

Undergraduate Research curriculum Committee

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: E. Bennet, M. DeDonno; F. Bloetscher, J. Fewkes, L. Chiang-Hanisko, T. Hindle, D. Mitsova; L. Sloas, D. Meeroff.

Other attendees: D. Chamely-Wiik (DCW), J. Soberon and Melina Da Silva Matos Sharifan

Donna opened the meeting by reviewing the course submitted for RI Designation, noting that the faculty member presenting had to teach in the next hour.

1. URP course submitted for RI Designation

- URP 4430 RI: Planning for Hazards Disasters

DCW welcomed Melina Da Silva Matos Sharifan to URCC and shared the course syllabus. Melina shared the course syllabus. The course focuses on hazards and disasters and includes a research component. She noted the course is interdisciplinary, with students from planning, engineering, geosciences, architecture, and sometimes other fields. Since we are focusing on hazards and disasters, students' research questions will center on how to make infrastructure or policies more resilient. They'll explore resilience strategies and may focus on a specific hazard or case study to go deeper into their analysis.

Previously she guided students in analyzing policies and writing memos. It would be valuable for them to dive further into resilience research focus on specific hazards. The class responded well to this approach, so she proposed designating it as a Research Intensive course (RI) since students are already engaging in those directions.

The committee discussed whether students complete individual or group projects.

Melina confirmed students typically work on individual projects.

DCW shared Melina's excellent excel spreadsheet of the learning outcomes and overall assignment for the grade and asked the committee if they have any questions.

The committee asked whether the course would always be taught as RI or if the department would retain the non-RI option.

Melina confirmed that the course can continue in this direction as an RI course.

She updated the syllabus to strengthen the RI component and noted there is also a non-RI version, which has caused confusion with scheduling issues in the past.

The committee didn't have any other questions; Melina thanked them and left the meeting.

The committee reviewed the syllabus and had no objections

Motion to approve: F. Bloetscher and seconded by D. Mitsova.

No discussion, all in favor.

Donna will send Melina an e-mail to let her know that her course has been approved and we will work with her, Diana, for UUPC and Steering and Senate. She will also send Maria Jennings an e-mail before the end of the day.

DCW welcomed everyone and rerouted the agenda.

2. Approval of September 23rd meeting minutes

Motion to approve the minutes: F. Bloetscher, seconded by M. DeDonno.

All in favor.

3. **Information:** Support for Faculty Teaching RI Designated Courses – CEE (Course Enhancement Expense) process in progress.

DCW: the third item is informational.

Within our Undergraduate faculty liaison group and in recent discussions, there's been a request to refine and clarify faculty eligibility for course enhancement expenses and graduate research consultants. We plan to add language noting that while there's a cap of 15, courses that don't meet the cap may still qualify on a case-by-case basis with proper justification. Our office hasn't updated the website or forms yet to reflect these changes, but we wanted to assure you this is still in process.

On another note, our office did an outstanding job hosting 19 institutions at the Florida Statewide Symposium this past weekend. Special thanks to Jenny Silverton for leading the effort and ensuring FAU was well represented, it was a great success. We've been a bit busy with the event, which explains a slight delay with other updates. And a quick shout-out to Lenny as well.

Lenny championed the nursing faculty to not only attend but also present at the Florida Statewide Symposium. Thanks to her leadership, three nursing faculty members represented the College of Nursing with outstanding presentations. They showcased FAU exceptionally well. Jennie thanked Lenny for being a true champion and for always representing all of what we do so well.

L. Chiang Hanisko: Thank you. We also have a new faculty attend for the keynote.

DCW: the keynote was excellent; he clearly outlined the new VIP program. We invited him from Colorado School of Mines to share how their institution implemented VIP and to inspire other Florida schools to join the consortium.

Since FAU is the first in Florida to launch VIP, his insights were especially valuable. The proposal for course numbers related to exposure and skill-building has been approved by UUPC and will move to senate next. Full approval is expected by Spring so we can begin implementation.

Third note: The College of Education now has two additional DIR courses, great progress thanks to Sharon Darling and Michael DeDonno. We're working on a comprehensive list of which colleges have or still need DIR courses. The goal is to work with Deans and Liaisons to expand opportunities.

Students participating in VIP will be able to earn DIR credits, and these courses will also count as experiential learning through the (soon-to-be-renamed) Experimental Learning Advisory Committee.

Brian Montalvo from the Student Phys Career Center is leading the effort to align FAU with other schools that are counting internships and experimental learning as key success metrics. Hassner emphasized that one of his top priorities is expanding experimental learning opportunities beyond internships to include research and undergraduate projects.

Discussion Points:

- FAU Students doing research or undergraduate coursework (DIR, DIS or RI) often don't get counted the same way internships do.

- The goal is to improve how these experiences are tracked and recognized as high-impact practices.
- The meeting included representatives from multiple colleges, highlighting the need for better coordination across academic and career units.
- “High impact practices” include internships, undergraduate research, and other forms of experimental learning.

D. Mitsova commented, students in the Urban Design Capstone and other related courses work with real world partners like Terra Frisbee and President Hasner’s team. They recently presented design work connected to the bunker development project. A similar community engaged setup is used in the Planning workshop course.

DCW: Other institutions track undergraduate research differently and some use broader dashboards to count many experimental activities

D. Mitsova: We need a clear definition of what counts as an internship because many student experiences aren’t being captured, which leads to underreporting. FAU has programs like planning internships that provide real experience but aren’t included in the data. Improving how we track these activities will give a more accurate picture of student involvement

DCW: some colleges like Engineering, Nursing and honors already have full DIR course offerings, while others still need to expand. Use the spreadsheet to spot gaps and start conversations with departments that may support adding DIR. Creating a DIR course is simple and only requires one approval form.

FAU needs a consistent way to capture and report all forms of experimental learning so academic units can reflect their contributions accurately.

4. Announcements: On the agenda

5. Adjourn: 11:33 pm