

Curriculum Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 10 a.m.
McCormick Room, Collins Memorial Library

In attendance: Bill Barry, Alva Butcher, Kathleen Campbell, Julie Christoph, Gary McCall, Jenny Pitonyak, Geoff Proehl, Maria Sampson, Leslie Saucedo (Chair), Courtney Thatcher,

Meeting called to order by Chair Leslie Saucedo at 10 a.m.

Minutes approved as amended.

Agenda Item #1: Announcements

Chair Leslie Saucedo noted that two program reviews have been added to two working group folders. If those working groups can get to them by the last meeting, it would be good. If not, the chair understands. Associate Dean Julie Christoph offered explanations as to why those reviews were slow to come in. The Chair also described plan for completion of Senate charges by the end of the year, including helping Working Group 1 with their charge. All working groups were encouraged to bring any final thoughts about Senate charges to the next CC meeting so that the Chair can include them in the end of year report.

Agenda Item #2: Course Proposals (Working Group 1)

At the recommendation of WG1, the committee approved two newly proposed courses for inclusion in the bulletin: A. LTS/SPAN 376: The Art of Mestizaje (Artistic Approaches Core) and B. COMM190: Introduction to Film Studies: Transnationalism and Modernity. Motion to accept passed.

Agenda Item #3: New IHE pathway approval: “Empire, Colonialism, and Resistance” (Chair Leslie Saucedo)

The Chair reported on her review of the proposal for a new Interdisciplinary Humanities Emphasis (IHE) pathway: “Empire, Colonialism, and Resistance.” The courses appear to fit nicely into the topic. Discussion followed about how many courses are in the pathway and whether or not classes have pre-requisites. The Chair noted that many of the classes intentionally overlapped with classes in the Core. This would be a new, seventh pathway. Chair, “This really works.” Kathleen Campbell noted diversity of departments involved. Motion to approve passed.

Agenda items #4: Academic Calendar Update (Julie Christoph, Associate Dean)

Associate Dean Julie Christoph gave the committee an update on the initial draft of the academic calendar for 2020-2021 and the complete, detailed calendar for the next academic year, 2019-2020. It was noted that a faculty member had expressed a concern about midterms grades being due on the day after spring break, which could pose a problem if faculty are travelling during break and unable to finish grading of work turned in just before break. It was not clear, however, whether or not this concern was shared by others.

Agenda Item #5: Report of Upper-Division Core Approach Review (Working Group 2, attached)

Courtney Thatcher presented the report on behalf of the Working Group: see report below. Thatcher reviewed key points in the report, including their summary recommendations, which the group framed as suggestions, given that we are in the midst of rethinking many of these issues through the work of the Curriculum Task Force (CTF).

It was asked if students can use core classes or humanities pathway classes for the requirement. They can. Discussion followed as well about the relationship between the report and the work of the CTF. Alva Butcher moved to strongly endorse the report and forward it to the Curriculum Task Force for their consideration. Motion passed.

Agenda Item #6: Report of Foreign Languages Graduation Requirement (Working Group 1)

Geoff Proehl presented the report (see below) on behalf of the Working Group, reviewing the group's overall process, the survey it sent to Foreign Language faculty, what came out of the discussion of the Foreign Language faculty that the Working Group convened, and the Working Group's recommendations.

In the discussions that followed, there was particular interest in point #6 under consensus of Foreign Language faculty: "The process of learning a language is important to student development and benefits all who can learn a language. In this light, it might be best to require all students to take at least 2 semesters of a foreign language. In other words, students who are already proficient in 2 languages would take 2 semesters of another language. This would eliminate proficiency testing."

There was concern that this would be seen as the Working Group's or CC's recommendation, especially if the report was forwarded to the Curriculum Task Force. Committee members also noted some ambiguous language in point #6 and asked why the Working Group did not recommend changing the name of the Foreign Language requirement to Second Language or Language Requirement.

These concerns lead Proehl to offer to take the report back to WG1 for revisions and then represent it at the next meeting. The committee accepted this suggestion as meeting time came to an end.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Geoff Proehl, Theatre Arts

March 26, 2019
Curriculum Committee
Working Group 2
Draft report on the upper division requirement

Working group 2 has met and held email conversations in the Spring of 2019 to perform a review of the upper division requirement. We considered the history of the requirement, the 2018 University of Puget Sound Core Curriculum Assessment Report, a survey of department chairs conducted in the Spring of 2019, and a CC meeting discussion. Below we include summaries of these and our recommendations.

Background on the requirement

The upper division requirement first appeared in the 2003-2004 Bulletin along with the new core structure including the “ways of knowing” core requirement. Based on archived faculty meeting minutes from April 4th, 2001, there were three main reasons for the implementation of the requirement: “an undergraduate liberal arts education should... [broaden student] perspective”; “get juniors and seniors out of lower division courses in a positive way”; and it “would encourage creation of some new upper division core courses.”

Key findings from the 2018 University of Puget Sound Core Curriculum Assessment Report

“Two-thirds (67%) of students surveyed reported that the upper division requirement challenged them to learn at an advanced level outside the department of their first major (“very much” or “some”). Many (67%) also reported that they fulfilled the requirement through a second major, minor, or emphasis (“very true” or “somewhat true”). Some surveyed students (30%) reported that it was difficult to find courses to satisfy the upper division requirement because of prerequisites required for upper division courses, which was echoed during the focus groups.

“During the focus groups, all students expressed that they felt that Puget Sound expects them to become more well-rounded students and get more of the “liberal arts” interdisciplinary experience through the upper division requirement. Not only does it give them a chance to learn material outside of their normal realm, but it also gives them the opportunity to look at their primary discipline through a new lens. **Many students met their upper division requirement through classes necessary for a minor or second major, through their Connections course, or through prerequisites for major courses.** However, some students took a random course of their choosing to fulfill the requirement and not any other requirement. For the most part, though, **students don’t have this requirement on their mind as much as other requirements**, likely because it gets fulfilled in the process of completing another requirement. **Students wished they were made more aware of this requirement**, perhaps by their first-year advisor. Additionally, **many students said they would have taken more upper-level classes outside of their major had they had the time.**”

Summary of findings from Spring 2019 survey of department chairs

While many chairs were not sure about the purpose of the upper-divisional requirement, the general sense was that it was created to ensure students take at least one course outside of their major that was not a survey course or at the introductory level. Additionally, it would

provide depth and rigor beyond the core requirements, and many felt this was an important part to a liberal arts education.

For the question, “Do you think other types of courses or a change in the requirement would meet the same goal?”, 26 out of 32 answered “yes”. When asked to explain further, many said it could possibly be done differently but were unsure of how. Some suggested connections courses or requirements related to the proposed pathways as a different way to meet the same goal. Several mentioned that many students meet the requirement through a second major or a minor and that it is perhaps less worthwhile, but that the requirement itself could be changed to make this less likely. Another chair mentioned that it can be hard for transfer students to meet the requirement given that they often have to play catch-up to meet all of their major course requirements.

As for offerings, many departments have almost all of their 300 and 400-level courses without prerequisites, while several departments offer no classes that meet this requirement, or just a couple. There do seem to be many course offerings overall, however.

For the question, “If any such courses are offered (no pre-requisites required for non-majors), do they require extra time spent in class reviewing the necessary pre-requisite material because of the mixed audience of majors and non majors--potentially at the expense of covering other relevant material?”, 9 out of 32 answered “yes”, 6 out of 32 answered “no”, and 11 answered “maybe”.

Last two questions followed up on the above. In general, the courses that meet the upper-divisional requirement do tend to require faculty to spend additional time going over pre-requisite material. One suggested that this has to be done with majors to some extent anyway. Many chairs expressed the benefit of having non-majors in upper level classes. They bring knowledge from other fields and enrich the conversations. One expressed a dissatisfaction in having unprepared students in upper divisional classes as they did not seem willing to work or contribute to the class. It was also mentioned a couple of times that since upper-divisional courses without pre-requisites are available to all students, some spots in certain classes have to be set aside for majors/minors.

Curriculum Committee discussion

Members of the Curriculum Committee brought up that additional graduation requirements have been added since the upper-divisional requirement was instituted. Many connections classes already meet this requirement, also the number of students with minors has increased allowing students to meet the requirement easily.

One person asked if the classes that meet the requirement should be standardized in some way.

Summary of recommendations:

The original purpose of the implementation of the upper-divisional requirement was three-fold: “an undergraduate liberal arts education should... [broaden student] perspective”; “get juniors and seniors out of lower division courses in a positive way”; and to “encourage [the] creation of

some new upper division core courses.” While new courses were certainly created for this requirement, it is unclear if it has succeeded in the other two purposes. Our recommendations are based on this.

- Since many students are meeting the requirement without necessarily realizing it, stronger communication of the requirement and purpose would be beneficial.
 - As many students are meeting the upper-divisional requirement through second majors and/or minors, an exploration into whether or not students are actually seeing the “breadth of depth” expected from a requirement “outside of one’s first major” is recommended.
 - An additional survey or data pull on whether or not juniors and seniors have been successfully removed from lower division courses in a way that opens them up to first-years and sophomores should be done.
 - Given the addition of new requirements since the upper-divisional requirement implementation, some thought should be given as to whether or not this requirement is still needed in its current form.
 - Given the benefit to the students in depth across fields, and to the classroom discussions, the sentiment of the requirement should be maintained even if it is not kept in its current form.
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- **Since the curriculum task force is already looking into this requirement and its suggestions may substantially change its form, we recommend the above be considered but will not further pursue them until the task force’s recommendations are finalized.**