

Motion

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning moves that the faculty adopt the new General Education Curriculum for Skidmore College as detailed in the February 28, 2017 Proposal.

Rationale

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) offers this new general education curriculum proposal for consideration and adoption by the faculty. Much of what is proposed is a new way of organizing what many of us already do. By reframing

combined from the Non-Western or Cultural Diversity clusters during their time at the College.

Given the assessment data and research on the impact of courses addressing diversity, CEPP strongly believes the Bridge Experience: Power and Justice requirement in the curriculum, along with a separate Global Cultural Perspectives requirement, will better support the above-mentioned student learning goals.

Both direct and indirect assessments also indicate that Skidmore students and graduates are not adequately meeting goals for quantitative reasoning and scientific literacy. These assessments include the 2014 Skidmore Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning Exam (SLQR), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Alumni Learning Census (ALC). On the quantitative reasoning section of the 2014 SLQR, nonnatural science majors at Skidmore scored a mean of 44% and 52% reported that they never or only sometimes used numerical information to examine real-world problems. Most natural science majors (>80%) reported using numerical information more frequently. The natural science majors averaged a 60% on the quantitative

Finally, the Middle States Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation require written and oral communication, technological competency, and information literacy to be addressed in the curriculum either separately or integrated into academic disciplines. These competencies are already being taught in most departments and programs but could be done so with greater intentionality.

Resources will be made available, including / but not limited to / support for faculty developing new courses, modeling interdisciplinary and integrative approaches, and the stakeholder working groups that will refine learning goals and criteria for individual courses.

The Committee on Educational Policy and Planning will review the general education curriculum one year after full implementation and then every five years

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR SKIDMORE COLLEGE

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) offers this new general education curriculum proposal for consideration and adoption by the faculty. CEPP has reflected on the thoughtful comments and concerns we have heard from faculty, administrators, staff, and students regarding prior versions of this proposal, and we have endeavored to address them in this revision. Much of what is proposed is a new way of organizing what many of us already do. By reframing the general education curriculum we hope to offer significant benefits for our students, especially in their understanding of what the Liberal Arts can do; and, more specifically, how our curriculum at Skidmore provides a means of integrative and life-long learning.

This proposal contains essentially the same number of requirements as our current core curriculum. Yet, this proposal includes a new Bridge Experience that addresses the need to better understand diversity and inclusion,

OVERVIEW

The general education curriculum reflects the collective intellectual values of the Skidmore faculty. Both the ordering of the curriculum and the individual courses in the proposed new curriculum are intended to be logical and coherent. Although a general education curriculum (at Skidmore or elsewhere) is only a partial preparation for an academic and intellectual career, when it is combined with courses that constitute the major, electives, and experiences outside of classes, it completes a liberal arts education.

As articulated by the American Association of Co

in consultation with the appropriate department chair or program director, approve up to 8 maturity -level credits for study at an other institution. CAS does not limit the amount of maturity -level credit that may be awarded in transfer for students participating in an approved off -campus study program.

With the appropriate approval, s tudents may satisfy their general education requirements while studying abroad.

All courses in the proposed general education curriculum except the FYE seminars may fulfill other requirement s at the College. A single course can satisfy up to two of the general education requirements.

INTEGRATIONS

Integration s/ that is, the student's making of meaningful and productive connections among the various courses, ideas, and experiences of a liberal arts education/ accurately describes what we aim to foster in students at Skidmore College. To integrate knowledge is to think beyond the simplicity of a single idea to the broader and deeper concepts that animate the world. It involves the realization that to be liberally educated one must understand that concepts, principles, ideas, experiences, and values do not end at the arbitrary borders of a course or a discipline, but are interwoven in a tapestry of complex knowledge. We hope to challenge our students to be more intentional about this process and about the concepts that undergird it. As such, the principle of Integration s forms the backbone of the new proposed general education curriculum. Its

Bridge Experience: Power and Justice

(1 course)

[A committee of stakeholders will further refine learning goals and criteria for approving courses. Departments, programs, and curriculum committee will determine appropriate credits for qualified courses.]

Students will take a course that interrogates the nature of power and justice / with a focus that may be historical, sociological, literary, anthropological, political, psychological, comparative, contemporary, philosophical, or all or some of these. The course will focus on power and justice through the lens of identity, (dis)ability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, and/or socio-economic class, and may also look at artistic expression and organized political action. Students should reflect on their own circumstances and how they influence knowledge acquisition and understanding. Students should interrogate their own assumptions and place them in relation to distinct cultural frameworks of power and justice. Ideally, students will take a Bridge Experience course in their second or third year.

CEPP COMMENT:

Our [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#)

(Denson, 2009; Chang, 2002; You and Matteo, 2013; Neville et al, 2014), especially when students took additional coursework and or workshops on diversity (Neville, et al.2014).Diversity courses are associated with gains in the critical thinking skills of students as well as their ability for complex thought (Bowman, 2010).Exposure to diversity in the curriculum has been shown to increase the ability of students to understand the perspective of others, to be open to having their views challenged, to be tolerant of differing beliefs, and to work with diverse groups of people (Gurin, Nagda, and Lopez, 2004; Hurtado, Ruiz, and Whang, 2012; Engberg and Porter, 2013)Evidence suggests the impact of diversity in the curriculum lasts well after students graduate from college (Bowman, Brandenberger, Hill, and Lapsley, 2011).

Under our current curriculum as part of the Culture -Centered Inquiry requirement, students take one course from either the Non-Western or Cultural Diversity clusters. For the graduating classes of 2013-2016, 46.0% of the graduates did not take a Cultural Diversity course during their college education and 33.5% did not take a Non -Western course. Of the 2013-2016 graduates, 59.4% took only one course combined from the Non-Western or Cultural Diversity clusters during their time at the College.

Given the assessment data and research on the impact of courses addressing diversity, we believe the Bridge Experience: Power and Justice requirement in the curriculum , along with a separate Global Cultural Perspectives requirement, will better support the aforementioned student learning goals.

Refereni

Gurin, P., Nagda, B. A., & Lopez, G. E. (2004). The benefits of diversity in education for democratic citizenship. *Journal of Social Issues*60, 17-34.

Hurtado, S., Ruiz, A., & Whang, H. (2012). Advancing and assessing civic learning: New results from the diversity learning environments survey. *Diversity and Democracy*15, 10-12.

all courses and capstone experiences faculty are free to design Coda as they see fit.

1. Relevance/ Students will connect to the broader world, which may mean the broader world of academic discourse and/or the world outside of Skidmore College.
2. Integration / Students in the Coda will consciously and reflectively examine their broad and unique liberal arts education.
3. Creativity / Students in the Coda will produce original work and engage with individual ideas / in analysis, invention , or creation / in all fields.

It is expected that by their senior year, students have a firm idea of their academic interests and some idea of their post-college plans. In a Coda, students may work collaboratively with faculty and peers to identify an appropriate integrative course, research project, performance, and/or practicum. Students may choose to fulfill their Coda within their major, but they are free to find interdisciplinary experiences and codas offered by other departments. There are many ways to define such courses, including , but not limited to:

Senior thesis projects or capstone courses that require significant research and writing;

Existing maturity -level courses that require substantial engagement with original research, in-depth analysis, service learning, and/or civic engagement with a focus on integrative learning ;

Practicum experiences within a major (e.g., an Education Studies major may satisfy this requirement with the teaching semester);

A one-credit add-on to an existing 3 or 4 credit course that requires the student to focus on integrative learning, work in collaborative setting with peers and faculty, and present a final product that satisfies the three Coda themes; and

A Coda course that is specifically designed by a faculty member to invite students who do not choose to take on individual research or practicum experiences to engage with the three themes of the Coda.

As part of the Coda, students will have the opportunity to reflect on how their project and liberal arts education connect to society. Working collaboratively with faculty and reflect on the integrative learning experience are essential elements of the senior experience. The Coda is the conclusion of the sequence of integrative experiences, and thus, seniors are expected to be able to engage intentionally and thoughtfully with the process of reflecting on their time at Skidmore.

FQR Courses Approval:

For an existing course to be designated FQR, the course will need to be certified by the Quantitative Reasoning Program Director in conjunction with a QR review team of two STEM faculty, appointed annually by the QR director in consultation with the curriculum committee and the Dean of the Faculty. New courses will need to first have curriculum committee approval prior to seeking FQR approval. To certify a course as FQR, the review team will consider the course syllabus as well as the FQR approval document which outlines the specific ways in which the course addresses the learning goals stated above. Once a course is certified as a FQR course, the course will be reviewed by the QR review team within 5 years of approval or at the discretion of the QR Director.

MA 100:

Quantitative Skills is a 3-hour course that currently exists and is the study of practical arithmetic and geometry, data gathering and analysis, introductory probability and statistics, size and bias in sampling, hypothesis testing, confidence intervals and their use in statistical analysis, linear relationships, interpolation and extrapolation, correlation, linear and exponential growth with practical applications.

Students requiring a basic skills course must complete this course prior to enrolling in an FQR-level course which must be completed prior to enrolling in an AQR course. Therefore, students needing MA 100 must complete this course or an equivalent course by the start of their sophomore year.

CEPP COMMENT:

Our [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#) emphasize the importance of knowledge of human cultures and the physical world through study in the arts, humanities, languages, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. We expect students to analyze, interpret, and apply varied forms of information; understand and use evidence to solve civic, and scientific problems. These skills are essential for a liberally educated student to possess to critically examine results and claims about the world, to make informed decisions and choices, to communicate quantitatively based ideas and thoughts to others, and to develop and model solutions to many of the problems we face in our societies. Both direct and indirect assessments of Skidmore students and graduates indicate these goals are not adequately being met. These assessments include the 2014 Skidmore Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning Exam (SLQR), the National

Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Alumni Learning Census (ALC).
On the quantitative reasoning section of the 2014 SLQR, nonnatural science

CEPP COMMENT:

Courses from a number of disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences will satisfy the Global Cultural Perspectives requirement. Our [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#) emphasize the importance of understanding diversity in national and global contexts, and the ability to interrogate one's own values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences, and to engage effectively and collaboratively with individuals and across social identities.

[See links to further resources at the end of the proposal]

Language Study
(1 course)

[A committee of stakeholders will further refine the learning goals and criteria for approving courses. Departments, programs and curriculum committee will determine appropriate credits for qualified courses.]

Writing

(1 course)

To be completed by end of 2nd year; prerequisite: placement or successful completion of EN 103.

[A committee of stakeholders will further refine learning goals and criteria for approving courses. Departments, programs, and curriculum committee will determine appropriate credits for qualified courses.]

Students in a Writing course will immerse themselves in the process of writing informed by careful reasoning and critical reading. Students will further cultivate their skills in developing ideas, writing from sources, organizing material, and revising drafts. Students will further refine their understanding of grammar, style, and formal conventions of writing. Some students will need prerequisite experience writing in English (e.g., EN 100 and EN 103) before enrolling in a Writing course.

CEPP COMMENT:

Courses that satisfy the writing requirement will necessarily be writing intensive courses; they will have the appropriate lower course caps. The prerequisite must be completed by the end of the first year. Our [Goals for Student Learning](#) will have the appropriate(s) listed.

INQUIRIES

Artistic Inquiry through Practice

(1 course)

[A committee of stakeholders will further refine learning goals and criteria for approving courses. Departments, programs, and curriculum committee will determine appropriate credits for qualified courses.]

Students in a course that satisfies the artistic inquiry requirement will develop an

reflect upon human culture as expressed in historical tradition, literature and languages, art, film, performances, music, historical documents, cultural artifacts, and ideas and beliefs. Students will understand the unique value of the particulars within human contexts and the importance of subjectivity for human experience.

CEPP COMMENT:

Inquiry based activities where students use an inductive and/or deductive approach to study and better understand an aspect of the world where the outcome of the study is not known beforehand;
 Discovery based activities where students use an inductive and/or deductive approach to learn about known phenomena in the universe ; and
 Problem-based activities where students develop their own inductive and/or deductive methodology to address a particular scientific question and/ or problem.

CEPP COMMENT:

On the 2014 Assessment Report on Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning, Skidmore students did well on basic scientific knowledge . On the Nature of Science Literacy Test, Skidmore students generally did well except on questions related to the definition of a theory, the definition of a law, the relationship between theories and laws, the meaning of induction/deduction, and evidence needed to prove a statement true or false. In addition, non -science majors in particular had difficulty related to experimental conditions/design. On the Scientific Literacy portion of the assessment, students were especially challenged on the question related to the design of a study. Our [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#) require knowledge of human cultures and the physical world through study in the arts, humanities, languages, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences

Technology Literacy

[Departments and Programs will consider ways in which discipline-based technology skills can be intentionally included in the major, either through application of the "Writing in the Major" model or by some other mechanism]

Definition:

A technology literate student is able to use effectively appropriate tools to acquire, manage, evaluate, create, and or communicate information, knowledge, or works of art.

Visual Literacy

[Departments and Programs will consider ways in which discipline-based visual literacy can be intentionally included in the major, either through application of the "Writing in the Major" model or by some other mechanism]

A visually literate individual is able to:

- Determine the nature and extent of the visual materials needed;
- Find and access needed images, objects, and visual media effectively and efficiently ;
- Interpret and analyze the meanings of images and visual media;
- Evaluate images, objects, and their sources;
- Use images, objects, and or visual media effectively ;
- Design and create meaningful images, objects, and or visual media; and
- Understand many of the ethical, legal, social, and economic issues surrounding the creation and use of images, objects, and visual media; and access and use visual materials ethically (Adapted from Association of College and Research Libraries, [Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#), Oct. 2011)

Writing in the Major

No significant changes are proposed to the writing in the major requirement at this time.

CEPP COMMENT:

Our [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#) call for our students to

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