

Curriculum Committee 2019-2020 Annual Report

The Curriculum Committee (CC) reviews college curricular matters, ranging from approval of new courses to facilitating the implementation of new General Education requirements. The CC met weekly throughout the past academic year (11 meetings in the fall and 15 meetings in the spring), including 8 Zoom meetings during the second half of the spring semester and an asynchronous period in May-June to review new Bridge Experience courses.

This report marks the conclusion of my two years of serving as the chair of the Curriculum Committee. I would like to thank the faculty who served on the committee during this period for the seriousness, thoughtfulness, and attention they gave to each of our reviews of curricular matters (a list of this year's committee membership is at the end of this report). I am sure that the faculty join me in expressing our gratitude to the members of the Registrar's Office serving on the committee—Dave Deconno, Shannon Melvin, and Sharon Clemmey—for their information and support. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to Associate Dean of the Faculty Ron Seyb for his guidance, support, insightfulness, and, yes, his good humor. Corinne Moss-Rascusin will serve as the new chair of the Curriculum Committee next year.

Overview of Regular Business

During the past academic year, the CC reviewed and ultimately approved 67 new courses or revisions to existing courses. The committee also reviewed 12 changes to majors and minors from academic departments and programs. Some of the curricular proposals submitted to the CC are a matter of small changes, classified as Routine Matters; this year, the Routine Matters subcommittee approved 70 such items. The majority of these routine matters involved the elimination from the catalog of courses no longer offered and creating a sliding credit option (1-4 credits) for Professional Internships, as requested by the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs.

The Curriculum Committee also reviews travel seminars that faculty develop. According to procedures overseeing the creation and approval of new travel seminars, the CC chair approved four travel seminars this spring: [Inside the New Cuba](#) (Winter 2021) led by Michael Ennis-McMillan (Anthropology), [The Rise of China](#) (Spring 2021) led by Xiaoshuo Hou (Sociology and Asian Studies), [The Body and Soul in Ancient Greece](#) (Spring 2021) led by Michael Arnush and Leslie Mechem (Classics), and [Oxford University: The Quest for Meaning](#) (Summer 2021) led by Sheldon Solomon (Psychology).

During the first half of the spring semester, the CC reviewed and approved 12 new Scribner Seminars. These seminars were first reviewed, revised, and endorsed by the FYE director, Amos Emeka.

Other Business

In addition to its regular work, this year the Curriculum Committee also focused its attention on the approval of the new Black Studies Minor and implementation of the new General Education requirements.

Black Studies Minor

CEPP and the Dean of the Faculty had included the Curriculum Committee in discussions for a Black Studies Minor as early as spring 2018; the review of a formal proposal for a Black Studies Minor began at the end of the fall 2019 semester. The committee worked with director of Black Studies Winston Grady-Willis at the end of the fall 2019 term and the beginning of the spring 2020 semester. Although new minors do not require the approval of the faculty, the committee solicits comments from the faculty. In February, the CC announced the Black Studies Minor to faculty and invited faculty comments on the Skidmore Forumbee. The final proposal for the Black Studies Minor was announced at the March faculty meeting. See the appendix for the complete proposal.

General Education Requirements

Throughout the past academic year, the Curriculum Committee devoted a sizeable proportion of its work to the review and approval of courses for the new Bridge Experience requirement. The committee had a positive and productive relationship with Eric Morser (History), coordinator for Bridge Experience courses. Marx and Seyb met with Morser several times throughout the year, and Morser attended two Curriculum Committee meetings.

Understanding and interpretation of requirements and underlying philosophy of the new Bridge Experience courses initially varied greatly among the faculty submitting course proposals. This situation improved throughout the fall term. At the start of the spring semester, the committee created a Bridge Experience Checklist to guide faculty in their development of new courses or revision of existing courses to fulfill the components of Bridge Experience courses. By the end of the academic year, the committee had approved 22 Bridge Experience courses, including several courses developed during the spring Mellon Grant workshop. Members of the spring 2020 Curriculum Committee met after the end of the spring term on an asynchronous Forumbee section to review Bridge Experience course proposals arriving in May. There are approximately an additional 10 Bridge Experience course proposals pending approval that the committee reviewed and sent recommendations for further revision to the instructors. These courses will be reviewed in fall 2020. A list of the approved Bridge Experience courses appears in the appendix.

Last year, the Curriculum Committee created a working group to develop a new approach to the World Language requirement for English Language Learners that would give these students the option of English language study as an alternative means to fulfill the WE requirement. The working group ultimately proposed two CEPP that the two components of this dimension of the new General Education Requirements were incompatible and should be handled separately. CEPP decided against allowing some students to “pass out” of the World Language requirement.

A new working group will continue to consider English language support for ELL students at Skidmore. Members of the working group included Ron Seyb and Michael Marx, co-chairs; Michael Ennis-McMillian (Anthropology); Paula Brehm (Registrar's Office); Thad Niles (Writing Center ELL Specialist); and Martha Wiseman (Writing Center Director); and assistance from Brenda Pashley (SAS), Alicia Sullivan (SAS), and Viviana Rangil (WLL).

In other work related to the new General Education Requirements, the committee reviewed and revised the catalog copy explaining the new requirements to students that Seyb had drafted. In the fall, the Curriculum Committee will take up the new requirement for the Senior Coda.

2020-2021 Agenda

In addition to its ongoing oversight of the college curriculum, the CC anticipates that the 2020-2021 academic year will be particularly busy as faculty continue to submit new and revised courses to fulfill the new General Education requirements, particularly course proposals for the Bridge Experience, and departments submit their visions for the Senior Coda. If time permits, the CC hopes to examine the role of free-standing minors within the curriculum, whether such minors should become majors, their status within the curriculum, and the demands they place on the faculty.

Curriculum Committee Membership

Fall 2019 Members

Maria Lander (World Languages and Literatures)
Michael Marx, Chair (English)
Corinne Moss-Racusin (Psychology)
Jwoon Park (Anthropology, fall 2019)
Robert ParkeHarrison (Studio Art)

Ron Seyb, Associate Dean of the Faculty (ex officio)
Dave Deconno, Registrar (ex officio)
Sharon Clemmey, Registrar's Office (ex officio)
Shanon Melvin, Registrar's Office (ex officio)

Spring 2020 Members

Maria Lander (World Languages and Literatures)
Christopher Mann (Political Science)
Michael Marx, Chair (English)
Corinne Moss-Racusin (Psychology)
Jwoon Park (Anthropology, fall 2019)
Robert ParkeHarrison (Studio Art)

Ron Seyb, Associate Dean of the Faculty (ex officio)
Dave Deconno, Registrar (ex officio)
Sharon Clemmey, Registrar's Office (ex officio)
Shanon Melvin, Registrar's Office (ex officio)

Fall 2020 Members

Sandra Goff (Economics)
Kate Granney (Political Science)
Maria Lander (World Languages and Literatures)
Corinne Moss-Racusin, Chair (Psychology)
Robert ParkeHarrison (Studio Art)
Student representative, TBD

Michael Arnush, Associate Dean of the Faculty (ex officio)
Dave Deconno, Registrar (ex officio)
Sharon Clemmey, Registrar's Office (ex officio)
Shanon Melvin, Registrar's Office (ex officio)

Appendix A:

Appendix B: