

Curriculum Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

Membership:

Faculty:

Xiaoshuo Hou, Sociology (chair)
Christopher Mann, Political Science
Michael Marx, English
Barbara Norelli, Library
Tom O'Connell, Computer Science (one-year replacement)

Administration:

Sharon Clemmey, Associate Registrar (non-voting)
David DeConno, Registrar (non-voting)
Ron Seyb, Associate Dean of Faculty (non-voting)
Shannon Phillips, Assistant Registrar (observer)

Student Representative:

Riley Filister-Weiman 21' (Fall 2017)
Hannah Miller 18' (Spring 2018)

Meetings with the Full Committee:

The Curriculum Committee met 14 times in the fall semester and 13 times in the spring semester, for a total of 27 meetings. Agenda items included:

- ⇒ 41 proposals for new courses
- ⇒ 27 proposals for substantial revisions to existing courses
- ⇒ 17 new or revised Scribner Seminars
- ⇒ 4 IdeaLab course proposals, including 1 pop-up course
- ⇒ 21 proposals for new Skidmore in Paris and New Zealand courses
- ⇒ Proposals for revisions to the major or minor for AH, AR, CH, DA, ED, EN, ESS, GW, GE, HP, LA, MF, MU, PY
- ⇒ Proposals for creating new minors in Statistics and Black Studies

Significant Curricular Changes:

Of the above proposals, the following items will result in significant changes to the curriculum:

- ⇒ A new minor in Statistics proposed by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics has been approved.
- ⇒ The Art Department has revamped their course descriptions and renamed a number of their courses.
- ⇒ The Dance Department has added a research track to their major in addition to the performance/choreography track; both tracks require 41 credits.
- ⇒ The Education Studies Department has made substantial changes to their major to require a second major (or at least 30 credits) in a liberal arts and sciences discipline approved by the New York State Department of Education.
- ⇒ The Gender Studies program has added a new required course, GW 202 Lived Feminism: Engagement and Praxis, to their major and minor.
- ⇒ The Geosciences Department has changed the requirements to their major to allow more flexibility in course selections and more choices to fulfil the writing requirement in the major.

⇒ The Music Department has added a new required course, MU 200 Thinking About Music, and revised their senior seminar into a senior Coda course.

Unresolved Proposals:

The Curriculum Committee discussed in the spring the proposal by CEPP to create a minor in Black Studies. We were very excited about the minor and agreed with the rationale, but we need to review the actual curriculum with a list of courses/requirements for the minor before we can move the proposal forward.

In addition, the Department of Athletics, Fitness and Recreation proposed to create a one-credit PA course for varsity athletic participation. The Committee had conflicting views about the proposal. Given that the proposal is closely related to the College's institutional values and policies, we would need more time to consult the faculty and vet the proposal.

Policy Implementation:

The Curriculum Committee had a retreat on May 17 to discuss the implementation of the guidelines for the new curriculum drafted by CEPP-organized workgroups and the guidelines for pop-up courses proposed by the IdeaLab Steering Committee. For the new general education curriculum, we found many of the guidelines to be vague and difficult to implement in their current form, and raised questions such as whether courses satisfying the all-college requirements have to be of certain level, whether they can have prerequisites or count towards major requirements, whether courses satisfying the Bridge Experience requirement have to address inequality only in the US, and if power and justice should be the only theme of BE courses or could be just a section. We were also unsure of the procedure for approving existing courses for the new gen ed requirements and whether there will be a committee/point person similar to the QR Committee for each set of the requirements. We have conveyed our feedback/questions back to CEPP in order to get more guidance and clarification. We have also learned from the Registrar's that the New York State Department of Education will have to review every existing major to make sure that with the implementation of the new gen ed curriculum students will be able to complete their majors within 4 years. As a result, we need to have at least a list of courses for each gen ed requirement ready for the New York State's review so that they can map out course load for each major.

For pop-up course guidelines, we offered feedback on the procedures and time frame for approving such proposals so as to streamline the process. We would like to request that faculty members planning on teaching a pop-up course use the new course form on Curriculog so that we can have all the information we need to review the proposal. Specifically, we need information on course number/title/description, credit hours, how credit hours are met, prerequisites, grade options, rationale for teaching the course as a pop-up rather than a regular course to justify the immediacy of the course, etc., and we need a syllabus, no matter how tentative it is. We also suggest that instructors should submit their proposal to CC at least two weeks prior to their desired date of the initiation of the course and that no pop-up courses should start after the Withdrawal deadline.

In addition, in the fall semester, the Curriculum Committee published on its website two documents: one on recommended syllabus language for statements about Academic Integrity, Special Accommodation, Title IX, and S/U grade option (https://www.skidmore.edu/curriculum_committee/documents/ProposedSyllabusStatements.pdf) ; and the other on tips for receiving a rapid review by the Curriculum Committee to offer transparency on the review process (https://www.skidmore.edu/curriculum_committee/documents/CurriculumCommitteeExpeditedReviewRules-final.pdf).

Routine Matters:

In addition to the work of the full committee, the routine-matters subcommittee that is composed of Ron Seyb, David DeConno, and the Chair of the CC responded to many routine matters. Routine matters include deleting courses no longer being offered, minor changes to existing courses, minor changes to prerequisites, travel seminar proposals, and the like.

Conclusion:

The Curriculum Committee had another busy year, which indicates that many exciting curricular changes were happening. With departments and programs hiring new faculty members and the upcoming new general education curriculum, innovative courses and revisions to majors/minors have taken place. The Curriculum Committee is privileged to bear witness to each of these changes, and we are honored to report that creative thought indeed matters in the curricular field. Questions regarding the IdeaLab courses, the implementation of the new gen ed curriculum, the Black Studies minor, and assigning credit to varsity athletic participation will be carried over to the next year.

Faculty Members for 2018-2019 Curriculum Committee:

Xiaoshuo Hou, Sociology
Christopher Mann, Political Science (on leave in spring)
Michael Marx, English (chair)
Corinne Moss-Racusin, Psychology
Bob ParkeHarrison, Art

Respectfully submitted,
Xiaoshuo Hou (chair)
20 June 2018