

Recent Curriculum Revisions as a result of Student Outcome Data

These points derive from Assessment Committee interviews (fall semester, 2004) with departments preparing for review.

Communication: Continuous curriculum improvement occurs as a result of students' expressed need to become familiar with new technologies used in public media. 225 and 325 are now digital rather than analog. A new PR course was designed to be offered twice every 5-6 years. 304, 306, and 308 include additional small group experiences. Alumni members are brought in to talk with students in 306 and 308 in order to better prepare them for the types of current job opportunities. An online alumni survey was designed to facilitate this process. 410 has been revised each year for the past six years in order to prepare students for the competitive nature of the job market. The quality of portfolios prepared by 410 students demonstrates their high level of professional preparation. In addition, changes were made in the curriculum of the media promotions major in order to better fit the qualities expressed in the college mission and objectives.

History and Political Science: Fewer education majors take Latin American and Eastern history because of the inclusion of a cross-cultural requirement in the General Education curriculum. As a result the department is designing more courses to meet the needs of upper division students. Efforts are underway to showcase the expertise (Russia, Women's Studies) of new faculty in order to promote research interests in upper division students.

Philosophy/Religion: Two primary areas of curriculum changes result from student outcome data—Biblical Literacy and Critical Reflection. In the transformation from Bible and Culture/Faith and Learning to the new Core Curriculum, it became evident that students needed more historical background. Biblical studies courses were added to both the General Education requirements and to requirements within the department. In Synoptic gospels, for example, Dr. Hartley now spends four weeks on historical Biblical literature in a cultural framework. Previously, this type of extensive background work was not provided. It was assumed that students came to college with this knowledge. In Homiletics courses, six weeks of preparation has been integrated in order to develop the ability to "get in and out of scripture" prior to designing a sermon. Again, this extensive background in Critical Reflection had not previously been offered.

The department of Philosophy/Religion teaches 17 sections in General Education. Faculty members from this department are involved in every Core Curriculum course (101, 102, 301, 302, 401). In addition the department provides the Biblical Studies and Philosophy courses required of all students as part of their General Education curriculum. For this reason, the department has a greater had in General Education than any other department on campus. Philosophy/Religion faculty are now working with colleagues from other department in interdisciplinary course offerings. This effort supports the growing trend for students to have multiple majors, particularly within the Social Science Division. The scope of scholarly work resulting from these interdisciplinary relationships has increased considerably over the past two years. In this way, faculty model what it means to be a part of a learning community.

English: In order to increase the efficiency of the department and to meet the needs of a higher number of incoming freshmen students, curriculum offerings were revised to include alternate year courses. Four courses are offered every semester, 10 courses are offered every year, 18 courses are offered in alternate years. Eight to ten sections of ENG 101 are offered each academic year.

A sequence of five ESL courses were added, one each semester. Students inspired to serve in foreign countries after graduation seek these courses whether they are majoring in English or in another field. Sections of Core Curriculum courses have also been added to the curriculum in the past two years. The department is seeking to provide necessary yearbook and journalism courses for the growing numbers of students interested in the field of research journalism.

Music: During the past two years the Music department has redesigned and improved the sequencing of courses within each of the majors they offer. This process helps advisors and students plan more effectively for the inclusion of course work outside the major to complement the student's vocational pathway. Improvements in equipment, practice space, and digital technology/software needed for production are continuous. Additional full-time faculty are needed to meet the high enrollment within the department. Systematic tracking is underway to follow those students who enter GC as music majors but decide to transfer to other majors within the college. The Music department may well be serving to facilitate higher numbers of majors in other departments.

(Summary, 10/11/04, Susan Hughey-Rasler, Ph.D., Director of Assessment)