ARTS, SCIENCES & ENGINEERING
FACULTY MEETING
COOLIDGE ROOM, BALLOU HALL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Table of Contents

Announcements

Retirement Party for Margery Davies, September 26th, 3-5 PM, Coolidge Room........... 2
Introduction of New Faculty from the SMFA ................................................................. 3

New Business

Discuss AS&E Bylaw Changes: Budget & Priorities Committee ................................. 3
Next Steps in Credit Conversion Process ....................................................................... 5
Student Accessibility Services ....................................................................................... 19
MEETING ADJOURNED ................................................................................................. 22
PROF. TOBIN: Good morning. Welcome to the first meeting of the year for the faculty of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. I’m Roger Tobin from the Department of Physics and Astronomy and one of the co-chairs of the Executive Committee. Fulton Gonzalez is my fellow co-chair. This is the first meeting of this faculty at which our new colleagues at the Tufts School of the Museum of Fine Arts are in virtual attendance. So they are able to see and hear us, but we, of course, are not able to see and hear them but they can, however, submit comments electronically and Fulton will be watching for that. Because of this arrangement, it is even more essential than usual that everyone please wait for a microphone, speak into the microphone, and please identify yourself with your name and your department or your affiliation. Because even if you are very well known to all the people in this room, you will not necessarily be well known to all of your new colleagues, and certainly they will not be able to hear you if you don’t have a microphone unless you have a really, really loud voice. So we need that even more so now.

Another reminder: when you do leave, whether earlier or at the end of the meeting, please do pick up all your paper and so on. Otherwise, poor Jillian and Lindsay have to deal with it when they have enough other things to do.

MS. DUBMAN: Thank you.

PROF. TOBIN: So we’re going to get underway. The first item is an announcement from Jim Glaser.

Retirement Party for Margery Davies, September 26th, 3-5 PM, Coolidge Room

DEAN GLASER: It is actually Jim Glaser, Dean of Arts & Sciences. I welcome SMFA at Tufts faculty. It’s actually in the agenda that there will be a retirement party for Margery Davies next Monday; correct, Jillian, it’s a Monday?

MS. DUBMAN: Yes.

DEAN GLASER: September 26th, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM in the Coolidge Room. It’s here in print but I just wanted to remind us all how much we love and miss Margery, and we would love to see you here next week. Thank you.

PROF. TOBIN: Next, before we get to the items on the agenda, I’d like to give an opportunity to Nancy Bauer to introduce those colleagues from the SMFA who are in virtual attendance.
Introduction of New Faculty from the SMFA

DEAN BAUER: I didn’t know who was going to show up here, and my quick glance around the room indicates – I saw you guys and Jean. So I want to introduce Jeannie Simms and Mags Harries. Chantal Zakari was introduced at the last meeting. Have I missed any SMFA faculty members that are in the room that I have just – okay.

So I will start with Mags Harries. Can you stand up? This is Mags Harries who is a person that I think many of you will actually get to know and see because Mags is an absolutely phenomenal installation artist. And part of the work that she does when she installs things is have the installation process itself be part of the artwork. Since the minute I met her, she and I have been talking about the possibility of her doing something wonderful on our campus. And those conversations are still ongoing. She’s also in a conversation with the Medford Art Council, which has been really interested in this whole project. So I think you’ll probably be seeing Mags around the campus. It’s very exciting. I’ll also very quickly mention that Mags’s daughter is also an artist, and my husband one night when I was exhausted recently said, “You got to watch this film; I’ve heard good reviews on Netflix.” And I hate almost everything he wants to see. But anyway, I turned on this film, and I thought it was fabulous. It’s called Tallulah. It stars Ellen Page and Allison Janney, very famous actresses. It’s an amazingly fantastic film, one of the best ones I’ve seen in a long time. It was released in theaters too, but it’s on Netflix. We’re really, really happy to have Mags and her very talented family with us.

Jeannie Simms is sitting in the back. Jeannie, will you stand up? Jeannie is the Chair of the Photography Department at the SMFA. She is, like many artists at the SMFA, a multi-talented, wonderful, wonderful photographer. In fact, yesterday was the opening of the new exhibition at the Tufts University Art Gallery on our campus in Aidekman, which is a really wonderful exhibition that features many, many artists on our campus and on the SMFA campus, and a lot of people that are affiliated with Tufts. It’s called Memorable Objects, and it’s mostly portrait photos, a couple of sculptures, and some other things from the last twenty-five years. Many of the objects are things that are in our permanent collection. There is a large series of wonderful photos of gay and lesbian couples done by Jeannie in the gallery that I highly recommend to you. Jeannie also works in film and video and also does lots of other things and we’re really thrilled to have her as well. So please if you can please say hello to our new colleagues.

Discuss AS&E Bylaw Changes: Budget & Priorities Committee

PROFESSOR TOBIN: Thank you and welcome to our new colleagues. We’re very happy to have you here.

The next item, which I’m sure is what brought you all here today, is a really important revision to our bylaws. So the bylaw description for the Committee on Budget and
University Priorities is the one place where we actually call out specific departments and programs for representation on the committee. So that means whenever we change those things we have to change the bylaws. So this is an amendment to make two important changes to this bylaw. One is changing what used to be GRALL to its new name of International Literary and Cultural Studies. The other is to incorporate the School of the Museum of Fine Arts into that description.

So as you know, these are bylaw changes so we have to discuss them in great depth in one meeting and then we vote on them in a subsequent meeting. So is there any discussion of these? Nancy?

DEAN BAUER: The thing I want to discuss is that the SMFA has departments also, and the last part says “Or the SMFA.” I’m wondering if it should be “Or departments of the SMFA”?

PROFESSOR TOBIN: I think when we were discussing this we were not aware of what the structure would be at the SMFA. So I think the issue is whether we would want more than one representative from SMFA on this committee at a time if they work in separate departments. Do you have a proposal regarding that?

DEAN BAUER: I’m not sure because I wasn’t – I didn’t – I’m a bad dean, I didn’t read any of the handouts beforehand so I apologize. I’m just seeing this for the first time now. I have nothing else to do so. I guess what I think, and I’d like to discuss it with my colleagues, but I think there are roughly speaking thirty-some, in the low-thirties, full-time faculty members who are eligible for being in this body. There are at the moment six departments. So that doesn’t make sense to have six representatives or one representative from each department given that almost all of the other departments that we have are larger than that. But it might be that it also doesn’t make sense to necessarily just be limited to one. I was wondering if there’s a way to wait on this one or if it’s critical to decide on this? Is this one of the things that we have to wait until the next meeting to vote?

PROFESSOR TOBIN: We do have to wait until the next meeting to vote on it, and we could have an amendment at that time. I don’t think this is really time critical. We need to get this sorted out before we do elections to committees in the spring, and we can deal with some housekeeping and things on the agenda – we can table this.

DEAN BAUER: I’m sorry to spoil the “this one’s easy” part, but let me have some conversations with –

PROF. TOBIN: We can come back to this at the next meeting or a future meeting.
DEAN BAUER: Thank you.

PROFESSOR TOBIN: Any other discussion? Okay, so we will return to this at a subsequent meeting.

So I would now like to invite up Carmen Lowe and David Proctor – I think Jason Rife is not able to be here today – to give us an update on information on the credit conversion process.

Next Steps in Credit Conversion Process

DEAN LOWE: So I’m Carmen Lowe, Dean of Undergraduate Studies. I’m here with the chairs of our two curricula committees for the School of Engineering and Arts & Sciences. You have to imagine Jason here in spirit. We are going to give a description of where we are in the credit conversion and then open it up to questions that we can answer as best as we can.

First thing I want to do is say that we are introducing some changes in terminology. The first one is we’ve been using the words in Arts, Sciences and Engineering “credit” interchangeably with “course” for quite a long time. It’s confusing when we talk about the current credit system and the new credit system. So what we’ve been using in the Curricula Committees and in EPC, the Educational Policy Committee, is referring to some things called “semester hour units.” So we’re converting to semester hour units, it’s going to be a temporary term that we use as part of this conversion. We are finally referring to them as SHUs, S-H-U. In honor of that, David has worn a beautiful pair of shoes as a reminder. So we’re going to be talking about SHUs. So I wanted to introduce that term to you. So we’re starting the process, both the department chairs and department administrators in engineering and in arts & sciences, holding off on the SMFA for now. You’ve already received spreadsheets that list all of the courses in the course catalog. This is going to begin a process where the departments review your courses and review an estimated assignment of SHUs to that course. If they want to have a conversation with the respective Curriculum Committee about, you know, ‘I don’t think that this course has been assessed correctly or there’s an inaccuracy in the course catalog, something has changed.’ This is an opportunity to correct that.

So this is a change to review our curriculum as it currently is, course by course, and to say this proposal for assigned SHUs, whether it’s going to be a three credit course, three SHU course, or five or two or one as the case may be. This will be determined by the curricula committees. So what the federal Department of Education and our accreditor at NEASC are asking us to do is basically create an internal process of review that’s consistent and transparent for deciding how we are awarding credit to various courses in agreement with the federal definition of the credit hours.
Now, a perfect system, it’s not going to be mathematically accurate. We’re trying to capture the nuance of courses in the departments as they’ve been taught. This is going to be a tremendous amount of work for the curriculum committees for both schools. So we’ve tried to make it as easy as possible on the departments, the chairs, and the department administrators is have – and also to keep David and Jason from having overflowing email inboxes – is to create these spreadsheets as well as an online petition form where it let’s say you have a particular course that you think should be worth more SHUs than the registrar’s estimate and you have a reason, an explanation, for this, we’re just asking that you use the online petition form because we’re potentially going to have dozens – hundreds of petitions. We don’t know yet. And we want to keep David’s shoes nicely polished.

So I’m going to turn it over to David. First I’ll give an overview of what engineering has already done, where they are, and then we’ll talk about arts & sciences. So the engineering departments received their spreadsheets in the spring. They had a chance to review them, and they’ve already indicated to the Engineering Curriculum Committee which courses, department by department, they want to review, to have further discussion about how the credits, or the SHUs, will be assigned to those courses.

Jason will be sending an email very soon to the department chairs in engineering to work on a time frame. I believe that he is going to ask each department in engineering to test, to use one test case, one course, for the petition by a certain date in October so the departments can get familiar with how it works and answer any questions. So that’s what Engineering is doing so they can figure out their curriculum and their requirements for all different majors after they sort this out for engineering. Arts & sciences is a lot more complicated, so I’m going to turn it over to David.

PROF. PROCTOR: Arts & sciences is going to effectively break it down to hopefully slightly more manageable kinds of pieces. So the first grouping of departments that we’re asking to actively consider and submit any request for changes are the sciences and math departments. They have a deadline of October 31st to get us their feedback on their spreadsheets. The Language Departments are going to be next, romance languages, ILCS, and classics department. They have until November 21st to review their spreadsheets and give us their feedback.

Then we move on to social science departments towards the end of this semester and in to early next semester. The humanities departments and then interdisciplinary programs. Then we’re in conversations actively with Nancy about the SMFA and how that will work over time. We’re also in constant contact with the graduate school, Sarah Herchel and Graduate Policy and Programs, who will be actively involved in the process, as well. LA&J Curricula will serve as something of a clearing house for all departments in
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School of Engineering

arts & sciences to process any concerns, questions, also deal with any petitions. Any petitions that are for graduate-only courses will be turned over to P&P, and it will be their responsibility to make decisions on these.

So our hope is that this will be as transparent and collaborative possible. There’s been a TRUNK site that’s been set up in which all departments have their spreadsheets now currently posted. All department chairs, graduate program directors, and department administrators have access now to the SHU petition process TRUNK site. We’re happy to add any other department members on. Already departments have requested that staff assistants, curricula committees within separate departments be added on, and we’re happy to do that.

The goal here is to make this as seamless as possible, but it’s also a great opportunity for us to really evaluate our curriculum and for departments to really think about how they’re teaching, what they’re teaching, and what workload each of their courses in essence indicates for students.

The choices are going to be restricted to one, two, three, four, five, six, generally. I don’t think there’s really much more than six. We are not going to actively consider something like a 2.5 SHU course. That was a decision that EPC made and that was part of what was voted on last year. So the half credit aspect is not really part of this process. So departments should really look at the guidelines and figure out where their courses fit in that kind of one to five. This will be the average, somewhere from one to five, probably three, four, and five being the most commonly used. The rare six here and there, and maybe the rare one. Departments really should take time to consider that and consider the amount of time their students spend in class, contact hours regularly, and also homework is factored into that as well.

The petition itself has a little handy calculator in which you can type in your contact hours, type in your homework hours, and it will give you a sense of how many SHUs that class should be worth. As departments look over the spreadsheets I strongly encourage you if you see something that just doesn’t seem right to you right off the bat, that looks like the form was (inaudible). The registrar’s office did a fantastic job doing this. They got us the information very quickly. It is very accurate. But sometimes how Dowling sees a course is not necessarily how a department sees it. So this is a great opportunity to correct that as well. So the department’s perspective is in line with how the system shows the course. So if there are questions that you have about how a course has been equated in SHUs, you know, feel free to contact me about that and we can certainly discuss that. In certain cases a petition may be necessary. In other cases it might be simply a conversation, a few emails back and forth to figure out exactly how to basically deal with and accommodate your concerns.
The goal here is to really maintain standards, make sure that you have a set standard that can be applied to all departments, but also within that to be flexible and respect the cultures, the independent needs of departments, and the uniqueness of each discipline.

DEAN LOWE: So I also wanted to add where we are in terms of the larger time frame. So we are going to be referring to our actual launch date for this new credit system is fall 2018. Students will register for those courses in March of 2018 and courses need to be all ready to go to be uploaded for fall 2018 in December of 2017. So we need to use this academic year for the review. And the Curricula Committee will get back to the departments. There is some time in the fall of 2017. If a department says, “You know, we looked over our curriculum for this major, this graduate program, and we decided that we’re going to change some of the course components or instructional components of particular courses, whether it’s a sophomore seminar or a graduate seminar, and we’re going to repetition the Curricula Committee to reflect that change in the course including a change in the SHUs assigned to that course.” So that’s part of what we’re anticipating is that departments review their curriculum holistically and as also the Educational Policy Committee is clarifying various policies and language around this, that there might be some shifts in individual courses, individual programs, and we’re trying to do that. We’re also really aware of how individual professors are concerned, that, “How does this impact the courses I teach?” The individual departments are concerned about how it’s going to affect their graduate and master’s degree programs.

We also want the faculty to be aware that we really want to make sure that what we’re putting in place is going to make sure that students still easily graduate on time, maintain a manageable course load, and make progress towards their degree. We’re not seeing any major changes to our curriculum or how faculty are teaching. It’s just a different system of accounting for what we’re actually doing and trying to make things a little more transparent for our students. So that’s what we’re attempting to do.

PROF. PROCTOR: I want to emphasize too that particularly to the science and math departments and the language departments, that as you process and consider the spreadsheets that this is, you know, in a sense a first-run through. You want to do the best you can to account for any changes you might want and have any discussions that need to be had. But by the same token, this is an ongoing conversation. So when you submit your spreadsheet it’s not necessarily the end of the conversation nor does it mean that you can’t continue to consider that other changes might be necessary. So throughout the spring semester we’ll certainly be receptive to any additional request for changes, petitions for changes. And curricula will continue to function over the summer as well this particular year to ensure that we continue this process and that by fall of 2017 we’re in a good position.

DEAN LOWE: So I guess we can open it up for questions.
DEAN GLASER: Jim Glaser, Dean of Arts & Sciences, professor of political science, teacher of a class with a recitation. My recollection is that the registrar’s office has students sign up for class and a recitation or a class and a lab when they register for courses. I would hope that SHUs will be allocated to both the course and the recitation. So the course that I teach, which meets three times a week for an hour—I’m not teaching this semester, but when I do it meets three times a week for an hour and one hour per week for the recitation. My opinion is it should be a three SHU course with a one SHU recitation, and I just wanted to see if that was the case?

PROF. PROCTOR: The way that the registrar’s office processed the conversion from our current system to SHU was to take into account labs and recitations and use those in considering what the SHU value should be. So in many cases there are lecture courses that meet twice a week with a recitation that are at the four SHU level. There are science courses that meet twice a week and have a lab that are five SHU level.

DEAN GLASER: So we’re going to be dealing with workload in the dean’s office, I think it’s going to be easier for us in assessing workload if the SHUs are allocated separately to the course and to the recitation or the lab than if they’re all in the SHU together. So I’m just putting it out there that there will be some value, and since the registrar’s office already asks students to sign up for a course with a recitation separately that the SHU should be allocated to the two things separately. JoAnn?

MS. JACK: Jim, actually the way it’s happening to date is to one course with components of recitation and a lab. We talked about this last spring. It’s all connected. So the SHU would be on the course. Last week, literally, we changed the catalog completely, made all of those things separate which would not allow us to have them sign up for a lab and recitation all at one time. So you have to make your recitation on a whole new catalog record to do it the way you’re suggesting. I do believe with the new system it has been very helpful for those that have acquired recitations and labs that force that to all happen at the same time. So you can’t put today a SHU on the recitation or the lab.

DEAN GLASER: Okay. We should have a conversation about that.

MS. JACK: Okay. Maybe there’s another way we can pull the data in terms of workload that could break it in a report that isn’t necessarily tied to have the courses set in the catalog.

PROF. PROCTOR: Are there any other comments relating to this discussion before we start a new topic?
DEAN QU: Jianmin Qu from the engineering school. At the end of the day, kind of relating to what Jim was saying, when all is said and done would it be possible since we’re going through this process now to have a clear indication in either the course number or somehow shows the credit hours associated with that course? There’s an example, it’s pretty standard in engineering courses, every three lab hours is equivalent to one lecture hours in terms of credit. So if you have a course that has three hours per week, three hours lab per week, then your course will have the destination of 3-3-4, that is three lecture hours, three lab hours, and total of four credit hours. So every time you see something and the students see it and the faculty see it, it becomes very clear what commitment you had to make and what the money hours would be.

DEAN LOWE: I think that’s a question for the registrar to answer. Is this about numbering courses?

MS. JACK: I’m not sure that’s really about numbering. I see what you’re saying about it being displayed. I think that’s more technical and the background and how to display the course and the course description to pull out how many hours a particular thing would be. So it’s a very technical issue in terms of SIS. I mean, it’s obviously possible, but again, I think it’s related to the way the courses are set up to date. So if they have more than one component, it’s one course with separate components. So we can definitely look in to seeing how to map those components within the course. But again, I do think it’s a good – something we never had in the past. Where kids come in and sign up for a lab and a course and all that, so I hate to lose that part of it. But I understand there’s an additional need. So we should certainly talk about that.

DEAN LOWE: I think also if engineering is interested in doing that, that might be part of course descriptions displayed on websites. If an engineering advising materials or the Curriculum Committee for engineering, you know, clarifying this just as a way to communicate among engineering students and faculty about the workload for the course, that might be a possibility of changing the course numbering system we use across both schools.

MS. JACK: That’s exactly my point. Thank you. We can do that today. You can update all of your course descriptions today right in the course description where the student reads about the course. It breaks out. I can do that today.

DEAN QU: I’m not suggesting changing the course. I’m just saying adding the information to that.

MS. JACK: We can absolutely do that and that can happen now. That’s not technical at all if you want to just add words to the course description.
PROF. MANZ: Beatrice Manz, history. I’m speaking partially for the history department, primarily for myself because we have not fully discussed this issue. But for me, first of all I have a question. I take it you’ve already assigned tentative values and that we petition as a department? Right, okay. But I wanted to speak to what Jianmin has suggested. One of the concerns that I have, and I think other historians do as well is that the credit is given to the student and not to the faculty. So I think this has to be separate from workload. Furthermore, in our department it is the upper-level courses which do not have sections which usually require more work. But there’s the reading, it’s much larger. Seminars require more work. Therefore, for us, in some cases having an automatic extra credit for those with sections means that you’re giving more credit for less work. Furthermore, in terms of the work – I’m sorry to be coming out against your idea of the separate section. We don’t always set sections ahead. We depend on whether you can have someone teach a section, depends on your enrollment. So for us that would work very badly I think. It would make a serious problem. Thank you.

PROF. PROCTOR: I just want to point out that part of this process is to again respect the individual cultures within departments. So for certain departments there are going to be certain concerns that will be, you know, unique to that department or set of departments. Departments are all – there is a set of basic standards that we are going to apply, that we are applying. But within that there is a level of flexibility for departments. I don’t want any department chair to look at the spreadsheet we send and see that as the final kind of assessment. It is by no means. It’s the beginning of a conversation. It’s a conversation that’s going to maintain the standards but also see as best we can to respect the natures of departments.

PROF. SCHILDKRAUT: Debbie Schildkraut, chair of political science. So this question goes off of Beatrice’s. But first I did look at the TRUNK website, and it does seem very transparent and that a tremendous amount of thought went into how this is going to work. So thank you for that. There are definitely issues to work out, but I think that it’s going to go a lot smoother.

So in looking over those materials I was having the same thought as Beatrice was. Our department, like many departments, we have these large intro classes with recitations. We have mid-level lectures, small classes, and seminars. It’s fairly clear based on the definition that the lower classes with a recitation should be four credits, then mid-level classes will probably be three credits, and it’s the seminars that I’m curious about for all the reasons that I won’t repeat that she explained. What I want to point out though is that as I was looking through, I guess when I initially thought of it I thought, “Sure, we’re going to petition for all our seminars to be four credit classes even though the spreadsheet may say three.” But then there was something, I don’t remember exactly the wording, but in the guide that was provided there was something like just because a class is more work doesn’t mean it’s worth more credit or something. It seemed to me it
was slapping down my thought that seminars would be three credits and so I thought, “Oh, are all these going to be rejected because it is based on face time three SHUs, but based on workload I think many, if not all our seminars, we would argue to be four SHUs?” So I just want to know what your advice is in proceeding with these petitions for a situation like that so that we’re not sending petitions that are rejected.

PROF. PROCTOR: I think what we meant to say was that the face time is not the only calculator, that work outside of the classroom can be actively figured in. So for a seminar that meets three hours a week but requires significant work outside of the classroom that is a very viable petition for four SHUs, absolutely.

PROF. SCHILDKRAUT: The current wording I read as just because you have more work, don’t think you’re going to get four credits, but I’ll have to go back.

PROF. PROCTOR: We’ll examine that wording because that is not our intention.

PROF. SCHILDKRAUT: Thank you. That’s very helpful.

PROF. SCHWARTZBERG: Sharan Schwartzberg, occupational therapy. I have a similar question or seeking guidance about independent studies and special topics. My concern about being – there are different definitions of those courses, and I’m hoping that my department reviews the term uniformly. I did a study of different departments in arts & sciences to see how they were using these terms and the course definitions, and I did one at the medical school. We discussed this at a faculty meeting. It’s not clear – I think we have a good idea of what we want to have for each of those, but right now our special topics are on 200 level, the directed studies were 100 level. Putting the level aside, how would we determine the number of SHUs given that the scope of those projects could vary? I’m sorry if I missed it in the materials, but right now we have a half of credit and a full credit of special topics and directed studies and they’re really determined by the oversight of the faculty who’s directing those courses.

DEAN LOWE: So generally for a typical independent study or special topic it generally replaces one regular course in the curriculum in the student’s schedule. So that would typically be the three SHUs or the current one credit. It’s the same as if a student is doing a senior honors thesis, they have one credit for the fall, one credit for the spring, that’s going to be three SHUs for the fall, three SHUs for the spring, six SHUs overall for this very large independent study. So I think it matters how this course, this independent study, fitting in the curriculum for the student’s degree program. Is it replacing a whole course, in which case it will probably be three SHUs? Or is it equivalent to a half of course? We did try in the guidelines document, which I believe is on the TRUNK site, to try to figure out how many hours of work. It’s inexact. But we do have some guidelines. If that’s a conversation we should have with the graduate
programs. Again, an independent study varies tremendously at the graduate level from program to program where a student might do an independent study in the English department versus occupational therapy. There’s just a huge difference. So we can certainly try to help you figure that out.

PROF. PROCTOR: I’ll say just very generally that the sense behind an independent study now, the theory at least, is that it is, as Carmen said, equivalent to a regular full credit course. That sense would not change as we move on to this three, four, five credit system. So if a department feels that their independent study right now is worth one Tufts credit and that workload is not going to change as we move forward into this new credit system, then in theory at least that one credit independent study should qualify for three SHUs. Half credits are more difficult and certainly vary dramatically from department to department and program to program. In theory, half credit hopefully would move to two SHUs, but again, in that situation in particular there’s going to be a conversation between the Curricula Committees and various departments because there’s a lot of variation there.

PROF. MIRKIN: Sergei Mirkin, Chair of Biology Department. The process, it looks pretty transparent and kudos to your work. We had some back and forth with David (inaudible). But what I wanted to say, expanding on what Jim said, is I would caution having SHUs affect a teacher’s workload. I think this is a very, very touchy issue. You know, if you get right now, I think we need to first things first, and review the SHUs assigned to each course. That seems to be doable and transparent with your calculator. When it comes to the workload of the teachers, I’d say there is no relation between student SHUs and teacher’s workload. Even now on the surface it looks like if you teach a five SHU course you should get more than the teacher’s (inaudible). That is a very, very touchy issue and I will caution against doing that.

PROF. JOHNSON: Vida Johnson, professor of Russian department, of International Literary and Cultural Studies. I have a concern from hearing the discussion and that is that in (inaudible) where all children are better than average, and when we look over our courses, all of our courses will be better than average. That is, that there won’t be a desire to move them to the four credit, which would then, I think sort of make moot the original impetus for all this. Which is that when we were renewed we seemed to have had not enough graduation credits and that we should move from the equivalency from thirty-four courses to the equivalency of forty courses. If a lot of our courses move from three credits to four it might be that students will actually graduate with fewer courses than they are graduating with now.

The problem that I see is our students are always very smart, and they can figure out that taking a whole lot of introductory courses in a whole lot of departments at four credits will get them closer to graduation than taking the intermediate level or some advanced
courses that are only three credits. So I don’t know how to solve this problem, but I think it’s a real problem that will come up.

PROF. PROCTOR: I want to assure you that we are taking the SHU information very seriously and that for any course where it is not very, very apparent, for example, some of the science courses it’s very apparent that combination of class time, week of lab, and a week of recitation, equal a certain number of SHUs. For courses in social sciences and humanities, it’s going to be a little bit more complicated. But for a department to argue that their X seminar deserves four SHUs, there is a process that they have to go through where they have to lay out very clearly what the defined workload is and what effectively justifies granting it four SHUs.

I will say we’re depending on what I think is something we can certainly depend on, which is the honesty of our faculty colleagues to recount accurately what the workload is for their courses. Unless you study the guidelines relatively carefully, what you think might be a four SHU course might actually not be a four SHU course. There’s a significant amount of work outside of the classroom that is going to be necessary to compensate for a smaller amount of contact time within the classroom. So it is going to be a difficult process. It’s going to be a little bit complicated in those areas. But we are taking it very, very seriously and we’re going to be very, very careful in our evaluation, particularly in those situations to make sure that we are being fair but that we’re also being accurate.

The other thing I just want to say to everybody is I don’t think we can really assess how students are going to react to this. There could be a rush towards courses that are actually three SHUs because it’s less work. There could be a rush towards courses that are four and five because they can get more SHUs by taking certain courses. We fundamentally don’t know and we’re not going to know until we actually implement this. So I understand. Certainly, I have my own concerns as a faculty member about that very topic. But I think realistically we’re not going to know how students react until we launch the system and see how students are going to react.

DEAN LOWE: I also wanted to add, Vida, to the first part of your concern. It was that the perception why we’re making this change because students weren’t taking enough courses. That wasn’t it at all. It was the fact that we had so much tremendous variety in our courses and across our curriculum that the one course was one credit wasn’t really accurately reflective of what was actually happening. That was what the accreditor and final definition of the accreditor were actually asking us to take account of, so that students, all students were graduating, meeting a certain threshold, because there’s quite ranges across the curriculum. So that’s what this is trying to adjust.

PROF. TALIAFERRO: Jeff Taliaferro, political science. David, thank you so much for
the hard work you and your committee have already done. This is a question specific to arts & sciences and to undergraduate majors. Since we’re moving to SHUs as our credit information: are we as academic departments and interdisciplinary programs going to have to come back next year and determine the minimum threshold in terms of the number of SHUs that students have to fulfill for them to complete the majors? If so, what problems do you foresee?

PROF. PROCTOR: I’m actually going to ask the chair of EPC, Anne Mahoney, to field that question because that is one of the projects of EPC.

PROF. MAHONEY: Thanks so much, David. Anne Mahoney, classics, Chair of EPC. EPC still has a lot of work to do on this as well. In fact, starting this afternoon, we’re going to have to figure out exactly what you asked about Jeff, which is what portion of a student’s program measured by SHUs should go towards basic requirements, foundation and distribution. What portion should go towards their major and what portion should be left over for electives? Current thinking is if this works out the way I expect it to work out, the student will actually have a smaller percentage than at present of courses they got to take and more space in the program for electives, which we think is a really good thing. We will probably leave things as flexible as possible. The current rule in the Bulletin is that a major needs to be ten Tufts credits and some of them are more than that. We will probably define it as something like, a minimum of thirty SHUs and then a department can choose to make it much larger than that as it is appropriate for the particular discipline. But you’ll hear more about that from EPC in about January.

PROF. SAIGAL: My name is Anil Saigal from mechanical engineering. I have served as an ABET evaluator for ten years. This was strictly for engineering but we do look at the liberal arts program that comprises and makes up the engineering program. To the best of my knowledge, unless something has changed in the last year or so, that’s when I finished my term, in any place I have ever visited I have hardly seen no more than ten percent of liberal arts courses which had more than three SHUs. For people who I have never really seen anywhere recitation counted as a SHU. If we meet the requirements – if there is a SHU that means that for every in-contact class hour we need two hours outside and the recitation does not follow two hours of outside work. It is the (inaudible) class (inaudible) which should have six hours of outside work. So if we’re going to start four credits, four SHU courses at sixteen hours of in-class contact, that means it’s thirty-two outside contact hours, which makes it a forty-eight hour work for the student when a full-time work is forty hours.

So before we go into all those things, I think we should look at what other liberal arts schools do and get their procedure about whether recitations can count as a SHU from whoever is going to be accrediting the program. I have never seen that done. In general, it’s either three or four SHUs, just three lecture hours, and then a four SHU for a science
course which might be three lecture hours and three hours of lab where you say that’s the contact hour. That’s why a three-hour lab is typically one SHU.

DEAN LOWE: So the formula that’s provided by the federal government is based on instructional hours, not necessarily contact hours, as well as the estimated expected amount of work a student needs to go out and do outside of class. In some cases a recitation is optional. A student doesn’t need to go to it. In some cases the recitation might simply be a review of the lecture. And many other times a recitation is far more active learning. It really depends on the class. It might debate happenings in the recitation. It might be all sorts of active learning in the recitation. Course by course the expectations of outside work are going to vary tremendously. So it’s not necessarily that every single course has a recitation will add up to four SHUs. It really depends on what’s actually happening in that course and that’s why we’re using this process.

PROF. KRIMSKY: Shelly Krimsky. Is this going to be harmonized throughout the entire university with all the schools?

DEAN LOWE: Many of the schools are going to move to SHUs at the same time frame. I’m not sure exactly which ones. I know Fletcher is and some of the programs, especially the programs that have combined degree programs with Arts, Sciences and Engineering will move to SHUs because we’re all using the same student information system.

PROF. KRIMSKY: I also wanted to ask about if we have a number of combined degrees with different schools at Tufts and it can make it kind of complicated if they were a different unit system than we were. Public health program at the medical school, Fletcher school. I don’t know – is the vet school going this way too?

DEAN LOWE: I know that Fletcher and the public health school, yes. I don’t know about the veterinary school or the medical school. I don’t know if the registrar knows exactly?

MS. JACK: I don’t know the answer.

PROF. ART: David Art, political science. I guess I have concerns much like Beatrice did about gaming the system. I’m a professor of political science game theory. But what happens if you have a department that arrives and comes up with a mean credit with a 3.5 SHU across the board and another department comes up with a 4.5 using all these processes? That creates – you know, this is not merely an accounting practice that creates incentives in specific ways. Will there be some mechanisms in looking across the college to see if those are enforced? Second, have you thought about any sort of cap on the number of SHUs that are five? Because, you know, I mean, my department – if it
were up to me I would just maximize the number of hours in my own interest, and I would assume that other people would do the same. So how can we think about those distributional consequences?

PROF. PROCTOR: I think it is – our expectation is, and I think we’d be surprised very much if there were a significant number or really any five SHU courses that come from other than the science departments with a couple of other exceptions. For the Social science and humanities departments to propose a five SHU course would require an immense amount of additional work, which I’m not aware of any course that currently exists in any of the four undergraduate social science departments and certainly the humanities department that would be able to point to five SHUs. A four SHU, a seminar, a research seminar that requires significant external work outside of the face time in class, that is something that the department should actively consider and the committee will actively consider.

As far as ensuring that departments are not trying to game the system, when we receive your spreadsheets we’ll have the assessment of everything a department is accepting, everything the department is petitioning. And certainly, if we see that suddenly a department that we’ve evaluated as primarily mostly three SHU courses is suddenly arguing that all their courses should be four, that will be an ongoing discussion.

I want to assure you the petition is set up so that it takes a significant amount of careful consideration and careful thought in your entries to come out with something that’s going to be the equivalent even for a four SHU.

PROF. ART: Well taken and you’ve thought through this. I just still wouldn’t want it to come down as the department that’s the most forceful ends up getting its way through the petitioning mechanism.

PROF. PROCTOR: I assure you that will not happen. The Curricula Committee has a set of standards and we are going to stand by those standards. If a department does not meet those standards for a certain SHU, the course will not be approved for that SHU.

PROF. RICE: Anne-Christine Rice, French. Will students’ input on workload be considered?

PROF. PROCTOR: In evaluating SHUs? Not at this time.

PROF. RICE: When students fill out evaluations there’s a category at the end that asks if this course needs more work, less work. Is this being taken into consideration?

PROF. PROCTOR: No.
PROF. GARDULSKI: Anne Gardulski, earth & ocean sciences. I have a couple of thoughts. For independent studies or research credit or something, can we still have variable amounts? Do we have to designate three, four, or five ahead of time because I could imagine, in the sciences at least, there could be a range of project types and efforts? So I would just suggest that we could have a variable designation.

Then my other question is less about gaming the system and more about right now our students, if they go through and get exactly thirty-four credits, have two five-course semesters. Now if most of the courses are evaluated at three SHUs, they’re going to have eight semesters with five courses. For some students that’s quite manageable. If we keep our workload the same, which we’re not supposed to change or we’re supposed to increase it, this could become extremely difficult for some students. I’m just saying – I’m not so worried about four credit courses. I did lots of those as an undergraduate and graduate student. That is sort of the norm. So I’m a little concerned that it sounds like the norm is three credit courses. This is for student workload.

PROF. PROCTOR: I’ll field the multiple credit aspect. Anything that’s variable credit now can still be variable credit in the new system. What we’re going to avoid is this does exist in a few instances, but departments have had what is actually on the books of one-credit course in our current system that try to up the credit when Professor X teaches it, drop it back when Professor Y teaches it. That we will not allow. But anything that is a variable credit now can still be a variable credit in the new system.

DEAN LOWE: As far as student workload, undergrads in particular are taking a range of courses across the curriculum; language courses, science courses, courses in the humanities, ex-college classes, yoga, dance, things of that nature. We’re hoping that this system will allow them to have a more balanced course load, but we are, of course, always worried about students just overloading. So that’s why we’re working closely with the departments to try to get, you know, more accurate accounting. What is happening in these courses? So we can have a more accurate reflection of student workload. I know that many of us who are pre-major advisors, we have that eager freshman who comes in and they want to take in their first semester Introduction to Arabic, Introduction to International Relations, EPIC, and a bunch of other courses, Intro to Economics. That will be – they’re putting together an impossible course load, but it looks to them like they just picked out four or five classes. They don’t realize how much work they’re trying to bite off.

But we are very worried. There’s been a lot of conversations throughout EPC of trying to make sure, and we don’t know what the final outcome is going to be, that we’re not overloading undergrads with an impossible workload.
DEAN QU: Jianmin Qu, engineering school. I know I shouldn’t be saying this because I’m probably getting myself into trouble, but I’m somewhat surprised by this line of discussion. It sounds like we’re discussing the currency conversion from one course to these SHUs that are going to be applied. But keep in mind that the SHU is a measure of the intellectual content of the course. Why would you want to intentionally devalue the intellectual content of the course you teach? My experience in the past has always been the other way around. The student comes back and complains and other faculty from other departments comes back and complains that your course really deserves four credit hours rather than three because the student put a lot of time in. So I don’t know why we are so caught up on inflating the course. Remember, this is your own discipline. This is your own intellectual content. Why would you want to intentionally devalue it? If it only deserves three credit hours why would you want to be four? I don’t know why this is such a concern.

DEAN LOWE: I think it’s a big change for Tufts, and I think a lot of people are unfamiliar with the semester hour system used at a lot of other universities around the country.

PROF. TOBIN: I’m sure this is a topic we’re going to be discussing throughout the year. I’m sure you all have a lot more questions. If you have specific questions of course please direct them to the people on the committee, who I think deserve enormous thanks from all of us.

(Applause)

PROF. TOBIN: The last item is very timely. I’m sure you all have exams and things coming up. So we’re going to have some information from Kirsten Behling from Student Accessibility Services.

Student Accessibility Services

MS. BEHLING: Hi everybody. Thank you for having me here today. I am Kirsten Behling, the Director of Student Accessibility Services. I’m new to Tufts so it’s nice to meet you all officially.

I just wanted to take a few minutes to inform you about how we serve our kids with disabilities here at Tufts because I think it’s important to get the information out especially as we’re getting in to the semester and students are starting to pop up in need of accommodations.

So our office is serving any student in an undergraduate or graduate department in the School of Engineering, School of Arts & Sciences, and the SMFA. Right now we’re
serving about five hundred students on campus, which is an increase from last year, but also lower than we probably should be serving. There are a lot of reasons for that.

A lot of times, students transitioning to college sort of want to try things out without the accommodations that they might need, and then we’ll see them right around mid-terms or finals, which is fine. We’re happy to see them whenever.

I just wanted to review really quickly what constitutes a disability because a lot of times students think that they’re coming in with a learning disability or attention deficit disorder, something they maybe had resources for in high school or even their other undergraduate program. But the Americans with Disabilities Act is really expanding the definition to include things like chronic health, mental health, and both physical and sensory disabilities as well. So our office serves really any student. A lot of our students are coming to their disability newer. It’s a newer diagnosis for them. They’re sort of coming to terms with, “What does that mean and how do I get the services that I need? Do I really have a disability? What that label is all about?”

So my office and my staff work with the student to verify they do indeed have a disability. So we’re reviewing the medical information. We’re talking to the student. We’re trying to understand what their experience has been because they are their own best expert. We want to understand them.

Then we’re going to be approving the accommodations that help them to get to the same playing field as their peers that don’t have disabilities. So we’re not giving them the advantage. We’re just getting them to the same playing field.

Some changes that we’ve made this year in order to increase our services and also to help collaborate more with you because in addition to serving our students we also want to work with you. You are the experts. We want to figure out what we can do to make sure the accommodations that we’re providing are not altering the nature of your course.

Probably the biggest change is that we’ve asked our students to print their letters and physically hand them to you. This is a change. I think last year everything was posted on TRUNK. The reason why we’re doing this is because we want to encourage self-advocacy with our students beyond the college experience, so as they start to transition into their career world. So a student may be a little intimated and they need to sort of drop their letter and run, but we’re encouraging them to have conversations with you, not necessarily about the nature of their disability, but about what works for them in terms of helping them proceed.

The exam process that’s coming up, we haven’t changed it too much. We are limited in space, and so for students who get extended time or double time on their exams we’re
asking for your help to proctor that as best you’re able. If a student needs more of a
distraction reduced testing environment they are to take it with us. We’ve asked the
students to schedule the exams as far out as possible because we do run out of space.
But we do realize that sometimes we decide to have an exam the next day or the next
class period. We’ll work with those students too. We will collaborate with you back and
forth to try and get the exam to us. We want your proctoring specifications so we do it
to the same integrity that you would do it in your class, and we’ll get the exam back to
you as quickly as possible. So there will be some communication back and forth. If you
will just work with us around our timelines that would be really fantastic.

Lastly, I just want to remind you all that we’re here as a resource for you as faculty as
well. If you receive an accommodation letter and you’re not sure that the
accommodation doesn’t alter your course a little bit or feels like it’s uncomfortable,
please give me a call and let me know. I want to creatively problem solve how we can
make sure the student has the same access as their peers.

Also, sometimes students push a little bit. And if they’re pushing something that maybe
you feel is inappropriate, again, let me know. I’m happy to work with you and the
student to figure out if that’s appropriate.

Finally, if you’re working with a student and you think they maybe might benefit from
our services, we do a lot of work with students who are just now seeking testing to see if
they have a disability, you can send them our way. I ask that you not ask them point
blank if they have a disability but rather you encompass our services with services from
the Academic Resource Center and sort of make them aware. The syllabus also is a nice
resource for them.

So I just wanted to give you a quick overview, I’m new to Tufts, and make sure you’re
aware of our services. If you have any questions I’m happy to answer or you can find me
in Dowling. Thank you for your time.

(Applause)

PROF. HARDMAN: I wanted to know if there’s a timeline in terms of when students
have to let us know if they need special accommodations for an exam? I’ve had many
students this semester, and it’s uncomfortable when someone shows up three days before
an exam, and I have to arrange to be able to stay for two more hours to proctor an
extended exam.

MS. BEHLING: Fair enough. This is a very, very good question. I appreciate you
bringing it up. So two points come to mind. One, is a student can register with our office
all the way up to finals because a lot of times they’re developing new disabilities or
coming to terms with their disability, and we’re fine with that.

We ask a student, especially if they want to take it in our space, to give us a week’s notice. We ask a student if they’re going to be taking it with you as faculty, then they should show the same courtesy unless, again, you decide to make the exam immediate. If you are able to proctor it and they contact you three days in advance, that’s great. If you are unable to do so, you can contact us. But we may say to the student, “Hey remember, there’s this policy that you need to be following.” Sometimes lessons are hard to learn the first time around.

PROF ZAKARI: Do you have an office at the SMFA?

MS. BEHLING: So we have a contact at the SMFA, Lindsay Costa. So I am doing all the intakes. I’ve been on the campus a few times to sort of check it out and work with our students down there but then Lindsay is implementing the accommodations. We’ll be doing some faculty reach out too.

(Applause)

PROF. TOBIN: Thank you very much.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully Submitted,

Jillian Dubman
Secretary of the Faculty for Arts, Sciences & Engineering