HCIM Program Committee Meeting for November 2020

Meeting called by:	Bill Kules	Type of meeting:	Monthly Committee Meeting
Facilitator:	Carol Boston	**Note taker:**	Emilia Azar
Timekeeper:	Carol Boston		

Attendees: Bill Kules (3 / 3), Carol Boston (3 / 3), Amy Asadi (3 / 3), Niklas Elmqvist (3 / 3), Ge Gao (3 / 3), Alex Leitch (3 / 3), Jeff Waters (3 / 3), Dustin Smith (2 / 3), Kate Izsak (2 / 3)

Agenda and related documents here

Minutes of the Meeting:

Agenda item:	(1:00) Adoption of September and October minutes	Presenter:	Bill Kules

Minutes of the September and October meetings were adopted unanimously.

Agenda item:	(1:05) Operational updates: introduction - Emilia Azar, new APS; updates from virtual Open House and November 9 listening session, etc.	Presenter:	Bill Kules and Carol Boston

Discussion:

- Emilia Azar has joined the program team as an Academic Program Specialist. She brings marketing expertise from the hospitality industry as well as an interest in higher education counseling.
- About 50 prospective students participated in the HCIM Q&A as part of the virtual iSchool Open House on October 28.
- About 2 dozen first-year students participated in a combination session on November 9 involving a whiteboard challenge led by UXTerps and a listening session related to the program. A few students noted challenges adjusting to different tech requirements and communications mechanisms for classes (e.g., Microsoft Teams vs. Zoom, Slack vs. ELMS) and the number of emails they receive from the iSchool/HCIM. They also provided each other with suggestions for how to buff up their portfolios through extracurricular design challenges and including work in progress.

Agenda item:	(1:15) Draft PLO rubric & assessment committee reports
	    a) Design and UX Strategy Competencies
	    b) (Research & Evaluation and Professional Competencies
		Presenter:	Bill Kules, Niklas Elmqvist and subcommittees

Discussion:

During the October meeting, two subcommittees were established to identify assignments and draft rubrics for assessing newly adopted program learning outcomes. Alex, Amy, and Bill worked on Design and UX Strategy competencies (looking especially at assignments from Interaction Design Studio, Visual Design, and the HCIM Capstone). Niklas, Ge, and Carol worked on Research & Evaluation as well as Professional Competencies (with Jeff), looking especially at assignments from the UX Research Methods course and HCIM Capstone/Thesis.

The committee reviewed the work of the subcommittees to date:

- Substantial progress was made on assignments and rubrics for assessing the Design competency.
- The UX Strategy competency will require more steps and time. Before draft rubrics can be developed, it will be important to first identify the indicators of mastering UX Strategy skills. Curriculum changes will likely be necessary to help students develop these skills.
- Some preliminary rubrics were established for the Research & Evaluation competency, and the subcommittee had questions about how research methods other than contextual inquiry were taught. The group will work on their rubrics and add more information for a final draft to share during the December meeting.
- Work on assessing the Professional competencies is at an earlier stage, though there are sources for rubrics (e.g., UNC, UMD's undergraduate education) that may be able to be easily adapted.

Discussion points:
- Niklas was concerned that the group could be setting a policy through PLOs that reduces fluidity within a course. He stated that many courses are essentially designed by the instructors who teach them.
- Bill agreed that instructors should have flexibility within the course they teach. PLOs should not reduce creativity and flexibility--rather, we would ask that each professor design their own class while keeping in mind the direct connection their assignments have to the program learning outcomes. That way, instructors can assess student work in accordance with this program. Kate concurred that instructors should be free to *add* learning objectives, but not eliminate any pre-established by the program.

Conclusion: The two subcommittees will work toward presenting final reports for the December meeting, with the goal of beginning to embed assessment of at least one PLO in Spring courses.

Agenda item:	(1:40) Proposal to make Advanced Usability and/or Visual Design required/strongly recommended courses to align with researcher vs. designer interests	Presenter:	Bill Kules

Discussion:

Bill spearheaded a discussion on whether Advanced Usability and/or Visual Design should become required or strongly recommended courses. No decision needed to be made, but a conversation was encouraged.

- Alex suggested adding more opportunities to take electives in the winter or summer.
- Niklas stated that many students are going to take the exact amount of credits needed to graduate, and cannot afford to take on additional credits/an extra course for the spirit of learning.
- HCIM has a 30-credit requirement (minimum required by UMD), while other master's programs usually require more. Both MIM and MLIS require 36 credits to graduate.

- Bill noted that even if the program added on 6 more credits, full-time students would still be able to complete this program within two years.
- Amy supported the proposition to alter the HCIM credit requirement and require 36 credits. This way, the committee could require or strongly recommend Advanced Usability and/or Visual Design, which are valuable tools for the HCIM job field.
- Alex supported requiring the two courses if the new credit requirement increased to 36 credits.

Conclusion: Bill concluded that there was strong interest on two points: increasing the number of required credits and adding a new required course. Bill and Carol will discuss this further with Jeff and Kate, and bring back discussion points around this for the December meeting. After discussing further, a proposal could be written and shared in February.

Agenda item: (1:55) Introducing sequence options for first-year core courses   **Presenter:**   Bill Kules

Discussion:

The HCIM program is continuing to increase student enrollment. To support part-time students as well as balance teaching assignments through our growth, Bill proposed offering at least one section of 710, 711, and 631 each semester, with added guidance available to students about which sequence meets their needs and goals. Bill pointed out the diverse background of our student applicants and how it would be helpful to better consider their previously established skills and strengths to help them take courses early on that complement their abilities. In addition, he touched on other points:

We will eventually need multiple sections of the core classes to accommodate growth. If we have multiple sections, students will have flexibility as to what semester they will take the required courses. Students can then begin their HCIM master's program with courses that expand on their current skills, allowing them to develop strong portfolio pieces early on in the program.

Conclusion: No current action is needed on this item at this time. As the program grows, and the need arises for multiple sections of core courses, the committee can return to this discussion around sequencing flexibility.

Agenda item: (2:10) Best consideration date for Fall applications   **Presenter:** Jeff Waters

Discussion:

Jeff proposed changing the current HCIM application deadline of January 15, 2021 into a best consideration deadline for Fall 2021 with a later date extended to additional domestic applicants. This would:
- Expand access to additional applications beyond the typical admissions cycle
- Provide the HCIM program with additional options to increase enrollment
- Increase flexibility with deadlines during COVID-19
- Provide the admissions committee with additional, potentially high-yield applications if the yield and/or quality from the Best Consideration pool is lower than desired

Jeff originally proposed a June 1, 2021 final deadline for domestic students only. All applications received by January 15 would be considered the first batch and receive full review. The second batch would function similarly to a waitlist--if HCIM wanted to increase enrollment, the committee could choose to review applications received between January 15 and June 1. Jeff opened up the floor for further discussion:

- Bill supported the proposition, and asked if the committee would be open to reviewing a second round of applications pending a reasonable plan for review.
- The committee members agreed that a best consideration date in addition to a final deadline could bring in more quality applicants. The best consideration date practice produced a positive result last spring. They also acknowledged that this would potentially add to their workload.
- Alex suggested May 15, 2021 as a final application deadline, instead of Jeff's proposed date of June 1, 2021. Carol also supported May 15 - that way, faculty members who were willing to review applications in mid to late May could choose to do so. In addition, other faculty members who would prefer to review applications at the beginning of June could also make the choice to review later. This would give different faculty members the flexibility they need for their personal preference of when to view applications.

Conclusion: The committee voted unanimously to make January 15 the best consideration deadline (and required date for international students), and May 15 a final deadline for domestic applicants. Jeff will adjust the wording on the website accordingly.

Agenda item: (2:20) Application review procedures in new system   **Presenter:** Jeff Waters

Discussion:

Jeff hopes all reviewers on the committee will have access to the new application system soon and will relay more information as it comes. Carol confirmed that she has access and saw three completed applications and 100+ applications in progress.

The next HCIM Committee meeting will be held on Friday, December 11 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Create rubrics for Design PLO assessments	Design PLO Subcommittee: Bill, Alex, Amy	December 4
Identify courses where UX Strategy PLOs could be embedded	UX Strategy PLO Subcommittee: Bill, Alex, Amy	December 4
Prepare good draft of Research & Evaluation competencies	Research & Eval PLO Subcommittee: Niklas, Ge, Carol	December 4
Create rubrics for Professional Development PLO assessments	Professional Development Subcommittee: Niklas, Ge, Carol, Jeff	December 4
Talk with Kate & Jeff about course sequencing/ 36 credits	Bill & Carol	December 4
Research credit requirements & core courses of aspirational peers	Carol & Emilia	December 1