

# Curriculum Committee

of the

## Arts and Sciences Senate

To: Executive Committee, Arts and Sciences Senate

From: Elizabeth Stone, Chair, Arts and Sciences Senate Curriculum Committee

Re: 1998-1999 Annual Report

Date: 6 May 1999

The curriculum committee met 23 times during the 1998-1999 academic year. During the fall semester, committee members were: Elizabeth Stone (anthropology and chair of committee), Richard Larson (linguistics), John Cabot (neurobiology), Arnold Strassenburg (physics), Timothy Westphalen (European Languages, literatures, and cultures), Andrea Fedi (European languages, literatures, and cultures), Arlene Feldman (transfer office), Elaine Kaplan (College of Arts and Sciences, ex officio), and Kathleen Breidenbach (College of Arts and Sciences, ex officio secretary). During the spring semester, a student member, Sayed Ali, joined the committee from Student Polity and Strassenburg was replaced by Andreas Mayr (chemistry).

Routine matters are handled by the secretary and announced to the committee at each meeting. There were a great many routine matters resulting from proofreading of the new bulletin text by departments. These generally were corrections of errors in the previous (1997-1999) bulletin or a desire to correct prerequisites, change course titles, strengthen grading policies and add new courses to department's major or minor requirements.

Many submissions to the committee in the fall semester were driven by the departments' desires to incorporate revisions in the new 1999-2001 bulletin.

### **Significant Curricular Initiatives**

*Major revision of the biology curriculum and major:*

In addition to approving a new introductory course designed to improve the learning abilities of many incoming freshmen with weaker mathematics preparation, the committee approved a change in the basic general biology courses from two semesters to three, in order to allow incorporation of

recent advances in the fields of molecular and cellular biology and neurobiology. In addition, the committee approved five new tracks in the major to allow students a degree of specialization at the advanced level.

*Approval of change in D.E.C. category A requirement and revision of writing courses:*

Having been at Stony Brook now for a year, the director the Writing Program, which has changed its name to this year to Writing and Rhetoric, had identified a number of problems with the curriculum and with student attitudes about writing. First, the committee approved a change in writing course designator, numbers, titles and descriptions to more accurately reflect what is now being taught in the courses. Second, because the number of students placing in the "preliminary" college course,

EGC 100, had more than doubled, more students were becoming upset at having to take a course "that didn't count." To address these attitude issues, the committee approved a revision of the D.E.C. A requirement to two courses, WRT 101 (formerly EGC 100) and WRT 102 or 103, with the proviso that students may satisfy the first course of the two course requirement with an appropriate score on the writing placement exam (a score that places the student into WRT 102 or 103).

*Revision of beginning calculus courses:*

The mathematics department has begun a major revision of their beginning courses and calculus instruction in general. As a first step, the committee approved two new courses, MAT 118-C Mathematical Thinking (intended for non-science students) and MAT 122-C Overview of Calculus with Applications (intended primarily for economics and business students), and a revision of MAT 123-C Introduction to Calculus to allow students taking the course to move directly into the existing calculus courses (MAT 125-C Calculus A or MAT 131-C Calculus I). MAT 124-C Introduction to Calculus B, the course students would previously have taken upon completion of MAT 123, was deleted from the curriculum.

*Revision of Humanities major:*

The committee approved a significant streamlining of the major that also strengthened the disciplinary content.

*Revision of French major*

Because of the small number of French majors and recent reductions in the number of faculty, the committee approved a revision to the major that would make it slightly easier for the department to offer courses for the major and allow students to graduate in a timely manner.

*Revision of Astronomy major*

The committee approved revision to the basic major courses that take into account the strengths of the faculty and recent changes and advances in the field.

*Honors College:*

With the expectation that the Honors College will be undertaking a thorough revision of the program beginning next year, the committee approved a change in the 1-credit "soiree" courses that students are required to take during the first two years.

### *WISE*

The committee considered and tabled a proposal to expand the one-year WISE program to two-years. Since the WISE program had submitted a draft of a proposed four-year program, the committee felt it should wait until the University has made a commitment to institutionalize the program before acting on the proposal.

### *Learning Communities Program*

The committee approved two new seminars that will allow expansion of the learning communities into computer science and electrical engineering. The committee also approved an upper-division seminar for a learning community aimed at transfer and upper-division students.

### *Revision/ Approval of Minors*

Revision of German for Business minor, Italian American Studies minor, Interdisciplinary Arts minor, final approval of Service Learning for Community-Based Action Research minor, approval of the FLC minor in Issues in Health and Society: The Case of AIDS.

### *General audience physics and chemistry courses*

The committee approved a new course, CHE 108-E The Extraordinary Chemistry of Ordinary Things, designed to introduce basic chemistry concepts to non-science majors. The committee welcomed this proposal and also approved the proposal for a new physics course, PHY 313-H Mystery of Matter, also designed to introduce physics principles to a general, non-science audience.

## **Committee initiatives:**

### *Interdisciplinary Majors:*

Prompted by the committee's discussions about the revisions to the humanities major, the committee began a serious and thorough consideration of the University two large interdisciplinary majors—Social Sciences Interdisciplinary (SSI) and Multidisciplinary Studies (MTD). The committee met with the director of SSI and the director and advisors of MTD and conducted a survey of students in both majors. A subcommittee was formed including the directors of both majors, the chair of the committee, and representatives from all the major divisional areas and one undergraduate MTD major. The review is expected to continue into next year.

### *Standardize Directed Readings, Research and Internships:*

The committee considered data about directed readings, research and internships and approved a standardized credit range for all of 0-6 for internships and research and 1-6 for readings.

*Revision of Internship Policies:*

The shift of the internship advisor from an academic office into the Career Placement Office prompted a meeting of the committee with the internship manager. With her, the committee drafted guidelines for internships and independent research that would both protect the student and ensure academic integrity and treat both groups of students in the same way.

*Review of Film and Video Policy:*

Because of new technologies, more faculty are showing videos, films, and clips in courses. The committee reviewed the issue and wrote to department chairs reminding them of the University policy on film and video use.

*Coordination with CEAS Committee on Teaching Policy and Curriculum:*

As a result of new course proposals approved by the CEAS CTPC, a serious rift developed between the mathematics department in CAS and the AMS department in CEAS and between the two colleges' respective curriculum committees. AMS proposed to teach courses they considered equivalent to those taught by MAT. The chief concern was not that the courses were proposed but that neither the department nor the CTPC had made an effort to communicate with the math department or other CAS departments or with the CAS curriculum committee regarding the issue of where these courses "fit" in the curriculum. The chair of the CAS curriculum committee met with a representative from CEAS and drafted a proposal for cooperation and communication which, with revisions on both sides, was approved by both committees. In short, it says that both committees will try to be aware of the impact of their actions on the other college and will work openly and collaboratively when issues arise that affect the other college.

The committee met with Dean Paul Armstrong once in the fall semester. Early in the spring, the committee met with the Dean and Provost Rollin Richmond about the issue of the new AMS calculus courses. The committee also met with Associate Dean Mary Rawlinson once each semester.