

To: Executive Committee, Arts and Sciences Senate

From: Robert Cerrato, Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Re: 2003-2004 Annual Report

Date: May 31, 2004

Members of the Committee for the 2003-2004 academic year were: Michael Barnhart (History, spring only), Robert Cerrato (Marine Sciences, chair), Arlene Feldman (Transfer Office), Claire Green-Ford (Undergraduate, spring only), Elaine Kaplan (College of Arts and Sciences, Committee Secretary), Ada Hasloeher (Undergraduate), Ellen Lindquist (CAS Graduate Assistant, observer), Judith Lochhead (Music), Catherine Marrone (Sociology), Anthony Phillips (College of Arts and Sciences), Malcolm Read (Hispanic Languages and Literature, spring only), Sarah Sternglanz (Women's Studies), and Thomas Weinacht (Physics).

The curriculum committee met 25 times during the 2003-2004 academic year. Two new majors were approved (European Studies and Asian and Asian American Studies). There were changes to a number of major and minors (Africana Studies, Economics), and dozens of new courses were approved. Significant time and effort was spent resolving pending issues with SUNY System Administration regarding compliance with the SUNY General Education Requirement, especially the American History component of the requirement. Routine matters were handled by the secretary and announced to the committee at each meeting. Routine matters chiefly involved deletion of courses and changes of course titles, descriptions, and/or prerequisites.

Visitors to the Committee included James Staros, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Joan Kuchner, President of the Arts and Sciences' Senate; Mark Aronof, Deputy Provost; Norman Goodman, Chair of the Sociology Department, an elected representative to the SUNY-wide University Faculty Senate, and member of the Advisory Council on General Education; and David Hanson, Director of Undergraduate Studies in Chemistry.

A summary of the Committee's major activities during the academic year follows.

### **Policy Matters:**

**SUNY General Education Requirement:** The Committee adopted guidelines for the submission of general education courses to SUNY System Administration. Upon adoption of the procedures in early November by the University Senate, approximately 150 courses were forwarded to Albany by our campus liaison, Mark Aronof, on a

CD-Rom disk. As the year progressed, a total of 22 additional courses were forwarded to SUNY. At the time of this report (May 2004), we have received approval for only 78 of the 172 courses.

**SUNY American History Requirement:** In mid-fall, the Committee learned that 22 DEC K courses that were pending approval for the SUNY American History requirement had been rejected by the SUNY Advisory Council on General Education. This rejection was final acknowledgement that we had been unsuccessful in our long-standing attempts to convince SUNY that our modified DEC K (“The American Experience in Historical Perspective”) fulfilled the SUNY general education requirement (SUNY-GER) in American History. Upon receiving the news, Provost Robert McGrath directed the campus to immediately develop a plan to comply with the SUNY-GER American History requirement.

The plan, creating a “Skills 4 Competence in American History”, was developed by a group of faculty and administrators and was approved by the University Senate on December 1, 2003. This plan decoupled the SUNY American History requirement from our DEC K. The list of courses that satisfy Skill 4 include some DEC F courses in American History and Government and DEC K courses that SUNY had already approved to meet the SUNY-GER American History requirement.

Skill 4 went into effect for all new students entering the University in Spring 2004 or later. At the time of this memo, the University has not received notification from System Administration that the plan has been approved.

Once the Skills 4 plan was implemented, the Curriculum Committee felt that it was appropriate to return DEC K to its original theme (“American Pluralism”) and course list, since the pluralism component of the curriculum had been lost as a specific requirement. The Arts and Sciences’ Senate and the University Senate approved this restoration. Departments that had previously agreed to move courses from the original DEC K (American Pluralism) to the modified DEC K (The American Experience in Historical Perspective) were contacted to ask whether they wished these courses to be returned to DEC K, effective Fall 2004. Most replied affirmatively.

**Specializations:** PeopleSoft allows specializations to be noted on students’ transcripts. This is advantageous to students, since it allows an additional credential to be added to their official record. The Curriculum Committee was asked by the Arts and Sciences’ Senate Executive Committee to develop guidelines for listing specializations on transcripts. The Committee’s guidelines (appended to this memo) will be taken to the Arts and Sciences Senate Executive Committee in Fall 2004 for approval.

A request from Multidisciplinary Studies for a specialization in Social Sciences was received. The Committee has requested a more formal course proposal for discussion in early fall.

**Ex-Officio Committee Members:** The Committee proposed, and the Arts and Sciences' Senate approved, the addition of two new ex-officio Committee positions for professional employees. Beginning in Fall 2004, the committee will include one professional employee knowledgeable about registration procedures and graduation requirements and one professional employee knowledgeable about both general student concerns and transfer student issues.

**Web-based Curriculum Committee forms:** New course proposal forms, crosslisting forms, and guidelines will soon be available on the College of Arts and Sciences' website.

#### **Departmental Matters:**

**Africana Studies:** Changes to the AFS major, resulting in a more rigorous set of requirements, were approved.

**Asian and Asian American Studies:** Requirements for a new B.A. program were approved. SUNY System Administration and the State Education Department must now approve the major. In order to create a cohesive and sensible numbering system for the several programs joining the AAS department, the Committee approved revised course numbers for Chinese Studies, India Studies, Japanese Studies, and Korean Studies. The Committee also approved several new course proposals and numerous proposals for temporarily or permanently combining AAS courses with courses in other departments.

**Chemistry:** The Committee approved two one-credit organic chemistry honors courses and, after requesting that the department consult with affected departments in CAS, CEAS, and HSC, approved a revision of the second semester of the organic chemistry course sequence.

**Economics:** The Committee approved revised major requirements, proposals to regularize several topics courses, and changes to the economics honors program. The Committee also approved a proposal to require a grade of C in prerequisite courses in order to continue in subsequent economics courses.

**English:** The Committee approved a change in prerequisites for upper-division courses to include EGL 204 as either pre- or co-requisite in order to prevent 204 bottleneck.

**European Studies:** The Committee approved a B.A. program, which must now be approved by SUNY System Administration and the State Education Department. Several new course proposals were approved as part of the proposed major.

**Mathematics:** The Committee approved an alternative registration procedure for MAT 319 Foundations of Analysis/MAT 320 Introduction to Analysis. Also approved was the addition of more stringent prerequisites for MAT 205 Calculus III and MAT 322.

**Science and Engineering Living Learning Center Minor:** The Committee approved revisions to reflect the program's new status as an upper-division component of the Undergraduate College structure and a new course for the minor.

**Social Sciences Interdisciplinary Major:** The Committee discussed the discontinuation of this major with Joan Kuchner, the Undergraduate director of the major, and with Dean James Staros.

**Women's Studies:** Prerequisites were revised for required major courses and special topics courses.

#### **Future Issues for the 2004-2005 Academic Year:**

**Gateway Courses and Potential Grade Inflation:** The Committee is concerned with the request by some units (e.g., the Professional Education Program and the Department of Mathematics) to require that a grade of B- be earned in a course in order to proceed to a subsequent course. Members believe that this will lead to grade inflation because a B- will become the average grade.

**Freshman Orientation Courses:** The Committee learned that both the Undergraduate Council and the CEAS Committee on Teaching Policy and Curriculum had approved a proposal to require all freshmen to register for a College-based version of SBU 101 starting this fall. To date, however, the Committee has not received a proposal from either those proposing this new requirement or from any governance entity.

**SUNY-GER:** The Committee is concerned with the extensive delay in notification about SUNY-GER status for courses that are submitted by the campus. As noted above, only 78 of 172 courses, most submitted to SUNY in November 2003, have been approved as of May 2004, leaving 94 in undetermined status. We feel strongly that System Administration, having insisted upon oversight, should either provide an expedient and transparent procedure for reviewing courses for SUNY-GER requirements or cede such authority to the campus. The current situation, in the Committee's view, is unacceptable and is in urgent need of review.

## Arts and Sciences Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

### Guidelines for Specializations

Spring 2004

The following guidelines will be used by the Curriculum Committee in reviewing requests for **listing an approved track within a major** as a specialization on the transcript:

- 1) To propose listing a specialization, the major must have at least two distinct tracks. One of these may be considered a “general” track and need not be listed as a specialization.
  
- 2) For departmental majors, the specialization should be an area of concentrated study that involves at least 18 upper-division credits within the major.
  
- 3) For interdisciplinary majors such as MTD, the track being proposed for listing as a specialization must focus study on a single theme. The track must also incorporate all of the two or three areas of study within the major, and it must involve most of the upper division courses