

To: Executive Committee, Arts and Sciences Senate
From: Robert Cerrato, Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Re: 2002-2003 Annual Report
Date: September, 2003

The curriculum committee met 21 times during the 2002-2003 academic year. Committee members were: Robert Cerrato (marine sciences and chair of the committee), Nancy Tomes (history), Catherine Marrone (sociology), Andreas Mayr (chemistry), Judith Lochhead (music), Sarah Sternglanz (women's studies), Malcolm Read (Hispanic languages and literature), Arlene Feldman (Transfer Office), Ada Hasloeher (undergraduate representative), Christine Promin (graduate representative), Elaine Kaplan (College of Arts and Sciences, ex officio member), and Kathleen Breidenbach (College of Arts and Sciences, ex officio secretary).

Routine matters are handled by the secretary and announced to the committee at each meeting. There were a number of routine matters chiefly involving deletion of courses and changes of course titles, descriptions, and/or prerequisites to bring them in line with current teaching in preparation for the new bulletin.

The committee also approved two small changes to the new course proposal form: the form now asks the instructor to identify the grading basis (e.g., A-F, A-C/U, S/U) and includes a statement informing instructors that if the course is offered toward satisfaction of a general education requirement, the syllabus must include a statement of the learning outcomes of that requirement.

The committee met with Dean James V. Staros in the fall semester to discuss his own vision of the curriculum and how the committee interfaces with his office. Cerrato reported that functioning is quite smooth. Staros said he was particularly concerned about the gap between freshmen retention and graduation rates and suspected the vulnerable period was the student's sophomore year. There was also discussion about Stony Brook Manhattan; Staros said it was important not to dilute the traditional offerings to students on campus just to take advantage of the new space.

Significant Curricular Initiatives

Art
Several new topics courses with appropriate D.E.C. designations were created. In addition, two new D.E.C. category J art history courses, in Islamic and Indian art, were approved.

Asian and Asian-American Studies

The committee approved the change of courses in Chinese studies and South Asian Studies to the designator AAS. In addition, the committee approved introduction of two new art history courses to be crosslisted with AAS.

Adapted Aquatics: new minor

The committee approved revisions to several courses and a new minor in Adapted Aquatics, sponsored by the department of Physical Education. The minor also leads to adapted aquatics certification.

Biology

Biology was particularly generative (as is only befitting!) [that's a joke, guys]; the committee approved a number of new courses (especially in molecular biology), a new bioethics course, and several experimental courses, including an extension of a special seminar conducted online and attached to BIO 203 Cell and Organ Physiology.

Chinese Studies minor and courses

The committee approved a significant revision to the minor requirements and to the advanced language courses. It was a case where assistance from the committee greatly strengthened the revised language offerings and both the instructors and the committee were pleased with the results.

Communications

The committee received proposals for several new communications courses and a draft of a proposal for a communications minor. The committee said they could not consider the proposals unless the forms were signed by an academic department chair and the courses had been reviewed by the faculty in the department sponsoring the minor.

D.E.C. regulations

The committee approved a request to change the rule on college courses taken while the student was in high school, and taken in the high school building. Previously these courses could only be used to satisfy D.E.C. categories E Natural Sciences, F Social and Behavioral Sciences, and G Humanities. The committee recommended to the University Senate that these courses be allowed to count toward all D.E.C. categories. The change was subsequently approved by the full Senate.

Education Courses

The committee approved new field methods courses in each of the areas in which Stony Brook offers teacher education (foreign language, social studies, mathematics, English, and science), in accordance with mandates from NCATE.

European Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

The committee endorsed a plan to develop a joint BA/MAT program in foreign language teacher education. The committee also reviewed a revised proposal, first submitted in Spring 2002, to create a new European Studies major. While the major was not approved, it is expected that after some modifications by the department, the committee will be able to approve the major in the fall 2003 semester.

Experimental (Temporary) Courses

The committee approved several temporary, experimental courses for the spring and fall semester. The experimental course proposal process thus far seems to be an effective means of offering alternative courses and allowing instructors the freedom to experiment. Perhaps the most interesting example was of an online recitation section of BIO 203, which allowed the instructor to experiment with online methods of instruction.

Health Science course

The committee approved the first Health Sciences Center course to satisfy a D.E.C. category. The School of Health Technology and Management proposed a course, HAS 192 Introduction to Autism Disorders, as satisfying D.E.C. category F Social and Behavioral Sciences. The syllabus was a model of what members would like to see in the future: it included a clear statement of the learning outcomes of the requirement and how the course would meet those outcomes.

Physics

The committee reluctantly approved the splitting of laboratories for PHY 121, 122 Physics for Life Sciences and PHY 131, 132 Classical Physics for administrative reasons. The splitting allows students more flexibility in scheduling and allows the department not to tie recitation size to lab size. The department intends to offer the lecture and lab with a common grade. The committee expects the instructors to make this extremely clear to students. In addition, enforcement of the corequisite should ensure students take both courses at the same time. The committee also approved several new courses in physics, including some one-credit courses to introduce students to the field and current research in physics. Finally, the department introduced two new introductory physics courses—Physics of Sports—intended for a general audience and designed to prepare athletic training majors. Members believed the courses would be quite popular.

Physical Education

Because of the new adapted aquatics minor and athletic training major, a change to the rules on use of PEC credits toward the degree was required. The committee approved a change that stipulates that only 4 credits of 100-level (activity) PEC courses could be used toward the degree. All the upper-division courses are academic in nature and apply toward the major and minor and therefore should be allowed toward the bachelor's degree.

Political Science

The committee received a proposal from an adjunct to offer a course on "Careers in Public Service" in the high schools for college credit. While the committee had no objection to a department offering a course for credit in a high school, members believed that course must at least be at the college level. The course that was submitted was clearly not, consisting largely of fieldtrips to different county agencies, and the proposal was rejected.

Sociology

Twenty-four sociology courses that had been removed from D.E.C. category F Social and Behavioral Sciences were restored at the request of the department. The courses had been removed three years earlier in response to the SUNY general education mandate; because the prerequisites to the courses satisfied DEC category F, students would already have satisfied the category. The department instead opted to change the prerequisites to the courses and allow them to satisfy category F. The committee also approved a new course, Global Issues in the United Nations, which uses video conferencing with UN ambassadors.

Undergraduate Colleges and College Seminars

The committee met with Deputy Provost Mark Aronoff to discuss the new Undergraduate Colleges. At the time, the Colleges' relation to existing programs such as Learning Communities, WISE and Honors College was yet to be resolved. Aronoff said the Colleges were a way of strengthening and taking advantage of the living learning centers and would provide a continuing living learning environment for students who wished to persist with the College theme beyond the freshman year. Separately, a course proposal for the first college seminar (a one-credit topics course for the College of Information and Technology Studies) was submitted to the committee and was not approved. Committee members asked the faculty director of the college to draw up guidelines for the amount of work to be required of students. There was concern that some faculty might make too many demands on students for a one credit course and the students' other courses might suffer. Later the course was approved by the CEAS curriculum committee (CTPC) and was offered in spring 2003 by arrangement of the dean of CEAS. There was consternation

among committee members that their approval was not also required because so many of the students taking these courses were and would be Arts and Sciences students. Throughout the year, there was concern about lack of information about how the colleges were actually going to work and how they would interface with existing programs.

Women's Studies

The committee approved several changes which strengthen the major and remove the “shopping list” quality of the requirements, including the introduction of a new core course.

Other Matters

Senate Constitution and By-Laws, Committee By-Laws

The committee reviewed the constitutions and by-laws and proposed clarifications to the committee's stated purview. A clear statement that the curriculum committee is responsible for general education requirements and courses was added. A statement was also added that the committee may consider other issues of undergraduate curricular import. There was some concern about proposed changes to professional representation; there had been some discussion in the Senate Executive Committee about removing professional representation or removing the voting rights of professional representatives. In the end, the senate stipulated that the dean's representative (as distinct from the secretary, who is and has been an ex officio non-voting member appointed by the dean) should no longer be a voting member of the committee. In general, it was no seen that this change would significantly affect the functioning of the committee. There was greater concern about another change the Senate approved: this change bars professional employees from academic-related areas outside the Senate constituencies (Arts and Sciences, Marine Sciences Research Center, Physical Education and Athletics) from serving on senate standing committees. This would mean the current professional representative, Arlene Feldman from the Transfer Office, would be ineligible to serve. Committee members believed strongly that this change should be reversed, since representatives from many student services and academic affairs areas bring their own experience and expertise to the committee and since committee decisions often directly impact their own positions.

SUNY General Education Requirements

For most of the year, the committee awaited information about how to proceed with SUNY general education courses, and continued to approve courses toward the D.E.C., pending instructions. In the fall semester, the committee registered a protest with the A&S Senate to a proposed compromise whereby a SUNY senate-appointed committee (ACGE) would be final arbiter in cases where the SUNY provost's office disagreed with the opinion of the local campus curriculum committee on which courses could satisfy which general education categories. In the spring semester, the committee chair received a request to provide a statement about the campus's general education approval process and guidelines. There was considerable concern about the lack of information and communication: the memo from SUNY reminding campuses of the need to submit such statements referred to a January memo to presidents which included the new guidelines for SUNY-GER that had not been shared with the committee, so the committee didn't know what the review and approval process would be. The committee received a request for the provost's office for the statement only days before it was due to SUNY. By the end of the semester, there were still a number of unresolved issues: the campus's policy on general education courses had yet to be approved; the status of ACGE—whether it is advisory to the SUNY provost or has the final decision on courses offered toward general education requirements—was still unclear; the campus procedure for submission of course approval forms to SUNY had yet to be worked out. The impact on course offerings, however, was expected to be significant. The need to submit courses to SUNY for approval before they may be offered as satisfying a particular D.E.C. category could significantly delay new course offerings.

The committee also briefly considered a draft proposal for assessing SUNY general education learning outcomes. The curriculum committee expected to continue to work with those developing the assessment plan over the next year or two. There were concerns about assessment of non-quantitative disciplines and their inherent subjectivity and the potential to use assessment to judge faculty.

respectfully submitted,

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