

Report to the Faculty Senate from
The University Curriculum Committee, 2012-13

Summary: For 2012-13, the UCC was charged with reviewing two Areas of Inquiry for renewal: Global & Cultural Understanding (Fall) and Quantitative Literacy (Spring). We also reviewed new First Year Seminar proposals for Fall 2013. With the implementation of the January Term, we considered many AOI proposals for J-Term courses. In addition to the normal spate of AOI proposals, the UCC began reviewing Experiential Learning proposals in anticipation of the implementation of this requirement. Altogether, the UCC reviewed over 150 proposals during the 2012-13 academic year (50 new AOIs, 71 renewals, 23 FYS and 12 Experiential Learning).

The UCC forwarded two items to the Executive Committee for possible action by the full Senate: 1. a report on staff teaching sections of FYS with the recommendation that staff receive a peer teaching observation to acknowledge their professionalism and to bring them more in line with faculty review standards; and 2. a proposal originating with CAAD that called for pushing back the implementation of the Experiential Learning requirement until Fall 2014.

Faculty Senate Exec charged the UCC to take advantage of the delay in implementation to review the Experiential Learning requirement (to be completed during academic year 2013-14). Special emphasis should be placed on better defining the reflective aspect of this requirement.

During academic year 2013-14, the UCC is scheduled to review two more AOIs: Engaged Citizen and Values/Ethics.

Recommendations:

1. It is difficult to find a meeting time that accomodates the number of members necessary to staff the UCC. We recommend that a regular meeting time be established in advance (e.g., 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:00) and that Senate Exec appoint members to the UCC who can attend at those regularly scheduled times. This would hopefully have the effect of allowing faculty with business before the UCC to have a clearer sense of the schedule.
2. The Drake Curriculum places no limit on the number of AOI approvals any one course can carry. The UCC experienced this as a challenge in a few cases, especially given the general understanding that any AOI should comprise at least half of the content of a course. While methodology AOIs (Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy) may appropriately complement content-based AOIs, the UCC suggests that the Senate consider placing a limit on the number of AOIs any one course may carry.
3. The AOI renewal process needs to be streamlined. Asking faculty to submit proposals for renewal and then asking the UCC to read the numerous proposals is

not an efficient use of faculty time. For example, there are approximately 90 courses on the approved list for the Engaged Citizen, the next AOI to be reviewed. It may be possible for staff time in the Associate Provost Sanders's office to be used to manage the logistics of collecting and maintaining syllabi for Drake Curriculum courses. This process of proposal and renewal will no doubt become even more complex as the assessment dimension is added to it in the future.

4. The UCC recommends that the Faculty Senate consider reducing the number of credits necessary to graduate with a bachelor's degree from 124 to 120. Drake at one time required undergraduates to take four credits of physical education. When that requirement was eliminated, the total number of credits was not adjusted. Reducing the number to 120, in line with many other baccalaureate programs, would allow students to take fifteen credits per semester for four years and achieve the total of 120 credits.