The meeting began at 8:00 a.m.
The Chair welcomed the Committee.

The following items remained on the Consent Agenda and were unanimously approved.
Consent Agenda:

1. College of Business
   a. CRC - EMG 4412 - Organizational Behavior & Development
   b. CGR - B.A. Management

2. College of Science
   a. CRC - EDS 1502 - Inquiry Approaches to Teaching

Discussion Items:
1. Transfer Credit Issues - Dr. Heck

Dr. Heck (Civil Engineering) presented several examples of issues adversely affecting the transfer of credit from other institutions, noting that there are apparently some rules for how transfer credit is evaluated, but not enough rules. He first explained that there are several instances where a course is evaluated by the School of Arts and Communication (hereinafter “School”) where it is determined that the course could be used as either a humanities or social science elective, but because of the way BANNER is designed, it shows as only HUM 1xxx, leading advisors to interpret that it can only be used as a humanities elective. He described an example where such a course was substituted for a social science elective, but when the transcript evaluation was performed prior to the student’s graduation, the substitution was rejected because the course had a ‘HUM’ prefix, not a ‘SOC’ prefix, despite the fact that the School had already determined the course could be used as either type of elective. It was explained that there are fields and attributes available in BANNER to indicate this kind of information, but those fields are not visible to advisors nor to those who conduct transcript evaluations prior to graduation. Dr. Heck proposed changing the course name to something akin to “HUM 1xxx Humanities or Social Science Elective.” It was alternatively suggested that perhaps the “xxx” portion of the number could be coded in such a manner to be interpreted as to how the course could be used (e.g. HU, SS, or HU/SS). Another suggestion was to add a new ‘HSS’ prefix that would make it clear that the course could be used as either type of elective. The Registrar’s office indicated that it would investigate and consider adding a new ‘HSS’ or similar prefix and/or modifying the titles of transfer courses to better reflect their potential use as electives, however the Registrar’s office also cautioned that many courses would need to be recoded in the system for this purpose, and that that would take time.

Dr. Heck’s next example involved a situation where a student took a 4-quarter-hour 2000-level course in Statics at Portland State University, but it transferred as 2.67 semester credits of FREE 1xxx. While the student was able to make up the additional 0.34 credit hours with other engineering science courses, this still caused the student and the advisor to spend time and effort to obtain the original transfer credit evaluation forms, waive prerequisite requirements, and obtain approval to substitute the course for
MAE 2081 (Applied Mechanics: Statics) during the transcript evaluation prior to the student’s graduation. Dr. Heck commented that rules should be in place to facilitate the proper content, level, and hours of transfer for a course so that other academic units, not just the one performing the evaluation, can determine the course’s utility in their own programs. The Committee agreed that, assuming that the content was similar, that the course should have been transferred as 2.67 semester credits of MAE 2xxx elective. Dr. Heck suggested that, in addition, it should be made more explicit by transferring it as MAE 2xxx Statics Elective so that an indication of content would be included, however there was an objection to this since the University does not have anything called “Statics Elective.” It was noted that if an advisor needs to see the original transfer credit evaluation form, they are available on Xtender.

Dr. Heck described another problem that arose, this time involving how some of the humanities courses now transfer from Eastern Florida State College (EFSC). EFSC has a three course civilization sequence, and it used to be that the first course in that sequence transferred as HUM 2051 (Civilization1 ), and either of the other two would transfer HUM 2052 (Civilization 2). However, after the Florida state system made changes to some of the course prerequisites, these courses now transfer as HUM 1xxx. In the particular incident, a student got all the necessary approvals on the “Request to Study at Another Institution” form, and was told that the course he or she was about to take at EFSC would transfer as HUM 2051. After successfully completing the course, student and advisor were told that it will not transfer as HUM 2051, but HUM 1xxx instead. Furthermore, when the student attempted to use the course for humanities elective (since that is the most it could then be used for), the substitution was rejected because the student (who subsequently had to take HUM 2051 at FIT) was told that they can’t get credit for two courses with the same material. This prompted multiple discussions. First, it was debated whether it is appropriate to tell a student that a transferred course is not equivalent to a named course at FIT, but then deny them the use of the transferred credit on the grounds that the course content is too similar to the FIT course. Some argued that it cannot be had both ways – either the courses are equivalent, in which case the student gets transfer credit for the named course, or they are not equivalent, and if the student takes the related FIT course, he or she gets credit for both. Others disagreed with that principle. Another related issue arose as to who has the authority to grant course substitutions, and all agreed that that authority resides with the student’s advisor and academic unit head of the student’s program (and perhaps the student’s dean). It was asked why some substitutions were blocked by third parties, particularly humanities courses. It was noted that in the past, there were incidences of that authority being abused, where inappropriate substitutions were being made. That said, the School noted that it would not, in the future, attempt to block course substitutions being made by the student’s home department, though they retain authority to determine course equivalencies over their own courses.

Another related discussion occurred over the differences in transfer credit when a student comes to FIT with an A.A. degree. By policy and articulation agreements, students who come to FIT with an A.A. degree are deemed to have automatically satisfied the University’s core requirements (specifically those in humanities and social sciences), and thus receive credit for HUM 2051 and HUM 2052. However, other students who do not complete an A.A. degree, but take the same courses as that student who does complete an A.A. degree, will not receive similar transfer credit. Some viewed this as an inconsistency, while others viewed it as an incentive for students to get an A.A. degree before transferring to FIT. There was no resolution on this matter.

A final issue that arose focused on how COM 1101 (Composition and Rhetoric) and COM 1102 (Writing about Literature) were being transferred. This is of particular concern to those students in and those who
administer the “2+2 program.” In particular, there have been instances where some schools in China have taken the course description and content from FIT’s COM courses and recreated FIT’s COM 1101 and COM 1102, taught in English by professors specifically contracted for this purpose. However, students who receive a grade of ‘C’ or better may or may not get credit for the course(s) depending on whether they (in addition to the course) pass a TOEFL exam or a writing sample exam at FIT. It was explained that in some cases, students have passed the course(s) in China, passed a TOEFL exam, yet fail a writing sample exam at FIT and subsequently are unable to transfer the course(s). In response, the explanation was given that it is necessary to look at whether the students have passed the prerequisites on a course as to whether they should receive the credit for the course. In particular, in this case, the prerequisites to COM 1101 include a placement exam and, in the case of international students, a TOEFL exam. If a student cannot pass a writing sample exam when he or she arrives at FIT, they have not demonstrated sufficient mastery of the English language, and need to be placed into ESL and/or remedial writing courses, and then take COM 1101. Some disagreed with this view, noting that a determination of course equivalency should be based on course content, not the course’s prerequisites. In any event, it was noted that none of this is written in the University Catalog, and thus the students are not given notice before they get to FIT that these additional requirements are going to be placed upon them.

Time allotted for the meeting having expired, the discussion was informally tabled.

The Chair noted the date and time for the next meeting.

Our next regular meeting is Fri., Mar. 25 at 8:00 a.m. in the Physical Sciences Bldg. conference room. Agenda items are due Fri., Mar. 18.

The meeting ended at 9:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Archambault – Chair