

DATE: April 28, 2005
TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: Richard Anderson-Connolly, Chair, Curriculum Committee
SUBJECT: 2004-05 Curriculum Committee Final Report

This memo summarizes the work of the Curriculum Committee during 2004-05 academic year. In the first part of the document I will highlight the more significant decisions of the body; a categorical and chronological disposition of the agenda follows.

Five-Year Departmental Reviews

The CC approved the reviews of Biology, Foreign Languages and Literature, Gender Studies (previously Women's Studies), Philosophy, Physical Education, and Religion. The review for Environmental studies was recently received and will not be completed this year. The Study Abroad Program requested and was given an extension from 2005-06 until 2006-07. The extension will allow the department to better incorporate any recommendations from the three-year Interim Study Abroad Committee.

The review documents prepared by the departments were generally found to be well-considered. In most cases the subcommittees made requests for clarification or elaboration of a few issues in the review. In all approved reviews the subcommittees and entire committee were fully satisfied with the final results.

Implementation and Assessment of the Core

Clarification of Policies involving First-Year Seminars

"First-Year" Seminars to be taken during the first year

The CC approved the current practice of the registrar which requires that all students register for a First-Year Seminar in each of their first two semesters.

Size of First-Year Seminars

The CC approved establishing an enrollment limit at 17 such that faculty may not add students above this limit.

Exclusivity of Entering First-Year and Transfer Sections

After considerable debate the CC decided that the registrar should continue the current practice of prohibiting entering first-year students from enrolling in transfer sections and vice versa. The general sentiment of the committee is that the university must more carefully examine the experiences of our transfer students but that we should not make any major changes to the core curriculum because (1) the new core is merely two years old and (2) we lack sufficient data about transfer students vis-à-vis the new core.

Visiting Professors and First-Year Seminars

The committee debated but ultimately rejected the suggestion that First-Year Seminars be taught only by tenure-line faculty.

Assessment of First-Year Seminars

The relevant subcommittees assessed the First-Year Seminars through a dinner and survey for faculty who teach these courses. The findings of the subcommittees are included as addenda to this report.

According to the registrar the First-Year Seminars have not adversely affected the offerings of courses at the sophomore/200 level. Enrollment limits and the variety of courses at the sophomore level have remained roughly constant since the introduction of the new core.

Regarding the impact of First-Year Seminars on the quality of work by students at the sophomore level, evidence has not yet been found. Professors have not reported any improvements in the quality of work in the second semester of the first year (when students already have completed one First-Year Seminar) compared to the first semester. Admittedly these data are impressionistic. Regardless, assessment of any changes in quality will face substantial methodological hurdles.

Guidelines for Connections Courses

The biggest challenge in approving courses for the Connections category is assessing their interdisciplinary content. One institutional arrangement used by the CC this year to facilitate this task was the creation of a large subcommittee (6 members instead of 4 as with other subcommittees) that included representatives from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds. Secondly, the subcommittee normally met in-person instead of via email, trusting the richer dialogue of the former to draw-out the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals.

Additionally the subcommittee looked for the course proposer to explicitly state the manner through which the course would be interdisciplinary, generally in the form of a cover letter included with the proposal as well as through the substantive content of the syllabus. While interdisciplinarity was essential, the subcommittee believed that many routes to this objective were possible. The subcommittee was reluctant to establish rigid, written guidelines, preferring to allow the proposers greater flexibility and creativity to accomplish the goal.

Thus the guidelines established by the CC for evaluating Connections Courses consist of institutional procedures rather than a formal document.

Other Business

- The committee approved an amendment to the document specifying the authority delegated to the Associate Dean. Item 10 continues to grant authority to the Associate Dean to approve courses for the Approaches categories for the new core but was amended to include an obligation on the part of the Associate Dean to report on the review process to the Curriculum Committee at least once per semester.

- The committee granted the Associate Dean authority to provisionally approve First-Year Seminars and Connections Courses during the summer (Item 11). These courses will be formally considered for approval by the CC in the fall. This authority is primarily intended to be used for courses proposed by faculty hired in the spring and who are thus unable to provide a syllabus and formal proposal to the CC in a timely manner.
- The creation of the Interim Study Abroad Committee (ISAC) relates to the CC insofar as both are concerned with evaluating and approving the curriculum of study abroad courses. While the Associate Dean serves on both committees, the committee favored a stronger faculty link between the two. To this end the chair of the CC (Anderson-Connolly) joined the ISAC. (See below under “Recommended Charges to the 2005-06 Curriculum Committee.”)
- The committee proposed a change to the guidelines for setting the academic calendar. This proposal will come before the entire faculty in the fall of 2005.

Recommended Charges to the 2005-06 Curriculum Committee

1. The following department/programs are scheduled for their five-year reviews: African American Studies, Engineering (dual degree program), Learning Center courses, Mathematics and Computer Science, Occupational Therapy Program, Physical Therapy Program, Politics and Government, and Psychology. The review for Environmental Studies, begun in the current year, should also be completed.
2. The Natural and Social Scientific Approaches should be reviewed in 2005-06. Using assessment of these categories as an example, the committee should also review current mechanisms of assessing the core, their effectiveness, and whether any modifications to those mechanisms are appropriate.
3. The CC should continue to place a liaison on the Interim Study Abroad Committee (ISAC). Although the chair of the CC held this position in 2004-05, in the future it might perhaps be considered as equivalent to a subcommittee assignment for one of the members of the CC.

Additional Recommendation to the 2005-06 Curriculum Committee

Based on the successful practice established in 2004-05, the chair recommends that the Connections subcommittee continue to consist of six members, selected from a broad disciplinary background.

Disposition of the 2004-05 Agenda

I. Departmental Reviews

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| 12/1/2004 | Women Studies Program (renamed Gender Studies) curriculum review approved. |
| 2/14/2005 | Religion Department curriculum review approved. |
| 3/7/2005 | Philosophy Department curriculum review approved. |
| 3/28/2005 | Biology Department curriculum review approved. |

- 3/28/2005 Physical Education Department curriculum review approved.
 4/4/2005 Foreign Languages and Literature Department curriculum review approved.

II. On-going business

Academic Calendar

- 10/20/2004 Full Academic Calendar for 2005-2006 approved and sent to Faculty Senate; basic dates for 2008-2009 deferred
- 3/7/2005 Proposal to revise the Academic Calendar approved and sent to the Faculty Senate

Action on core courses

- 9/22/2004 STS 352, Memory in a Social Context, approved for the Connections core
- 9/22/2004 STS 350, Computational Intelligence: An Introduction to Cognitive Science, approved for the Connections core
- 10/6/2004 COMM 110, Contemporary Controversies, , approved for the Writing and Rhetoric seminar core
- 10/6/2004 STS 360, Astrobiology: The Search for Life on Other Planets and for Life's Origins on Earth, approved for the Connections core
- 10/6/2004 STS 345, Physics in the Modern World: Copenhagen to Manhattan, approved for the Connections core
- 10/6/2004 STS 318, Science and Gender, approved for the Connections core
- 10/6/2004 CONN 369, Power, Gender, and Divinity: the Construction of Goddesses, approved for the Connections core
- 10/6/2004 CSOC 140, Modern Revolutions, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
- 10/6/2004 REL 110, Magic and Religion, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
- 10/20/2004 BIOI 157, Genetic Determinism: Are We Our Genes? the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
- 10/20/2004 CONN 330, Tao and Landscape Art, approved for the Connections core
- 10/20/2004 CONN 302, Ethics of Responsibility and Difference, approved for the Connections core
- 10/20/2004 CONN 310, Crime and Punishment, approved for the Connections core
- 11/2/2004 OT 115, Schizophrenia Debates, approved for the Writing and Rhetoric seminar core
- 11/2/2004 AFAM 110, Imaging Blackness: Black Film and Black Identity, approved for the Writing and Rhetoric seminar core
- 11/2/2004 ENVR 325, Geological and Environmental Catastrophes, approved for the Connections core
- 11/2/2004 HUM 309A, Nationalism: British and German Nationalism in the Age of Industrialization and Empire, 1700-1919, approved for the Connections core
- 11/2/2004 AFAM 401, Narratives of Race, approved for the Connections core
- 11/2/2004 CONN 375, The Harlem Renaissance, approved for the Connections core
- 11/10/2004 STS 341, Modeling the Earth's Climate, approved for the Connections core
- 11/10/2004 CONN 350, Perspectives on Food and Culture, approved for the Connections core
- 11/10/2004 CONN 415, Education and the Changing Workforce, approved for the Connections core
- 12/1/2004 COMM 190, The Discourses of Slavery, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
- 12/1/2004 BUS 110, Business and the Natural Environment, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core

12/1/2004	CLSC 120, Persuasion and Power in the Classical World, approved for the Writing and Rhetoric seminar core
12/1/2004	CONN 351, Everything Causes Cancer - Statistical Arguments for Causation, approved for the Connections core
12/1/2004	CONN 320, Health and Medicine, approved for the Connections core
12/1/2004	CONN 315, Democracy, Ancient and Modern, approved for the Connections core
12/1/2004	CONN 306, The Conflict Between Rhetoric and Philosophy, approved for the Connections core
12/1/2004	CONN 448, Work and Well-being: Stress and Health in the Workplace, approved for the Connections core
1/31/2005	STS 314, Cosmological Thought, approved for the Connections core
1/31/2005	ENVR 322, Water Policy, approved for the Connections core
2/14/2005	HIST 135, Success (and failure) in American Culture, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
2/14/2005	HIST 131, "Let Nobody Turn Us Around": Literature and History in the Civil Rights Era, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
2/14/2005	CONN 305, The Idea of Archaeology, approved for the Connections core
2/28/2005	CONN 355, Early Modern French Theatre, approved for the Connections core
3/7/2005	CONN 379, Postcolonial Literature and Theory, approved for the Connections core
3/7/2005	STS 340, Finding Order in Nature, approved for the Connections core
3/7/2005	CONN 380, Cosmos to Cosmopolitanism: Tradition and Transformation in Southeast Asian Architecture and Culture (2005-2006 PacRim course), approved for the Connections core
3/7/2005	IPE 377, Revolutionary Ideas in Political Economy, approved for the Connections core
3/21/2005	HIST 137, The Black Death: Medieval and Modern Perspectives, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
3/28/2005	PHIL 103, The Posthuman Future, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
3/28/2005	CONN 312, Biological Determinism and Human Freedom: issues in Science and Religion, approved for the Connections core
4/4/2005	EXSC 123, Understanding High Risk Behavior, approved for the Writing and Rhetoric seminar core
4/4/2005	IPE 180, War and Peace in the Middle East, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
4/4/2005	ECON 104, Peasants, Commodity Markets and Starbucks: Coffee in the Global and Local Economies, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
4/4/2005	PG 137, Politics of Terror, approved for the Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar core
4/18/2005	CONN 308, Free Expression in the United States, approved for the Connections core

III. Other Curricular Business

9/3 & 22/2004 Approved the continuation of the current authority delegated to the Associate Dean, amended as follows (amended text underlined):

“(10) approval of courses for the Approaches core categories in the new core. The Associate Dean will refer to the appropriate Curriculum

Committee Subcommittee all courses that he believes may not or do not meet the new core guidelines as well as provide a report on approved courses once each semester; and“
(11) provisional approval of Writing and Rhetoric, Scholarly and Creative Inquiry, and Connections courses over the summer. Such approvals are reviewed by the Committee in Fall term.

First year Seminars

- 1/31/2005 Approval of a maximum enrollment of 17 for first year seminars.
1/31/2005 Approval of allowing freshmen to enroll in first year seminars designated for transfer students and sophomores on a space-available basis only with permission of the instructor and after successfully petitioning the Academic Standards Committee.
4/4/2005 At the request of the Senate, the Committee revisited its earlier decision to allow freshmen to register into seminars designated for transfer students. The Committee reversed its earlier decision leaving the current policy of no freshmen being allowed in transfer only seminar sections and transfer students prohibited from enrolling in freshmen-only sections.

Deferrals

- 10/6/2004 Approved deferral of Study Abroad curriculum review to from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007

Special Interdisciplinary Major

- 11/3/2004 Approved the Special Interdisciplinary Major in Behavioral Neuroscience for Leiana Jagolino
3/28/2005 Approved the Special Interdisciplinary Major in Cognition and Brain Science for Drew Bromfield
3/28/2005 Any changes to approved SIMs must be approved by the SIM advisory committee **and** the Curriculum Committee

Study Abroad

- 10/6/2004 Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome approved as an affiliated program.
10/20/2004 Approved lifting the requirement that Study Abroad programs must be at least six weeks long.
11/10/2004 Approved dropping the exchange agreement with University of Aberdeen (Scotland)
11/10/2004 Approved the Oaxaca program that PLU has organized at the Institute Cultura de Oaxaca as an affiliated program.

IV. Business to be carried over to 2005-2006

- Basic calendar for 2008-2009
Environmental Studies Program curriculum review

V. Departmental reviews scheduled for 2005-2006

African American Studies
Engineering (dual degree program)
Learning Center courses
Mathematics and Computer Science
Occupational Therapy Program
Physical Therapy Program
Politics and Government
Psychology

Addendum 1: Final Report, Writing and Rhetoric Subcommittee

The Writing and Rhetoric Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee met on April 11, 2005 to discuss assessment materials received from faculty and the Associate Deans Office. The assessment of the Writing and Rhetoric core area involved faculty conducting their own assessment of learning outcomes in their seminars, reporting their findings on a questionnaire, and most importantly discussing their findings at a dinner meeting of WR faculty. The Curriculum Committee WR Subcommittee has reviewed this feedback and makes no formal recommendation for changes to this core area. It does offer, however, these comments and observations for consideration for the next iteration of assessment of the WR core.

- 1) From the reports, it is clear that balancing the different components of the core area (i.e., writing, oral communication, and argumentation as well as developing the course around a theme) is a strain. It was also noted that while faculty sometimes felt they gave short shrift to all the components in the core area, students felt that the areas received ample attention.
- 2) The subcommittee notes it could benefit WR and SCIS instructors to share ideas on writing. If students take the SCIS seminar first, that will serve as a student's first course in writing so it could be valuable for WR instructors to have ideas on how to build on SCIS instruction. Conversely, second semester SCIS instructors should expect greater writing and argumentation ability in their students, who will have completed the WR seminar, so those instructors should have ideas on how to build on WR instruction.
- 3) It seems generally that students do in fact understand the purpose of this core area as they march through the course, even though at the beginning they may not fully understand its purpose.
- 4) The course seem to be taught largely in a seminar format--i.e., based largely upon discussion rather than lecture.
- 5) The subcommittee spent considerable time discussing the value of the "pro-con" reasoning guideline. There was broad consensus that the "pro-con" guideline is important because it encourages instructors to design assignments in which students actually engage in argument performance and that in any case it was probably too early in the core's life to make significant changes to the guidelines. It was suggested that in discussing the guidelines with instructors and approving these seminars that attention to "counter-argument" fell well within the spirit of the guidelines.

6) In accord with the Curriculum Committee as whole, the subcommittee affirmed their concern about the current transfer sections of WR.

Addendum 2: Final Report, Scholarly & Creative Inquiry Subcommittee

The Scholarly and Creative Inquiry Seminar Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee met on April 11, 2005 to discuss assessment materials received from faculty and the Associate Deans' Office. The assessment of the SCIS core area involved faculty conducting their own assessment of learning outcomes in their seminars, reporting their findings on a questionnaire, and most importantly discussing their findings at a dinner meeting of SCIS faculty. The subcommittee also considered for assessment purposes reports about student performance at Freshfest (the first-year seminar public presentation event held towards the end of each semester).

In general, and as especially reflected in the discussion at the dinner/meeting, this core area is in very good shape: faculty are enjoying very much teaching these courses and students seem to be meeting objectives, including developing some enthusiasm for subject area and gaining a sense of mastery over material as the learning objectives encourage. The latter has especially been reflected in Freshfest presentations.

The greatest concern of the subcommittee was the method of assessment. Members expressed some general concern about the inadequacy of the information reviewed. One subcommittee member suggested that we should ask SCIS faculty to send in their assignments. Another suggestion was that we examine a sampling of assignments and syllabi. Another possibility is to develop a generic assessment tool that all instructors in this core area use. We need in some better way to detect whether students are developing insights and some intellectual independence.

The SCIS Subcommittee has reviewed the guidelines and learning objectives for the SCIS core and makes no formal recommendation for changes to this core area, but encourages the Curriculum Committee to review its assessment mechanisms for the SCIS seminar.