

**Curriculum Committee Minutes**  
**March 27, 2009**

**Present:** Brazell, DeMarais, Elliott, Hooper, Grunberg, Kotsis, Lamb, Livingston, Loeb, McCuisiton, Richards, Richman, Sandler, Tomhave, Walls, Warren, Wix

**Call to Order:** Chair Livingston called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM PST.

**Opening Remarks:** Chair Livingston thanked those members of the committee who had attended one or more of the all campus discussions of the core curriculum and especially Krista Kotsis and Florence Sandler who participated in all three discussions.

**Approval of the Minutes of March, 2009:** It was **M/S/P** to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 30 as revised to include the titles of the first year seminars that were approved.

**Internship Task Force:** Richard Anderson-Connelly has created an Internship Task Force for next year and would like a member of the Curriculum Committee to be a part of the group. Members of the committee inquired as to the reasons for the task force. DeMarais responded that some faculty members have noted that fewer students are enrolled in the internship seminar. For that reason, they would like to look at the whole internship program. Barbara Warren, who will continue on the Curriculum Committee next year, volunteered for the task force.

**Consideration of the Campus Discussion of the “Approaches” and Connections Cores:** We then turned to a summary and discussion of the campus-wide meetings on aspects of the core.

**“Approaches”:** While this discussion was open to all the different Approaches cores, most of the discussion was devoted to Fine Arts. There are three or four problems to solve with respect to the Fine Arts courses. First, Fine Arts has one of the smallest numbers of courses to fulfill the requirement so courses are large and oversubscribed. Second, there is the problem of designing courses that serve as gateway courses for majors as well as core courses. And then there is the thorny issue of what a Fine Arts course should be. Should these courses include an “experiential” component? If so, what is the nature of the experience? How does a course in the history of art or music provide students with an experience of art? If experience is taken to mean “doing art”, how can we supply students with that experience when faculty are overwhelmed meeting the needs of students in the major? What is the difference between a literature course in the Humanistic Approaches core and one in the Fine Arts core?

One solution that has been suggested is to combine the Fine Arts and Humanistic Approaches cores and require students to take two courses in the combined group. This solution was not well supported in the discussion. People teaching in Fine Arts believe that there is a different “way of knowing” in the arts and that having a specific arts requirement exposes students to an aesthetic rather than text-based expression of the human condition. Perhaps the question of how the Fine Arts differ from Humanistic

Approaches can be solved by re-writing the rubrics for Fine Arts to express the importance of the aesthetic approach.

**Connections:** Among the questions considered with respect to Connections were: Should this course be taken only in the senior year? Most agreed that the course could be taken in the junior year but that it should be reserved for upper division students.

Should this course be required to be interdisciplinary? Here, the rationale for the interdisciplinary requirement was that faculty members are trained in their disciplines and they needed to be forced into interdisciplinarity. Now the sense is that most faculty members are involved in one or more interdisciplinary programs on campus so that the requirement is no longer necessary. The current requirement to be interdisciplinary is often at the crux of discussions about whether a proposed course meets the Connections rubrics. Some members noted that the truly successful courses in Connections have been taught a number of times to “get the bugs out” and that they involved true collaboration between faculty members. This led to a discussion of whether a Connections course required two faculty members. While two are not required, some on the committee saw this as the ideal and that it made achieving the interdisciplinary goal easier. It also allowed students to see faculty members being stretched and required to go beyond their own comfort zones. Others asked what the effect of eliminating the interdisciplinary requirement would have on the course, whether the removal would make this a senior level SCIS course. Should this core have a new focus in addressing questions of national or global citizenship or our collective responsibilities? Members of the committee want a way to distinguish Connections courses from other upper level courses. Should there be a difference between a course on the Holocaust taught as a Connections course and one taught as a 300-level Religion course? The rubrics for Connections should make that distinction clear.

Continuing the discussion of the purpose of this core, students have commented in surveys that they find Connections courses “contrived”. Members of the committee responded that, of course they were contrived, they were deliberately contrived to stretch students. It is the responsibility of the professor to explain the reason for that particular core. We also considered Connections as a part of the requirement for three upper division courses. Now that all students must take courses at the 300 or 400-level outside their major, what does this do to a class? Are there naïve students without the background to participate fully in upper level classes? Members of the committee noted that one benefit of Connections courses is that they require faculty to design and teach demanding courses to students who may not have had the pre-requisites that would be assumed in a 300-level course in a particular discipline.

### **Reports from Working Groups:**

**Working Group 2:** Loeb M/S/P the approval of the following courses:

1) Chemistry 151, "Science and Sustainability," by Steven Neshyba and Richard Anderson-Connolly, as a SCIS.

2) Course Change Proposal, from Humanities 120, "Crisis and Culture: Medieval and Renaissance Humanities" to Humanities 130, "Metamorphosis and Marvels," by Denise Despres, as a SCIS.

**Working Group 5 M/S/P** approval of a Special Interdisciplinary Major in Human Ecology and Communication. Faculty in Environmental Policy and Decision Making support the request. The major combines history, communication, and English and goes beyond the current minor in Environmental Policy and Decision Making.

**Adjournment:** Richman M/S/P for adjournment at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Rose Lamb