

University Core Development Committee

March 14, 2002

1:30 p.m., Gasson 105

Minutes

Members in attendance were Chair Richard Cobb-Stevens, Patrick Byrne, Clare Dunsford, Paul Gray, Rob Gross, Maggie Kearney, Ourida Mostefai, and Sandra Waddock. Joe Quinn was there as a member of the Committee and as a specially invited guest. The agenda was to discuss (1) cultural diversity standards, and (2) resources for the science departments.

1) Cultural diversity

In response to a recent challenge by Professor Maxim Shrayner of Slavic Languages to expand the definition of cultural diversity courses to include Jewish and Russian subjects, the Committee sought to clarify its position to Dean Quinn. Essentially, the Committee feels that we need to stay within the definition of cultural diversity as promulgated in the Task Force document of 1991. The Committee does not have the authority to change the definition. Furthermore, the definition was the result of vigorous debate and careful compromise, and it is felt that it would not be productive to reopen the debate at this time. In response to the point that it is always good to encourage more cultural diversity courses, it was pointed out that we have about 120 courses now, so there is no dearth of courses.

There was also an interesting discussion of whether cultural diversity courses should by definition present the clash of two points of view, the foreign and the familiar, rather than simply presenting an exotic culture in and of itself.

2) Issues of the natural science core

Richard briefly summarized our two meetings with the science departments: Physics, Biology, Geology, and Chemistry. Over the course of a lengthy conversation members raised at least three major issues:

- that the University sends conflicting messages regarding the value of research and of teaching, especially in the core;
- that the University should address explicitly the two-tier system of teaching that has evolved, and reward part-time and adjunct instructors more fairly;
- and that teaching in the science core could be improved by the addition of resources, the reallocation of existing resources, the better training of teaching fellows, and monitoring the adequacy of English language skills among graduate students who teach.

Joe Quinn asked that the Committee make a list of recommendations regarding the science core, including specific recommendations for the individual departments. We will try to meet with Jack Neuhauser after we have completed this task.

University Core Development Committee
October 8, 2002
Gasson 105, 1:30 p.m.

Minutes

In attendance were Chair Richard Cobb-Stevens, Patrick Byrne, Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Tim Duket, Clare Dunsford, Maggie Kearney, Fr. Frank Murphy, Dennis Sardella, and Sandra Waddock. Our invited guests were Mary French and Pamela Hinves of Transfer Admissions to discuss issues of advanced placement.

The primary agenda was to decide whether we wanted to enforce the rule now in the Catalog that students must take a minimum of nine core courses at Boston College. Currently there is no way to enforce this policy. Mary and Pam distributed examples of students who have fulfilled more than six core courses with AP or dual enrollment courses. They also raised the more basic question whether we should reevaluate how we award AP, including whether we should recommend raising the scores accepted for credit to a minimum of 4 (some departments currently accept 3's). The information they handed out included comparisons with the AP policy at our competitor schools.

The committee asked Mary and Pam a number of questions regarding the effect on student enrollment of enforcing the "rule of 9" (none expected), the number of students who might have six or more AP courses at admission (estimated at 400-500), and whether we should treat AP the same as dual enrollment courses (Georgetown does not, for instance). Frank Murphy then moved that we create a subcommittee to work with Admissions and the departments to come up with a proposal regarding the number of core courses that must be taken at BC and to include general recommendations regarding AP credit. Frank's suggestion was unanimously approved, and Dennis Sardella agreed to chair the subcommittee, with Tim Duket and Clare Dunsford as members. Richard Cobb-Stevens and Clare Dunsford will meet with Joe Quinn first to see how he would like us to proceed.

Submitted by Clare Dunsford