

Discovery Committee Minutes May 13th, 2026 (Teams)

Present: Nicoletta Gullace (Chair), Alecia Magnifico, Roger Grinde, Anna Wainwright, Maeve Dion, Forrest Schwartz, Sachiko Akiyama, Kenneth Mitchell, Meaghan Dittrich, Gregory McMahon

Absent: Matthew MacManes, Kathrine Aydelott, Timothy Montminy, Grace Simmons, Qi Zhang, Laura Upham

Welcome

The chair began the meeting with welcoming committee members.

Action Items

1. Approval of the Minutes from the April 29th meeting.

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0. **Minutes Approved.**

2. Student Petitions.

- a. Petition to allow UNH course HUMA 513C to satisfy Discovery Humanities category.

Vote: Yes: 8 No: 0 Ab: 0. **Petition Approved.**

- b. Petition to allow Concordia University ENGR 202 course to satisfy Discovery Environment, Technology, and Society category.

Vote: Yes: 8 No: 0 Ab: 0. **Petition Approved.**

- c. Petition to allow study abroad experience to satisfy Discovery World Culture requirements.

Vote: Yes: 8 No: 0 Ab: 0. **Petition Approved.**

- d. Petition to allow St. Andrews Early Modern Western World course to satisfy Discovery Historical Perspective category.

Vote: Yes: 8 No: 0 Ab: 0. **Petition Approved.**

- e. Petition to allow University of Utah ECON 1740 course to satisfy Discovery Historical Perspectives category.

Vote: Yes: 8 No: 0 Ab: 0. **Petition Approved.**

- f. Petition to allow Point Loma Nazarene MUH 1000 course to satisfy Discovery requirements.

Vote: Yes: 1 No: 7 Ab: 0. **Petition Denied.**

3. Course Approvals

- a. CS 476 behind the Screen: Technology, Society, and Everyday life

Discussion: The committee discussed the new course proposal. A suggestion was made to have the faculty member start with Abacus before going into the 20th century. A committee member shared they believe it's not up to the committee to decide the contents of the proposal. Another committee member suggested that the faculty member change the title to their course to make it more precise.

Vote: Yes: 6 No: 0 Ab: 2. **Course Approved.**

- b. LLC 555 Discover the Dominican Republic: An Arts Experience

Discussion: A PAUL college representative mentioned a possible collaboration with PAUL for a J-term Business in Dominican Republic course. The representative is unsure if the course still runs but will reach out.

Vote: Yes: 8 No: 0 Ab: 0. **Course Approved.**

Updates and Discussions

1. The honors college representative highlighted concerns about students completing their general education courses within their college. The representative asked who sets the policy to prevent that? The chair shared that the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee is going to appoint an implementation committee. The implementation committee will come up with recommendations, and the recommendations will need to be voted on by the Faculty Senate.
2. Discussions were had regarding an email received from CPSO. CPSO raised questions about how Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) will be handled in the new discovery framework. These assessments allow individuals to earn credit for prior professional or experiential learning sometimes through short programs like those offered by Sophia Learning, which are recognized by the American Council on Education (ACE). Because CPSO depends significantly on awarding credit for prior learning, there is pressure to accept these credits, potentially even toward general education requirements. However, this raises concerns among faculty, who already worry about students earning too many credits outside the university and question the rigor of PLA-based credits compared to traditional coursework. While UNH's learning-outcomes-based general education system may support this shift, the federal definition of a credit hour could act as a constraint. Overall, leadership is expected to push adoption, despite anticipated resistance from faculty, particularly at UNH Durham.
3. The CPS representative emphasizes that PLAs vary widely in quality, noting that their department spent over a year rigorously evaluating military training programs before agreeing to grant credit far more intensive than short, third-party offerings. They stressed that certifications and micro-credentials are not equivalent to degree coursework and should supplement, not replace, academic programs. While they see value in PLAs, especially non-traditional students, she warns that excessive acceptance could undermine academic rigor and reduce tuition revenue. They also point out that ongoing institutional restructuring may make immediate decisions premature. Ultimately, she argues that PLA evaluation should happen at the program or faculty governance level not case-by-case by committees and that there should be careful pushback against broad, low-standard adoption.