifting the balance of power from the UH system back to the campuses.” Minutes were unanimously accepted as amended.
4. **Discussion of a possible campus-wide capstone requirement in the majors, suggested by Engaged Learning Working Group (Todd is a member)**

The chair provided the background of the request from ELWG regarding their work to help students engage in learning in high impact courses. Capstones are generally considered to be high impact courses. The question was whether to require capstone experiences for all undergraduates on campus. ELWG asked that this issue be presented to CAPP for further discussion and feedback. He invited Monica to be a guest to provide further information for our discussion.

Monica introduced herself as an educational psychologist, one who specializes in student learning. She has focused on how to make the college experience more meaningful (including through capstone experiences), and she has followed the research on this topic for 25 years. She shared the following:

- Common practice – Usually, capstone experiences are offered in the senior year for students to synthesize, demonstrate, and reflect on their cumulative learning via application. Different kinds of capstone experiences include courses in the majors, interdisciplinary courses or projects, team teaching, community service, internships, informational interviewing, etc. The main purpose of a capstone experience is to create something that students would be proud of and that would showcase their work.
- Example – The UCLA faculty started to discuss capstone experiences seriously in 2003. The UCLA Faculty Senate voted to require capstone experiences institutionally. All capstone experiences at UCLA have research underpinning.

Currently 60% of UCLA's degree programs have capstone experiences, of which 46% have been officially certified. Others use portfolio or external exams as alternatives ways of measuring the same kind of experience capstones provide.

- Reasons – The primary reasons for the adoption of capstone requirements are to increase students' engagement and to promote their competitiveness in the job market. For faculty, capstone experiences offer excitement and variety. Through senior capstone projects, programs often can review their strengths and weaknesses.
- Requirements – She hesitated to mandate a capstone requirement, preferring that the initiative come from the bottom up by building on currently existing capstone experiences, until it becomes a widely accepted and valued practice.
- Overall – All the research and literature indicates that capstone experiences are worthwhile.

One committee member shared that engineering had three capstone experiences, which were very valuable. He suggested that that Faculty Senate could survey the faculty to get feedback.

The question was raised whether undergraduates, especially those with low B's, could do the research required in capstone experiences. If we institutionalize capstone experiences, how would we set up the benchmarks?

Monica responded that students would need appropriate experiences prior to capstone experiences in order to help with scaffolding (i.e., in preparing students to succeed in the capstone).

One committee member commented that in English, for instance, the faculty would need to figure out how to translate their "Studies" courses into full-on capstone experiences. Such work might help faculty think hard about curriculum and programs. This attentiveness might offer an exciting opportunity for programs to grow.

One committee member asked whether the capstone experience in the form of an exit exam for languages might turn out to be a make-it or break-it experience for students.

Monica shared a legal case that occurred in a high school when a student received all A's in classes and then failed the final exit exam. Faculty members need to be aware of these kinds of cases and align their courses with the exams. High-stake exams such as SAT and MCAT offer a lot of practice.

The committee discussed the role of "required courses" in the various undergraduate programs.

Monica pointed out not all undergraduate programs have required core courses. Many departments have general requirements, satisfied by students selecting from a slate of different courses within the requirements; this allows students to follow their own predilections.

How many capstone courses were on campus? It would be help to have the data. Several examples were provided. It was estimated that one third to a half of all the majors at Mānoa had some sort of capstone course or experience.

One committee member inquired about the format of the capstone experiences and their impact on faculty workloads, especially for small departments. Another indicated that that would be for each department and faculty to figure out. He also noted that there seemed to be a general interest in capstone experiences in the room.

The comment was made that faculty usually do not like top-down mandates. We could ask programs to decide what they would like to do. It would be worthwhile sharing the information that we already have about capstone experiences at UHM.

Monica pointed out that CAPP could also ask questions about a capstone experience, especially in program review or as we look at proposals for new programs such as the one we have from Public Health.

The committee asked Monica to provide us with the literature about the effectiveness of capstone experiences; she also asked Monica to summarize what, based on Monica's knowledge and experience, was the main value of assessment.

Monica cited the rich data in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This assessment is of student learning, programs, degrees, and institutions. For her, assessment focuses on two things: (1) Changing student populations; and (2) Faculty disconnection. Assessment gives faculty the tools and helps them collaborate to produce curriculum that meets the needs of students. Most faculty, even those who are reluctant assessors, understand the value of assessment through their experience with their own course evaluations. Currently 98% of faculty have promised to participate in assessment at Mānoa and 50% are actually participating. She gave her contact information for CAPP members to reach her if any of us have any further questions.

One committee member pointed out that assessment was required for national and professional accreditation. The Chair stated that it would be good to encourage capstone experiences on campus and suggested that CAPP continue the discussion, maybe eventually preparing a resolution supporting capstone experiences at UHM.

**5. New Issue # 35.12: Proposal for a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Public Health**

The CAPP Chair recommended that two committee members read the Proposal for a B.A. Degree in Public Health thoroughly and that the rest of the committee members review it generously. Todd and Thao, who has a master's degree in Public Health, volunteered to be the intensive readers. More background history of this program was requested by members since there was a discussion of eliminating the program earlier.

**6. Carry Over Issue # 13.13**

The subcommittee on Issue 13.13 thanked the committee members who solicited feedback and comments from their colleges and asked all to send any additional ones regarding UHM Forms 1 & 2 to them before the next meeting.

**7. CAPP Vacancy**

The Chair reported that CAPP at this time is not at its full strength, with 7 members instead of 9. Stacey is only partially involved in CAPP for subcommittee work with Thao.

**8. CAPP Spring 2013 schedule and next meeting**

CAPP members agreed that CAPP's meetings would be scheduled between 2:45 – 4:00 p.m. on February 13 & 27, March 13, and April 10 & 24 for Spring 2013.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.**

**The next meeting will be held as scheduled on Wednesday, February 13, 2013, 2:45–4:00 p.m., at Hawaii Hall 208.**

Respectfully submitted,

Xu Di

Approved on February 13, 2013.