MINUTES OF

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULA

September 9, 2026

Present: M. Balong, N. Bird, A. Cox, D. Heistad, A. Gould, C. Holcombe, R. Kidwell, M. Kline, A. Mann, D. Mollenkopf, J. Morgan, C. Nedrow, H. Porter Occeña, A. Tabei, J. Zhu

Absent: C. Christopher, N. Lehman, J. Ophus

Guests: P. Berendzen, M. Clayton, S. Coon, K. Cunningham, L. Emery, L. Escalada, S. Huffman, J. O'Loughlin, S. Morgan, C. Weeks

The meeting was called to order by D. Heistad at 3:00 pm in the Presidential Room, Maucker Union

I. Welcome & Introductions

D. Heistad welcomed all present.

II. Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2026

N. Bird moved to approve the September 2, 2026 minutes. M. Balong seconded. D. Heistad asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes. Hearing none.

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the September 2, 2026 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Curriculum Review Procedures for Consent Agenda Items

N. Bird moved, M. Balong seconded to approve the consent agenda.

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Curriculum Proposals for the Department of Biology

N. Bird moved, M. Balong seconded to approve the Department of Biology proposals.

Agenda Items – Programs

- BIOECOEVO-BA: Biology Major: Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology Emphasis (deleted)
- BIOLOGY-BS: Biology Major (edited)

- BIOMED-BA: Biology Major: Biomedical Emphasis (deleted)

D. Heistad explained that the BIOLOGY-BS degree is adding two concentrations, which were previously freestanding BA degrees that are being deleted this cycle. The change will make the two deleted programs a BS degree, which will better serve students.

- ECOLOGYCONSERV-CERT: Certificate in Ecology and Conservation (added)
- GENOMICSDEVSTUDIES-CERT: Certificate in Genomics and Developmental Studies (added)
- HUMANANATOMYPHYS-CERT: Certificate in Human Anatomy & Physiology (added)
- NEUROIMMUNESTUD-CERT: Certificate in Neuro and Immune Studies (added)
- PLANTBIO-CERT: Certificate in Plant Biology (added)
- PRINHUMANBIO-CERT: Certificate in Principles of Human Biology (added)
- ZOOSTUDIES-CERT: Certificate in Zoological Studies (added)

J. Zhu mentioned the length of the PRINHUMANBIO-CERT being lengthy at 19 credits. N. Bird states that this certificate is not eligible for Biology majors, but rather the intent is for Nursing students who have taken their prerequisites at UNI. He mentions that Nursing students will have taken all the coursework involved in this certificate by completing their Nursing prerequisites.

N. Bird confirms that this is the only new certificate in the package for Biology non-majors.

M. Balong clarified whether the courses must be taken at UNI. R. Kidwell adds that this is possible to code on the Advisement Report if that is the intention.

D. Heistad noted that if Nursing students will take all these courses within their Nursing program, this will be double dipping credentials, which can be problematic. She questioned if a student goes onto complete the BSN, can the student still be eligible for this certificate. D. Heistad acknowledged exit pathways and offramps for students revising their academic plans but provided a suggestion to adjust the language regarding who can add this certificate.

P. Berendzen confirmed the department anticipates quite a few students, other than Nursing, adding this certificate as they will also be taking these courses. R. Kidwell will review language and compare it to other programs. She will work with the department to make the necessary changes.

For the other new certificates, N. Bird stated that the department wanted to explore different certificates. He went on to explain that the Biology major has 4 core classes, then students take electives to satisfy the degree. Due to how the major is constructed, there is no differentiation on concentration areas that these students might pursue. Adding these certificates would be a way to

distinguish a particular area of study a student explored, which could be marketable when entering the workforce or applying to graduate school.

C. Holcombe suggested consults being sent to additional departments. S. Coon stated that she did not believe this would impact course demand due to this subset of students already taking these courses for their major.

A. Tabei questioned who is eligible to add these certificates. N. Bird confirmed that all the certificates being proposed, aside from the PRINHUMANBIO-CERT, are for Biology majors only. He explained that this was a way to forgo listing prerequisites, which would lengthen the certificates. N. Bird indicated they would allow other majors to add the certificate, but they would be held to the prerequisites.

R. Kidwell explained that adding any of these certificates to a student's record would be processed manually by the Office of the Registrar, and the system is not able to catch if a student does not meet the criteria to add the certificate.

Agenda Items – Courses

- BIOL 3150: Practitioner Inquiry (added)

  D. Heistad mentioned that the proposal stated that this course was created for the Biology Teaching BA, but it is not required within the program. P. Berendzen confirmed that it is not required. D. Heistad questioned the purpose of the course outside of the degree. P. Berendzen added that this course is similar to BIOL 3190, but BIOL 3150 is meant to be more practitioner based, whereas BIOL 3190 is research based.

- BIOS 3198: UTA Experience: (Topic) (added)

  J. Zhu asked for clarification regarding the purpose of this course. P. Berendzen explained that BIOL 4198 is currently being used as "Undergraduate Teaching Assistant Experience", but the department had to add a clause that the course did not count towards 4000-level when used in this way. Creating a new course maintains the integrity of BIOL 4198.

- BIOL 4173: Research Experience: (Topic) (added)

  P. Berendzen stated that this course is critical component of the new BS degree.

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the motion to approve the Department of Biology proposals. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Curriculum Review Procedures for Curriculum Proposals in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

N. Bird moved, M. Balong seconded, to approve the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry proposals.

Agenda Items – Program

- CHEM-BA: Chemistry Major (edited)

C. Weeks stated that this change will give students more options, and the department expects an increase in enrollment. Additionally, this will allow for more flexibility for students that want to add a second major. Overall, the intention is to alleviate barriers, especially for students not mathematically advanced.

D. Heistad questioned the program length. S. Coon confirmed the program length is now 1 credit less.

D. Heistad noted that the proposal mentioned the department is expecting an increase in students after making this change. C. Weeks said the department anticipates more students adding this as a second major. S. Coon stated that this will be the department's shortest degree.

N. Bird expressed that Biology students would be interested in adding this as a secondary major with the change proposed.

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the motion to approve the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry proposals. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Curriculum Review Procedures for Curriculum Proposals in the Department of Science and Science Education

N. Bird moved, M. Balong seconded, to approve the Department of Science and Science Education proposals.

Agenda Items – Programs

- ALLSCITEACH-MINOR: All Science Minor-Teaching (added)
- BASICSCITEACH-MINOR: Basic Science Minor-Teaching (added)

D. Heistad questioned why the BOEE asks for 36 credits, but the proposed ALLSCITEACH-MINOR program requires 45 credits. She asked if this is due to the courses being 4 credits instead of 3 credits. L. Escalada confirmed the credit requirement is higher due to UNI courses being 4 credits instead of 3 credits.

D. Heistad mentioned that there are many other schools listed on the BOEE's website offering this endorsement and questioned whether the proposed program is competitive due to the higher credit requirement. L. Escalada explained that teachers are having a hard time finding these courses online, which UNI offers much of the coursework online.

L. Escalada also mentioned that the primary audience for this minor would be current teachers wanting to add an endorsement to their license. Many of these individuals have credits that could be applied to this minor, therefore shortening the length.

J. Zhu questioned the length of the programs and inquired regarding the audience. L. Escalada explained that the length of the program is related to meeting BOEE requirements, which are mandated by the state.

L. Escalada explained that there are two audiences. One audience being current teachers wanting to add an endorsement to their license. The other audience being current students. While advising, typically students are recommended to add as many endorsements as possible during their time at UNI. This minor is a way to market other endorsements in a way that is not as lengthy as adding an additional major.

N. Bird commented on program length. L. Escalada stated that most students have many of the credits already completed from their major coursework.

M. Balong asked if the methods would need to be listed. R. Kidwell confirmed methods would need to be listed to show that UNI's program meets the BOEE standards for the endorsement.

J. Zhu asked if a returning student could declare a minor. R. Kidwell confirmed that students can complete a minor or certificate, which would be added to their transcript if they let the Office of the Registrar know when it has been completed.

C. Holcombe asked if this program is duplicative to the Comprehensive Secondary Science Teaching Major. L. Escalada explained that the Comprehensive Secondary Science Teaching Major includes much more coursework because students receive the endorsements that both proposed minors would lead to, as well as 3 additional endorsements.

D. Heistad inquired regarding HLC requirements being met with the length of the program. R. Kidwell will review HLC requirements with N. Lehman.

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the motion to approve the Department of Science and Science Education proposals. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Curriculum Review Procedures for Curriculum Proposals in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences

N. Bird moved, M. Balong seconded, to approve the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences proposals.

Agenda Items – Programs

- AIRQUALITY-MINOR: Air Quality Minor (edited)

  D. Heistad stated this change is mostly due to faculty retiring. J. Morgan asked if the department would consider changing the name. S. Morgan explained that the current name is more marketable to students. Additionally, the remaining faculty teaching this program is an air quality specialist, so this aligns. M. Balong asked why 8 credits are required to satisfy the electives, rather than 7-9 credits. This seems to be forcing students into a certain subset of electives to satisfy the requirement. S. Morgan stated the department encourages students to take CHEM 1120 but does not intend to make that a requirement.

  R. Kidwell suggested changing the language to "Choose 2" or "Choose 3" of the following instead of listing a credit requirement. D. Heistad asked regarding the overall goal of the electives area. S. Morgan requested to change the language to "Select two of the following".

- ENVSCI-BS: Environmental Science Major (edited)

  D. Heistad explained that the department is removing two tracks. S. Morgan confirmed any changes made did not inflate the program length.

Agenda Items – Courses

- EARTHSCI 1300: Introduction to Geology (edited)

  D. Heistad stated that this change is due to removing the lab.

- EARTHSCI 1310: Introduction to Geology Laboratory (added)

  D. Heistad stated that this change is due to removing the lab from EARTHSCI 1300. S. Morgan added that there was still a need for the Lab after removing it from EARTHSCI 1300, so the department created a separate course.

- EARTHSCI 3245: Air Quality Methods (added)
- EARTHSCI 4220: Soils and Landscapes (added)

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the motion to approve the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences proposals. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Curriculum Review Procedures for Curriculum Proposals for Online Education

N. Bird moved, M. Balong seconded, to approve the Online Education proposal.

Agenda Items – Program

- APPLPROFSTUDIES-BAPS: Applied Professional Studies Major (added)

D. Heistad stated that legislation asked regent institutions to begin offering 3-year degrees. During the Board of Regents meeting, a reduced credit degree was added to the portfolio, which created space for institutions to offer a degree that was up to 95 hours. These were expected to be new and different degrees from what is currently being offered.

K. Cunningham stated that this program is similar to the BLS degree, as it is interdisciplinary. The ideal audience are adult learners that want to finish a degree. These students are likely already professionals, so the idea was to make this program career focused. The core is designed to give students competencies in career exploration. The committee aimed to pick applied courses and less theory based. D. Heistad stated that courses are all online and asynchronous, as this is an online degree.

D. Heistad asked if the electives could be moved towards the end. R. Kidwell stated that typically the tracks are listed last, so the structure aligns with other programs in the catalog.

K. Cunningham stated the Linda Emery will be advising these students, and will be mindful of who is being advised towards this program. S. Huffman mentioned the committee was strategic as to not encroach on other programs.

D. Heistad explained that there are quite a few steps after this is approved, which is why it was moved forward on the agenda. J. Zhu questioned if this program is available to any students. S. Huffman confirmed that students would be eligible to switch at any time. The idea is to provide students a way to graduate with a degree even if they decided to change their initial program. She mentioned that UNI has other programs with similar ideology.

D. Heistad stated that this is degree is very prescribed. K. Cunningham mentioned that students switching in their Sophomore or Junior year would not be likely to graduate sooner than if they followed the traditional BA degree. This program is intended for a different audience.

J. Morgan inquired regarding the naming convention of the degree. N. Bird expressed hesitancy regarding the use of “bachelor” in the name. D. Heistad confirmed this was a BOR decision.

J. Zhu asked if a student would be eligible for graduate school after graduating with the degree. D. Heistad stated that there will need to be transparency, as there is no certainty in graduate school acceptance. S. Huffman explained that she can foresee graduate programs requiring students to take addition prerequisites and that it is typically a program by program decision from the graduate school.

J. Morgan asked if the course offerings were investigated to ensure students entering this program with an associate's degree would be able to complete this program on time. K. Cunningham confirmed this would be possible.

M. Balong suggested adding an effective pedagogy course instead of methodical in the Educational Studies track. K. Cunningham said they would be open to adding any additional coursework that would be pertinent.

D. Heistad stated that this was designed so that another track could be added later.

Chair Heistad called for a vote on the motion to move the Online Education proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 23, 3:00 pm, Presidential Room, Maucker Union

Discussion of CHAS-Humanities Fine Arts proposals.

The meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Kline

Office of the Registrar

cc: UCC
GCC
Guests