

BOSTON COLLEGE

CHESTNUT HILL, MASSACHUSETTS 02467

CLARE M. DUNSFORD
ASSOCIATE DEAN
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
617-552-2277
FAX: 617-552-2145
E-MAIL ADDRESS: DUNSFORD@BC.EDU

University Core Development Committee November 3, 2003

Minutes

Members in attendance were Chair Richard Cobb-Stevens, Patrick Byrne, Tim Duket, Clare Dunsford, John Gallagher, Paul Gray, and Dennis Sardella.

The Departments of Economics and Sociology had been invited to come to discuss their contributions to the Social Science core. The first visitor was Cathy Schneider of the Economics Department. Economics has two Social Science core courses—EC131 and 132-- and a few electives that fulfill the cultural diversity requirement. Principles of Economics courses are taught mainly by Dick Tresch, Harold Petersen, and Cathy Schneider in large sections of 200-300; graduate students teach sections of only 35.

The Committee had two concerns about the Econ core: first, that almost no writing is required, understandable given the size of the sections, but nonetheless not ideal; and secondly, that there is little or no training given to teaching fellows and teaching assistants in the meaning of the core or other matters. The Committee asked Schneider to pass on these concerns to her department, and will pursue these matters at a later date, as we ran out of time.

Joining us from the Sociology Department were Chair Stephen Pfohl, Undergraduate Director David Karp, and core coordinator Mike Malec. The Sociology Department offers the largest number of Social Science core courses in the University, with a diverse set of topics. Mike Malec sends all new teachers of the core, including longtime professors, a packet of information that includes information on the core philosophy, suggestions for the syllabus, and copies of University policy statements. Several members of the committee praised the department both for the detailed descriptions of the core elements on the syllabi and for the careful preparation of core instructors. David Karp's syllabus in particular was cited as a "paradigm" of a core syllabus.