

University Core Development Committee
February 10, 2003
Gasson 105 1:30 p.m.

Minutes

In attendance were Chair Richard Cobb-Stevens, Patrick Byrne (Philosophy), Marilyn Cochrane-Smith (Education), Tim Duket A&S Honors), Clare Dunsford (A&S Associate Dean), Maggie Kearney (Nursing), Fr. Frank Murphy (History), Dennis Sardella (Chemistry), and Sandra Waddock (Management).

Catherine Schneider, director of undergraduate studies in Economics, presented a detailed description of department's two core courses: Principals of Economics I: Micro and Principals of Economics II: Macro. These courses are offered in two formats. There are several large lecture courses of about 250 students, generally taught by senior faculty. These courses also include small sections for discussions once a week. These sections are directed by teaching fellows. The remaining sections are smaller classes (35 students). All of these courses are problem-set oriented. It is assumed that students understand the fundamentals of algebra and geometry.

Members of the committee raised questions about attendance at the large lectures, and about the lack of writing requirements. Cathy explained that the small discussion sections are designed to ensure participation that implies presence at the large lectures. She also emphasized that is some clear expository writing involved in the resolution of problem-sets.

Two members of the committee suggested that the Economics Department might think of alternate core options, such as, for example, a history of economic theory. She noted that the department does participate in the Perspectives Program which this orientation. Prof. Frank McLaughlin offers a section of Perspectives: Horizons of the Social Sciences.

Submitted by Richard Cobb-Stevens