

To: Executive Committee, Arts and Sciences Senate

From: Robert Cerrato, Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Re: 2001-2002 Annual Report

Date: 5 September, 2002

The curriculum committee met 18 times during the 2001-2002 academic year. Committee members were: Robert Cerrato (marine sciences and chair of the committee), Michael Barnhart (history, *fall*) Ruth Cowan (history, *spring*), Catherine Marrone (sociology), Andreas Mayr (chemistry), Judith Lochhead (music), Sarah Sternglanz (women's studies), Arlene Feldman (Transfer Office), Elaine Kaplan (College of Arts and Sciences, ex officio member), and Kathleen Breidenbach (College of Arts and Sciences, ex officio secretary). The committee was also joined for all discussions of the SUNY American History requirement by Michael Barnhart (history) during the spring semester.

Routine matters are handled by the secretary and announced to the committee at each meeting. There were a number of routine matters chiefly involving changes of course titles, descriptions, or prerequisites to bring them in line with current teaching and requirements.

Significant Curricular Initiatives

Athletic training: new major

The committee approved several new courses and a new major in Athletic Training, sponsored by the department of Physical Education. The new major has subsequently been approved by SUNY and the New York State Department of Education. Committee members met with the developers of the program for clarification of a number of issues. The new major curriculum, designed to help provide support to developing athletic programs at the university, is built on a rigorous scientific foundation and will provide students with an alternative to the program in physical therapy.

Astronomy major and new minor

The committee approved several changes to the basic curriculum, four new courses, and a new, less quantitative minor, designed to be attractive to students with a strong interest in astronomy.

Education Courses

The committee approved new field methods courses in each of the areas in which Stony Brook offers teacher certification, in accordance with mandates from NCATE.

Mathematics

The committee reviewed a number of requests from the mathematics department, including a request to restrict admission to the major to qualified students, and met with representatives from the department. The proposal was taken to the Senate Executive Committee and the full A&S Senate as well, where there was general agreement that the department should avail itself of other methods for ensuring student success, such as early advising and intervention, rather than creating only the second restricted major in the College. The committee did approve a type of gateway course, which will be required as a prerequisite to most other mathematics major courses. The committee also approved creation of a new course that would meet with an existing course for half of the semester, at which point the students would be split into two groups. This method is designed to maximize use of resources and to cover material appropriate to either graduate and advanced work in mathematics or mathematics instruction at the high school level.

Federated Learning Communities (FLC) Minor in Global Studies for 2002-2003

The committee rejected a request to create new FLC seminar course numbers satisfying different D.E.C. categories. The belief was that, since the seminars are intended to be integrative, they could not appropriately be fit into any one category.

Chemistry

The committee approved a major restructuring of the first-year chemistry program, including the addition of a required zero credit chemistry course, designed to ensure that at-risk students, students with a lower mathematics placement scores, receive the help they need.

Child Life Pre-Professional Program

The committee approved the listing of a pre-professional program in Child Life, offered in conjunction with the existing Child and Family Studies minor, and two new courses. The program will provide a service to students interested in working with children in a health-care setting, to the hospital, and to the children who use it.

Career Development Courses

The Career Center proposed two new courses, a freshman-level Career Development and Decision Making course and a 200-level Career Planning course. Both were welcomed by committee members, especially the first, as its curriculum includes helping students think about their skills and abilities and hopes to provide students with other ways of thinking about the relation of education to career paths.

Experimental (Temporary) Courses

The committee approved several temporary, experimental courses for the spring and fall semester. The experimental course proposal process thus far seems to be an effective means of offering alternative courses and allowing instructors the freedom to experiment. Perhaps the most interesting example was of an online recitation section of BIO 203, which allowed the instructor to experiment with online methods of instruction.

One-Credit Courses

The committee approved a number of new one-credit courses, including AST 100 Astronomy Today, AST 200 Current Astronomical Research at Stony Brook, PHY 104 Opportunities in Physics, intended as introductions to the field and opportunities at Stony Brook, and USB 300 and 301 Global Issues, designed to allow examination of topics arising in response to the events of September 11, 2001, and beyond.

Fall review

The committee spent a great deal of the fall semester reviewing courses offered toward the D.E.C. category K/ SUNY American history requirement that had been challenged by the SUNY provost, Peter Salins. Stony Brook Deputy Provost Mark Aronoff and Arts and Sciences Associate Dean Nancy Tomes had arranged with SUNY Assistant Provost Joseph DeFilippo that the curriculum committee would solicit and review revised syllabi and any other supporting documentation for the contested courses. The committee developed a review form listing the principal requirements for American history as defined by Provost Salins's advisory committee on general education (PACGE). In addition, Michael Barnhart, an American historian and social sciences representative on the committee, suggested that a good measure would be if an American history textbook could appropriately be assigned for the course. The textbook did not actually have to be assigned, but if it reasonably could be, given the syllabus, then the course was considered to have satisfied the requirements for the revised category K/ SUNY American history requirement.

Most faculty were very responsive. In the case of some contested political science and sociology courses, the departments elected to remove the courses from D.E.C. category K, because the courses could not be modified to meet the new standards without a significant change in curriculum. In addition, some instructors chose not to submit materials, and therefore these courses had to be removed from the category.

Of the 38 courses challenged by SUNY, 22 were approved and 16 were removed, of which 9 were not contested by the department or instructor. The 22 approved courses include several special topics courses which were approved with a new general description and the provision that departments must submit the topic to the college before the scheduling deadline. If the assistant dean for scheduling and curriculum, an ex officio member of the committee, has concerns about the appropriateness of the topic for the category, she will bring it to the curriculum committee for review.

Subsequent developments

In February, the committee learned that Provost Salins wanted to receive syllabi for the courses that the committee had approved for the American history requirement. While Deputy Provost Aronoff had agreed to this before the committee had undertaken its review, the committee chair had refused. In soliciting syllabi and additional information from faculty, the committee had made clear that syllabi would be used only for review by the committee and would not be released by the committee to any

other parties. Committee members offered to make the committee minutes available to the SUNY provost, as these clearly demonstrated the methods the committee had used and showed that they had operated in good faith. This offer was rejected, but DeFilippo agreed to a conference call with the committee; this agreement was subsequently retracted.

Next DeFilippo suggested that the committee use the PACGE approval templates to submit course information. Because these templates included the request to list readings and topics, the curriculum committee objected, since these are in effect the contents of a syllabus. There was also concern on the part of the committee, raised by the templates themselves and by language in the communication from SUNY, that Provost Salins would use the templates to make a final judgment on the courses, contrary to the original agreement between DeFilippo and Aronoff, in which the committee would make the final judgment. On the issue of syllabi, the committee appealed to the Senate Executive Committee and the full Senate for support in its refusal to provide syllabi and their support was gratefully received. The Senate resolved that the committee should not submit syllabi, nor should it submit reading lists or lists of topics.

The committee chair suggested to Provost McGrath that the PACGE approval templates could be used and submitted to Provost Salins, provided the questions about reading lists and topics were deleted. The templates were prepared and submitted to Provost McGrath in June. They included any additional descriptive material provided by the instructor and included a record of the committee's deliberation about each course. On July 31, Provost McGrath received a letter from DeFilippo, rejecting the submission and requesting submission of topical outlines and readings. The committee chair has refused to comply with this request. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has written to faculty of the relevant courses and requested submission either of a topical outline and sample readings or a syllabus for possible submission to SUNY.