

Annual Report: Curriculum Committee, 2010-2011

Committee Charge:

The Committee on Curriculum shall address general issues associated with the curriculum as described in the Undergraduate Bulletin to ensure that the Bulletin accurately represents what Departments and programs offer and that those offerings are in keeping with the policies established by the Arts and Sciences Council; address proposals for new majors, minors, and programs; review proposals by Departments to change their majors; and determine scheduling and implementation of necessary program reviews.”

Committee Membership:

Keith Whitfield (Psychology & Neuroscience) – Chair [fall 2008 – spring 2011]

Scott DeMarchi (Political Science)[fall 2008 – spring 2011]

Michael Fitzgerald (Chemistry) [fall 2007 – spring 2011] (*was on leave for a year*)

Bill Seaman (Art, Art History, Visual Studies) [spring 2009 – fall 2011]

Julie Tetel (English) [fall 2010 – spring 2013]

Leslie Digby (Evolutionary Anthropology) [fall 2010 – spring 2013]

Andrew Scheiber (student, fall semester)

Keeley Hunter (student, spring semester)

Ex-Officio

Bruce Cunningham (University Registrar)

Ingeborg Walther (Associate Dean / Germanic Languages and Literature)

Note: The need for an additional Social Science faculty member went unfilled.

Meetings:

The committee met 5 times in the fall 2010 semester, and 5 times in the spring 2011 semester. Each meeting lasted 1 ½ hours.

Accomplishments for 2010-2011

NEW AND REVISED CURRICULAR OPTIONS (MAJORS, MINORS, CERTIFICATES)

The committee reviewed the proposals, engaged in extensive discussion in committee and with the program representatives, and made recommendations that led to the approval of the following programs:

- New Certificate Program in South Asian Studies
- Curricular Revisions:
 - Russian major
 - Visual Studies major/minor (name change to Visual and Media Studies)
 - Spanish/Latin American and Luso-Brazilian Studies major
 - History major
 - Biology major
 - Slavic and Eurasian Studies major
 - Theater Studies major / minor
 - Italian major/minor

CURRICULAR REVIEWS: CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

As part of the regular review process for certificate programs, the following certificate programs were reviewed:

- Study of Ethics (continued from previous year)
- Children in Contemporary Society
- Modeling Biological Systems
- Early Childhood Education
- Islamic Studies
- Markets and Management Studies
- Latin American Studies

The Committee on Curriculum reviewed the self studies provided by the program directors, and provided feedback and recommendations. The committee recommended to the A&S Council and the Dean of Trinity College the continuation of the programs in Ethics, Children in Contemporary Society, Islamic Studies, Markets and Management, and Latin American Studies.

The program directors in Early Childhood Education and Modeling Biological Systems requested that these programs be discontinued, and the requests were granted.

CURRICULAR REVIEWS: GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- Quantitative Studies Requirement:
The ad hoc committee of the Curriculum Committee continued its review of the QS requirement, meeting throughout the fall semester, and part of the spring semester. Jack Bookman presented the committee's deliberations, along with recommendations for revising the Quantitative Studies requirement to the Curriculum Committee. The committee discussed the recommendations at length, and forwarded them to ECASC with an endorsement from the committee. The recommendations will be taken up by the Arts & Sciences Council in the next academic year.
- Foreign Language Requirement – Creole and French:
The committee considered and approved a proposal from Romance Studies, endorsed by Dean Baker, to allow a combination of Creole and French to count towards the foreign language requirement. Heretofore, all (1, 2, or 3, depending on level) courses used to satisfy the requirement must be in the same language. Because of the close connection of Creole and French, however, students may take 2 courses in Creole plus 2 courses in French (total of 4 courses) to satisfy the requirement if they wish.

CURRICULAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Policies on Independent Studies
The Curriculum Committee considered and approved a proposal from Dean Walther to clarify and strengthen policies on Independent Studies and Research Independent Studies, to ensure that standards are upheld and that supervisors of independent studies have regular faculty appointments. A standardized Independent Study/Research Independent Study Request Form was approved for use by all departments and programs in Arts & Sciences.
- Policies on Graduate and Professional School Courses
The committee also considered and approved a proposal from Dean Walther to revise and clarify policies on the number of graduate and professional school courses that can count towards students' 34 course requirement. These had never been quite clear to begin with, and also needed some revision now that Public Policy has become a school. The text relating to these policies in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* and on the Academic Requirements webpage has been changed accordingly.
- Limits on courses towards multiple majors
The committee discussed an issue that arose on the Council floor that there are currently no limits on the number of courses that can count towards two majors. It was suggested that limits are necessary to ensure that a student completing two majors would be legitimately completing two distinct curricula. As scholarship has become more interdisciplinary, as departments have increased

the number of courses from other departments as part of their major's curriculum, with or without cross-listing, and as new interdisciplinary majors have been approved, it is no longer the case that the curricula of any two majors is mutually exclusive. The committee decided that it would be inappropriate to place limits on the number of courses that could count towards two majors, because if a student satisfied the requirements of each major, they have legitimately obtained both majors. Majors are free, however, to impose their own limits, if they feel it is appropriate. This has been the case in most interdisciplinary majors (e.g. Neuroscience and Biophysics). The department of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies has also placed of limit of two courses that can count for two majors within the department.

- Certificate programs: limit of 3 courses originating in any single department or program.
The committee considered a request from Global Health to increase the limit of 3 courses that may originate in any one department or program. Now that most inter- or cross-disciplinary certificate programs have their own subject code and are creating their own courses (e.g. Global Health), there is some question about the policy that no more than 3 courses may originate in any single department or program. The original rationale for the policy is that certificate programs are meant to be cross-unit areas of study, merging faculty interests across different programs and disciplines. Therefore, they should include courses from more than one discipline, and not allow more than half the courses to originate from a single department or program. Global Health argued that its own courses are interdisciplinary, and that therefore the policy should be changed. The committee decided that changing the policy would go against the intent of certificate programs, which are to be made up of courses from different departments and programs across the university.

CURRICULAR ISSUES

- Interdisciplinarity and the role of professional schools, institutes, and centers in undergraduate education.
The committee invited Dean Baker to attend a meeting to clarify the role of institutes and centers in undergraduate education, and in particular to provide guidance should institutes or centers propose new majors. There had been a number of issues that had arisen last year, not least the impression that interdisciplinary certificate programs might be conceived with an eventual major in mind, as happened, for example, with Neuroscience, which is moreover coordinated by the Duke Institute of Brain Sciences (DIBS). Dean Baker made it clear that certificate programs serve a very special purpose within the university, and are not intended to be stepping stones for a major. Certificate programs are contingent upon faculty synergies and interests at a particular moment in time, and are meant to come and go. They are not meant to be a road to a major. Whereas institutes and centers certainly may contribute to undergraduate education in ways that enrich the curriculum, majors within Trinity College of Arts & Sciences still need to be lodged firmly in the relevant Arts & Sciences schools, not in institutes or centers, since institutes and centers are not degree granting bodies. In the case of Neuroscience, DIBS is an Arts & Sciences interdisciplinary institute (unlike Global Health), and serves mainly a coordinating role; the majority of courses are taught by Arts &

Sciences faculty and housed in Arts & Sciences departments and programs. Majors need to be in schools also for reasons of infrastructure (teaching evaluations, grade appeals, problems with faculty, etc.); the top person should be a Dean, not a director.

- **Duke Intense Global.**

It came to the attention of the committee that two new pilot programs, one involving study in Russia, and the other study in India, had been approved at the provost level and were being implemented without going through the normal approval processes involving the standing committees of the Arts & Sciences Council (e.g. Global Education Committee and Courses Committee). The fact that some courses were being advertised that did not exist, nor been approved by the Courses Committee caused much confusion and many problems with scheduling, coordination among teaching faculty, etc. The fact that other courses were being reconfigured to involve a study abroad component without the knowledge of the Courses Committee or the Global Education Committee meant that the checklists and safety measures in place for such courses were not communicated to the program directors or instructors. Due to the efforts of the Office of Curriculum and Course Development and the Global Education Office, everything eventually got fixed, but not without some frustration directed at the “bureaucracy.”

The committee voiced the very strong view that the existing bureaucracy is, in fact, the faculty, and the faculty approving bodies and procedures are in place for very good reasons, not least, to ensure the safety of students while overseas, as well as curricular viability at the program and course level. Because, as has been iterated by many Arts & Sciences deans, the faculty owns the curriculum, all new programs need to be approved by the faculty. Therefore, it was resolved that in future all new programs involving undergraduates go through the normal approval processes. Dean Walther felt that no formal statement need be made at this time, since the chairs of the Global Education Committee and Courses Committee were bringing this to the attention of ECASC, and Dean Baker to the attention of other administrators. It is expected that all new programs will be vetted through the appropriate faculty bodies in future.

Challenges and plans for the future

- We expect that there will continue to be curricular challenges caused by changing administrative structures, new interdisciplinary configurations, and continued thinking on what a liberal arts education should look like in the 21st century. We are aware that there are other committees in the university dedicated to thinking about the undergraduate curriculum, led by or reporting to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and it would be good to have at least one member of the A&S Curriculum Committee represented on these committees, or to find a way of communicating ideas and concerns.
- The committee will be under new leadership starting Fall 2011. A major challenge will be staffing the committee with new faculty members. Since the only continuing members are Leslie Digby (Natural

Sciences) and Julie Tetel (Humanities), needed are five more faculty members (including a chair). Because of the heavy workload of this hard-working committee, it is sometimes difficult to find faculty members willing to serve.

- Whereas the committee plays a formal role in reviews of certificate programs, it currently plays no role in reviews of the undergraduate major. It is worth considering whether this might be a useful endeavor in the future, perhaps in the context of departments' external reviews.