

End of Year Report to the Faculty Senate from  
The University Curriculum Committee, 2013-14

**Committee Members:** Todd Hodgkinson (Chair) (Education), Michael Andreski (Pharmacy), Bill Boal (Business), Maria Bohorquez (Chemistry), Lee Joliffe (Journalism), Marcia Keyser (Cowles Library), Karen Leroux (History), Joanna Mosser (Political Science), Daniele Shelton (Law), Arthur Sanders (Ex-officio member), Chrystal Stanley (CAAD representative).

**Meeting Times** (n =10): 09/17; 10/22; 11/19; 12/03; 01/28; 02/18; 03/04; 03/25; 04/15; and 05/06

**Summary of Work:**

In August of 2013, the Executive Committee of the Drake Faculty Senate charged the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) with reviewing the efficacy of its general education program, commonly referred to as the Drake Curriculum. In addition to engaging in broad, theoretical discussions about the purposes of general education at a liberal arts institution, the UCC explored how the Drake Curriculum might be redefined in order to create a distinctive learning experience for all students.

In our analysis of the Drake Curriculum, the UCC identified several points of pride, as well as several areas of concern. We also formulated two major recommendations: 1a) To reform the Drake Curriculum but to keep its existing structure (a distribution model of general education) or 1b) To explore adopting an alternative model for general education (see appendix A for full report of findings and recommendations).

In addition to taking up an analysis of the Drake Curriculum, the UCC was also involved with reviewing proposals submitted for Areas of Inquiry (AOI) credit. It should be noted that—in keeping with the recommendations put forth by 2012-2013 UCC—the system for submitting and reviewing AOI proposals was revised and streamlined. Expectations for faculty members submitting proposals were also clarified. Faculty members now looking to submit a proposal for AOI credit may do so by clicking on links embedded in the Drake Curriculum webpage and by completing the newly revised proposal forms.

In an effort to increase the efficiency of the AOI review process, a folder was created in Bluespace to keep track of submissions. A concerted effort was also made to have UCC members evaluate submitted proposals prior to meeting in-person—and the practice of calling faculty members in to “defend” their proposals was reduced to an “at-need” basis. When appropriate, the UCC also reviewed AOI/FYS submissions via email.

Altogether, the UCC reviewed 36 AOI proposals. The courses approved for AOI credit can be found in appendix B of this report.

In our review of AOI submissions—the UCC voted to adopt a policy limiting the number of AOI designations a course could hold. Given that most AOI categories attempt to meet 2-5 learning outcomes, the UCC felt that it would be problematic for a single course to attempt to meet more than two AOI designations. This change in policy is aligned with the recommendations put forth by the UCC in 2012-2013.

In addition to reviewing faculty proposals for AOI credit, the UCC also reviewed eight FYS submissions and voted to approve four courses for INTD designation.

## **UCC Membership for the 2014-2015 Academic Year**

The following committee members will continue to serve on the UCC in the 2014-2015 term:

- Michael Andreski
- Todd Hodgkinson (Education)
- Marcia Keyser (Cowles Library)
- Karen Leroux (History)
- Arthur Sanders (Provost's Office, Ex-officio Member).
- Chrystal Stanley (CAAD representative)

The following schools/colleges need to elect members to replace UCC members who will be rotating-off of UCC this year:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- School of Law
- School of Journalism

The chair of the UCC for 2014-2015 will be Marcia Keyser (Cowles) library. The committee will elect a vice-chair at our first meeting next year.

## **Recommendations to Faculty Senate 2014-2015:**

**1. The UCC recommends the following committee members for participation in the working group established to explore a comprehensive reform of the Drake Curriculum:**

- Dr. Maria Bohorquez
- Dr. Todd Hodgkinson

**2. The UCC recommends that faculty members participating in the working group be compensated for their time.** Due to the extraordinary time commitment required, the UCC recommends that faculty members serving on the working group established to explore a comprehensive reform of the Drake Curriculum be compensated for their time. This compensation could take the form of a one-time stipend (merit pay), the form of a one-semester course release, or the form of credit towards promotion and tenure—with the work of faculty members counting for a single, peer-reviewed publication.

**3. The UCC recommends that the implementation of the experiential learning requirement approved by Faculty Senate be delayed.** As part of our review of the Drake Curriculum, the UCC was asked to consider whether/how the experiential learning requirement—previously endorsed by Faculty Senate—“fit into” a possible reform of the Drake Curriculum. Unfortunately, the UCC did not have the time to fully explore this question. The UCC therefore recommends that implementation of the current experiential learning requirement be delayed, so that the ad-hoc committee charged with exploring a comprehensive reform of the Drake Curriculum may consider this question (see appendix C for our full motion).

**4. The UCC recommends that next year's committee be charged with continuing its annual review of Area of Inquiry (AOI) coursework.** In order to make time for our review of the Drake Curriculum, the Faculty Senate suspended the UCC's annual review of coursework designated for AOI credit. The AOI categories slated for review in 2013-2014 were: Engaged Citizen and Values/Ethics. It is our recommendation that next year's committee pick-up where the 2013-2013 UCC left off and continue with its review of coursework carrying this AOI designation. We also recommend that a new annual review cycle be approved (see appendix D).

It is our hope that next year's committee will continue to employ the streamlined system for evaluating AOI/FYS proposals that was detailed in this report. It is also our hope that next year's committee adhere to the newly adopted policy of limiting the number of AOI designations that a course can fulfill to no more than two. Finally, it is our hope that next year's committee continue to review submitted proposals prior to meeting in-person, that the practice of reviewing AOI proposals via email be continued, and that the practice of calling in faculty members to "defend" their proposals be limited to an "at-need" basis.

We also hope that next year's committee makes a concerted effort to update the list of approved AOI coursework on the Drake Curriculum webpage and in the MYDUSIS registration system.

**5. The UCC recommends that next year's committee also be charged with exploring ways to increase the quality of the Drake Curriculum, in keeping with the recommendations outlined in our review of the Drake Curriculum.** In our final report to Faculty Senate (see appendix A), the UCC identified a list of attributes that are critical for a distinctive general education curriculum. The UCC also suggested ways for improving the existing Drake Curriculum, including, but not limited to: exploring ways to inform students about the larger purposes of the Drake Curriculum; determining if students are unable to enroll in specific Area of Inquiry requirements and, if so, why this might be; working to increase the number of AOI offerings, where needed; and reducing the number of AOI categories. *Given that significant changes to the Drake Curriculum may take some time, it is imperative that more immediate efforts be made to increase the quality of the existing general education curriculum.* The UCC therefore recommends that next year's committee take up this charge and work with members from the Drake Curriculum and Assessment Committee (DCAC), the Provost's Office, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, and the Office of Student Records in an effort to improve the quality of the Drake Curriculum.