

University Core Development Committee

Minutes

Meeting: April 15, 2009 at 12:00 noon-1:30 p.m. in Gasson 215

Present:

Dean David Quigley, Patrick Byrne, Mary Cronin, Cathy Read, Audrey Friedman, Margaret Thomas, James Weiss, Michael Clarke, Stephen Schloesser, Clare Dunsford, Richard Cobb-Stevens

In response to the following email message sent to randomly selected students (mainly Juniors), 20 students agreed to meet with members of the core committee to express their opinions of the core curriculum.

Dear X,

I serve as chair of the University Core Curriculum Committee. Each year we like to meet with a group of students to get their impressions of the core program. Our committee (10 faculty members from different departments) will be available on Wednesday, April 15 from 12:00 noon to 1:30, in Gasson 105. Would you like to participate in this discussion? We would appreciate your comments. By the way, pizza and soft drinks will be available.

Cordially,
Richard Cobb-Stevens
Professor/Philosophy

The following students agreed to participate:

Rachel Crowell (A&S)	Alexandra Tomkins (SOE)
Brian Ramos (A&S)	Jessica Hartman (A&S)
Maria Theodorakakas (SOE)	Ioven Fables (A&S)
Austin Travis (A&S)	Stephan Roundtree (A&S)
Katie Davis (SON)	Victoria Villamil (A&S)
Kaitlin Venables (A&S)	Margaret Mansfield (A&S)
Ariana Chao (SON)	Alexander Luer (A&S)
Chrisopher Nauser (A&S)	Scott Landay (CSOM)
Katherine McAuliffe (A&S)	William Hood (A&S)
Elizabeth Smith (A&S)	

There was agreement among these students (with one exception) that the core curriculum was in general a positive experience, in the sense that it broadened and enriched their academic experience.

There were some complaints about the relevance of the writing requirement. Several students said that they were convinced that their high schools had provided them with adequate writing proficiency. Others thought that faculty supervision of their writing in other courses was more helpful.

The Perspectives and Pulse programs were praised for the way in which the courses in these programs served to integrate themes across departmental lines.

A few students suggested that the History Core might be reorganized so as to provide one semester on European History and one semester on some non-Western approach.

The dialogue was frank, animated, and generally quite positive.

Richard Cobb-Stevens