

To: Faculty Senate
From: Jim Jasinski, Chair, Curriculum Committee
Date: April 21, 2006
Re: 2005-2006 Curriculum Committee Final Report

What follows is a summary of curriculum committee actions for the 2005-2006 academic year. For the record, I want to note that I served as chair for the spring 2006 semester; DeWayne Derryberry served as chair during the fall 2005 term.

Five-Year Departmental Reviews

The committee reviewed and subsequently approved the reviews of nine departments and programs during the year (see list below). In each case a curriculum committee sub-committee reviewed materials submitted by the department or program, and in most cases the sub-committee requested further information or clarification from the department or program on key points. In each case department responses satisfied the sub-committee, and upon the recommendation of each sub-committee, the full committee approved each review.

12/7/2005	Physical Therapy program curriculum review approved.
1/19/2006	African American Studies program curriculum review approved.
1/19/2006	Occupational Therapy program curriculum review approved.
2/2/2006	Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching program curriculum review approved.
2/2/2006	Environmental Studies program curriculum review approved.
2/2/2006	Psychology curriculum review approved.
2/16/2006	Politics and Government curriculum review approved.
3/9/2006	Mathematics and Computer Science curriculum review approved.
3/9/2006	Engineering (dual degree) program curriculum review approved.

Action on Core Courses

Depending on the core category, each core course proposal was reviewed by one of five sub-committees (mathematical approaches; natural scientific approaches; fine arts, humanistic, and social scientific approaches, connections, and first year seminars). Each course was evaluated in terms of the relevant core category's guidelines. When deemed appropriate, sub-committees requested additional information, clarification, or possibly modest revision to proposals. Faculty responses satisfied each sub-committee, and upon their recommendations, the full committee approved the following courses:

10/19/2005	GNDR 201, Introduction to Gender and Feminist Studies, approved for the Humanistic Approaches core.
10/19/2005	PHYS 104, Symmetry in Scientific Thought, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
10/19/2005	CSOC 117, Anthropology of Food and Eating, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
10/19/2005	HON 401, Some Classics of Asian Civilization, approved for the Connections core.

11/2/2005	HUM 310, Imperialism and Culture: The British Experience, approved for the Connections core.
11/2/2005	FL 105, Aesthetics in Japanese Culture, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
11/9/2005	CONN 390, Black Business Leadership: Past and Present, approved for the Connections core.
12/7/2005	BUS 380, Environmental Law, approved for the Connections core.
12/7/2005	ART 130, Graphics: Exploring the Multiple, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
2/2/2006	ART 140, Art Theory and Practice, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
2/22/2006	CLSC 106, The Peloponnesian War: Athens at the End of the "Golden Age," approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
2/2/2006	PSYC 180, Positive Psychology, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
2/16/2006	EDUC 419, American Schools, Inside and Out, approved for the Social Scientific Approaches core.
2/16/2006	IPE 427, Competing Perspectives on the Material World, approved for Connections core.
3/9/2006	STS 361, Mars Exploration, approved for the Connections core.
3/30/2006	BIOL 140, Novel Genetics, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
3/30/2006	AFAM 355, African-American Women in American History, approved for the Connections core.
3/30/2006	ENVR 335, Thinking About Biodiversity, approved for the Connections core.
4/13/2006	REL 125, Zen Insights and Oversights, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
4/13/2006	STS 188, Darwin in his Time, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
4/20/2006	CSOC 118, Social Organization and Change in the Developing World, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core.
4/20/2006	FL 205, East Asian Literature, approved for the Humanistic Approaches core.
4/20/2006	STS 330, The Idea of Evolution, approved for the Connections core.

First Year Seminar Policies

At its 9/28/05 meeting, the committee adopted a policy to restrict auditors in first year seminars.

At its 3/23/06 meeting, the committee approved a sub-committee recommendation to allow individual faculty members the option of allowing 18 students in a first year seminar. The committee went on record with its recommendation that the Senate consider modifying the 5/01 curriculum statement to allow 18 students in each first year seminar.

At its 3/23/06 meeting, the committee approved a sub-committee recommendation to eliminate the distinction between sophomore/transfer and freshmen sections of first year seminars *in the spring semester* (the distinction will remain in effect in the fall).

Special Interdisciplinary Majors (SIMs)

At its 3/9/06 meeting, the committee approved the Special Interdisciplinary Major in Criminology proposed by Katarina Jones. At the same meeting, the committee rejected a Special Interdisciplinary Major in Business with an Emphasis in Psychology proposed by Kelsea Ricker.

Study Abroad

At its 12/7/05 meeting, the committee approved the following Interim Study Abroad Committee's recommendations: SIT Mekong Delta, Semester in Greece, American University in Cairo, all as approved programs; CIEE Shanghai from an approved to an affiliated program; Ecotourism I Thailand as a non-credit short term January course.

At its 2/16/06 meeting, the committee approved the recommendations from the Interim Study Abroad Committee to create three categories of study abroad programs: UPS Sponsored Programs, UPS Partner Programs, and UPS Approved Programs.

Core Category Reviews

The Mathematical Approaches and Natural Scientific Approaches sub-committees also conduct reviews of these core categories this year. At its 4/13/06 meeting, the committee approved the natural scientific sub-committee core review report, and the committee did the same for the mathematical approaches core review report at its 4/20/06 meeting. Each sub-committee's report has been attached to this document as appendixes.

Other Curricular Business

At its meeting of 9/7/05, the committee approved the list of curricular actions delegated to the Associate Dean, with the understanding that approval of courses in both the old and new core will remain the work of the committee itself at least for awhile.

At its 9/28/05 meeting, the committee approved the full academic calendar for 2006-07 and basic dates for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. The committee forwarded the calendars to the Senate with the understanding that any calendar revisions adopted by the full faculty will supersede the calendars.

At its 2/2/06 meeting, the committee approved a 10 unit major for the BA in Music.

At its 2/16,06 meeting, the committee approved a proposal to create Bachelor of Sciences degrees in Biochemistry and Molecular and Cellular Biology.

At its meeting of 4/13/06, the committee approved a proposal to create a new interdisciplinary emphasis in Neuroscience.

Recommended Charges to the 2006-2007 Curriculum Committee

1. The following departments and/or programs are scheduled for their five-year review: Chemistry, English, Geology, History, Internship Program, Latin American Studies, Physics, and Study Abroad.

2. The Fine Arts and Humanistic Approaches core categories should be reviewed in 2006-2007 (Connections and Social Science categories should be reviewed in 2007-2008). As part of its review of these two approaches core categories, the committee should continue reviewing current mechanisms for assessing the core.
3. The committee should examine whether the practice of “double counting” a full year of course work (as is the case with Occupational Therapy and Dual Degree Engineering) is an appropriate practice.
4. The committee should examine existing guidelines for assigning activity versus academic credit.
5. The committee should examine how graduation requirement #H (upper level course requirement outside first major) is being implemented. Specific questions the committee needs to address include: can students count upper levels courses outside his/her major but in his/her major department? should the registrar continue enforcing a distinction between units and courses with respect to this requirement? how should the policy apply to students in interdisciplinary programs?

Appendix A Natural Science Approaches Sub-committee Report

Subcommittee members: Brad Dillman, Wade Hands (chair), Karim Ochosi, and Alyce Demarais.

The subcommittee has reviewed the course outlines of the classes that fulfill the Natural Scientific Approaches (NS) core area and also examined the responses to a questionnaire sent to all of the faculty teaching in this core area. The subcommittee also met with a group of natural science faculty at a dinner on March 31st to discuss the NS core and to get feedback from those who regularly teach in this area.

The faculty teaching in the NS core seemed to be generally pleased with the way the courses were going and felt that the students were successfully acquiring a broad understanding of scientific methods as well as the content of particular natural sciences. During the dinner, faculty engaged in a lively exchange of ideas regarding their own experiences and discussed various specific approaches they had found useful.

Some of the issues raised during the discussion included:

- 1) Class size as a problem for elaborate writing assignments.
- 2) The differences between natural science courses specifically designed for the non-science major and NS core courses that also serve as a general introduction to a specific scientific field.
- 3) The importance, but also the difficulty, of teaching students to read with a critical scientific eye (i.e. as one faculty member put it, “to develop effective BS detectors”) and

the associated benefit of teaching them to be able to identify bad, as well as good, scientific research in the popular press.

4) The inconsistency of transfer students: in particular it was mentioned that they sometimes have inadequate preparation (particularly in writing), different work attitudes, and problems integrating into an established cohort.

5) The general problem of assessment in this (and other) core areas.

6) The importance of student contact with scientific instruments and the tacit knowledge they acquire in that process (something that students would generally not have the opportunity to experience in a larger institution).

Although these and other topics were discussed, and many ideas were exchanged, nothing emerged from the discussion that could be considered a systematic problem or concern. The general tone was quite positive and the faculty involved seemed to appreciate the open exchange of ideas.

On the basis of this, and other evidence examined, the NS subcommittee concludes that the courses in the NS core are successfully meeting the guidelines and offers no recommendation for changes to this core area.

Appendix B Mathematical Approaches Sub-committee Report

Subcommittee members: Zaixin Hong, Alyce DeMarais, Christine Smith (chair) and Brad Tomhave

The subcommittee reviewed the course outlines of the classes that fulfill the Mathematical Approaches core and examined the responses to a questionnaire sent to all of the faculty teaching in the Math and Computer Science Department—which is the only department offering courses in this core area. The subcommittee also met with the Math and Computer Science Department on April 14 to discuss the core and to get feedback from those who regularly teach in this area.

Overall the Math/CSci Department is satisfied with the way that their courses meet the Mathematic Approaches Core. Below are some of the issues raised during the discussion:

1. The current wording of the guidelines for the Math Approaches core does not adequately address the abstract reasoning skills that are developed in Calculus, which is a course that currently fulfills the requirement. Thus, the Math/CSci Department intends to draft an amended version of the guidelines so that Calculus meets the guidelines.

2. The distribution of students in the various core classes was discussed. Intro to Stats accommodates ~2/3 of the campus Math Approaches core; however more students are fulfilling the requirement with Calculus than in previous years. In contrast, fewer

students than in previous years are choosing to take Intro to Contemporary Math and Finite Math.

3. The diversity of student background/skill level in core courses was addressed. The consensus was that Calculus tends to have a broader audience whereas Intro to Stats tends to be more uniform. These observations did not appear to cause any difficulties for instructors of these courses.

4. Students should be aware of the purpose of the core because all Math Core courses share departmental syllabi that explicitly state the objectives of the core.

5. The Math/CSci Department has developed an assessment tool for the Intro to Stats course that addresses student ability to statistically analyze a data set given at the beginning of the term and a second data set given at the end of the term. This assessment was given last year with inconclusive results and has been revamped for use with this year's students.

6. There was some discussion about how algebra skills are addressed in the core. Toward this end, remedial worksheets will be available in the Center for Writing and Learning.