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April 15, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Trinity College of Arts & Sciences Faculty, Advisors, and Students  
FROM: Ingeborg Walther, Associate Dean, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences and  
Director, Office of Curriculum and Course Development  
RE: Faculty Policies on Course Coding and Retroactive Coding

I am writing on behalf of the Arts & Sciences Committee on Courses to explain the faculty committee's long-standing policies regarding the assignment of curricular codes (areas of knowledge and modes of inquiry) to courses in Trinity College of Arts and Sciences and the Pratt School of Engineering. This memorandum is intended to address the many requests received by my office for retroactive coding of courses. When students make such requests, they are often based on their own recognition that a particular curricular code may be appropriate for the course they took. Occasionally, it happens that they are based on promises or information given by faculty or advisors that a course "will be receiving" a particular code or codes after registration or during the semester in which the course is being offered. When faculty make such requests, they are often based on a late realization that their course really should carry a code that it does not, or a desire to change the course after it has begun. While such requests seem reasonable on the surface, they create a host of problems, not least of which is the creation of false expectations on the part of students, and the unreliability of information about courses when students enroll. Faculty, students, and advisors should therefore know that students will not be given curricular codes for a course taken in a particular semester if those codes do not appear in ACES by the first day of classes of that term. This holds true even if the same course carries other curricular codes in subsequent semesters. This policy and its rationale are explained below.

**POLICY ON COURSE CODING AND RETROACTIVE CODING:**

**The curricular codes that appear on ACES for a course on the first day of class in any given semester are final. Those and only those codes will apply towards a student's general education requirements. No additional codes will be awarded concurrently or retroactively to that particular offering of the course.**

It is expected that all courses carry the correct curricular codes by the first day of **registration**. It occasionally occurs that a department or program submits requests after the deadline, and therefore curricular codes appear on courses late in the registration period, or even after, but this should be the exception rather than the rule. Faculty, advisors, and students should not assume that any course will carry codes that do not appear on ACES during the time of registration.

**ACES** is the official source for the listing of curricular codes attached to a course in a given semester. Only the codes that appear on ACES for a given semester on the first day of class of that semester are the codes that will apply to a student's general education requirements. If you notice discrepancies with information that appears on websites, flyers, advising materials, etc., please bring this to the attention of the Director of Undergraduate Studies immediately, as these materials may not be accurate or up to date. It may also be the case that the coding that appears on a website or flyer for a particular course refers to a previous or subsequent offering of the course. Students and advisors should not expect or assume that

those codes will be applied retroactively or subsequently to the course. Again, only the codes that appear on ACES in the particular semester in which the student takes the course will apply.

### **RATIONALE:**

Assigning of codes subsequent to a student's taking a course would constitute a fundamental inequity since students often choose courses based on the codes published at the time they enroll. Retroactively assigning codes raises a host of problems, including the following: first, students who did not register for a desired course because it did not carry needed codes would have cause for complaint if those codes were awarded later in the semester or after its conclusion. Second, advisors would be uncertain of what codes might at some future time be retroactively applicable to a course and would thus not know what courses to recommend to a student. Finally, retroactive assignment of codes would degrade the accuracy and integrity of the historical record, maintenance of which is an important responsibility of an institution of higher learning. These concerns apply to Area of Knowledge codes, as well as to Modes of Inquiry codes.

### **PROCESS AND PROCEDURES FOR COURSE CODING REQUESTS:**

Requests for curricular codes may be made only by departments and programs (that is, faculty and Directors of Undergraduate Studies), not by students. If students believe that a course should carry additional codes, they should bring this to the attention of the instructor and/or Director of Undergraduate Studies, who may decide to submit a request for additional codes.

The process and procedures for requesting curricular codes are explained on the Course Request page of the Curriculum and Course Development website, which can be found at <http://trinity.duke.edu/curriculum> (click on "Course Requests"). Requests for new courses and for changes to existing courses (including any changes to curricular codes) must be made by the posted deadline in order to be considered by the Committee on Courses in time for registration for the following semester. If requests are submitted after the deadline, there is no guarantee that they will be approved in time for registration.

#### Note to faculty and directors of undergraduate studies in departments and programs:

Although the Committee on Courses does its best to accommodate requests made after the posted deadline, it urges departments and programs to submit requests for courses to be offered in a given semester by that deadline to ensure that advisors and students have accurate information on courses at the time of registration.

As a fellow faculty member and former DUS, I realize that this deadline comes impossibly early, but please do try to think ahead and make sure that the courses you will be teaching in any given semester carry the correct curricular codes by the time students begin the registration process.

Thank you for your attention, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.



cc: Susan Wynn and Cary Moskovitz, Co-chairs, A&S Courses Committee  
Keith Whitfield, Chair, Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee  
Ruth Day, Chair, Arts & Sciences Council  
Lee Baker, Dean of Academic Affairs, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences