New Course Review: PLP 597: Writing and Rhetoric for Scientists

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Faculty Reviewers: Sue Marsh

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Background:

The GSC received a Major Curricular Change Form from the CAHNRS requesting approval for a new 3 credit elective graduate course PLP 597: Writing and Rhetoric for Scientists. It is proposed that this course will be offered in the spring semester of 2015 and repeated every two years thereafter.

Reviewer Comments:

* PLP 597 addresses a need to help prepare graduate students to write manuscripts for submission to scientific journals, serve as effective peer-reviewers and write a thesis or dissertation.
* The instructor of record is a faculty member within the Department of Plant Pathology and facilitators from the WSU Writing Program will lead writing studios.
* The course will initially only be offered to a small number of students (n=~38) in spring 2015 but it is anticipated that the course enrollment in subsequent years will reach 300-400 students.
* The course will only be taught on the Pullman campus. There is no mention as to whether this course will eventually be offered to other campuses but, given the expansion of graduate programs and students’ numbers on the branch campuses, it would seem likely that there would be interest.
* The student learning outcomes and their methods of evaluation are all appropriately documented.
* The course is comprised of lectures and writing studios.
* The assessment includes short writing assignments, from each class period, two analyses of a scientific text, a journal article manuscript, and a portfolio. These are all well described and due dates and grading rubrics are provided for each assignment.
* The appropriate course policies are all included.
* The only query is whether Dean Ron Mittelhammer has approved this new course request as it was signed off by Dr Kim Kidwell, CAHNRS Executive Associate Dean of Academic Programs. This was clarified by Dr Kidwell as the Associate Dean of Academic Programs does have signing authority in CAHNRS.

Syllabus:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Logistics |  |  |
|  | Instructor contact information | 🗹 |
|  | Course Prefix and number, title, number of credits, pre-requisites | 🗹 |
|  | Meeting schedules and times and building/rooms | 🗹 |
|  | List of required and recommended reading materials | 🗹 |
| Content |  |  |
|  | Student learning outcomes and method for assessing | 🗹 |
|  | Week to week course outline | 🗹 |
|  | Descriptions of required assignments | 🗹 |
| Grading |  |  |
|  | Relative weighting of required assignments | 🗹 |
|  | Penalties for late assignments | 🗹 |
|  | Grading criteria | 🗹 |
|  | Composition of midterm and final grades | 🗹 |
|  | Attendance or participation policies | 🗹 |
| Policy |  |  |
|  | Accommodating students with disabilities | 🗹 |
|  | Campus safety plan statement | 🗹 |
|  | Academic integrity | 🗹 |

Reviewer’s Final Assessment:

The course syllabus is well written and comprehensive and the course appears rigorous and clearly enhances the graduate experience for students in the sciences.

The Motions:

We move to approve the request for PLP 597: Writing and Rhetoric for Scientists.