**Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum**

**Annual Report for Academic Year 2011-2012**

We share this preliminary draft of our annual report to create an opportunity for questions or discussion at the May 11 faculty meeting and include Appendix H – a revised report on Supporting Writing Through Out the Curriculum.

As usual, the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum (CC) devoted much of its agenda to proposals from departments and programs. Building on conversations and concerns raised last year, CC piloted a more active collaboration with CAP in considering position requests. Our charge from the Faculty by-laws (see Appendix A) – “general authority and responsibility to insure the integrity, cohesion, and excellence of the curriculum” – and the composition of this committee makes it a natural forum for conversation about collaboration among faculty, students and administrative staff. We engaged the possibilities and challenges of the evolving diversity of the student body. And we monitored and tweaked the administration of the new general degree requirements.

After an overview of the organization of the committee and our process for the year, this report discusses our collaboration with the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP); revisions to the curriculum in the form of proposals from departments and programs and new course proposals; our facilitation of a conversation about responding to the evolving diversity of our student body; the implementation of the revised general degree requirements; as well as other agenda items. It concludes by identifying future agenda items.

This is a preliminary report (comments and suggestions are welcome). The final report as well as a number of appendices will be posted to <http://www.brynmawr.edu/cc> by mid-May. Appendix H, a revision of the report on Writing Initiatives, which we shared at the January faculty meeting, is included in this draft.

# Administrative/Procedural

The voting membership of the Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum (CC) consisted of the following faculty:

Don Barber (Geology) (2009-12)

David Ross (Economics) (2009-12) (Chair)

Michael Allen (Political Science) (2010-13)

Gail Hemmeter (English and Writing) (2010-13)

Susan White (Chemistry) (2010-13) (on leave, Fall 2011)

Tim Harte (Russian)(2011-14)

The Provost, the Dean of the Undergraduate College, (who both serve *ex officio*), and two students elected by the undergraduate student body were non-voting members of the Committee.

Kim Cassidy

Michelle Rasmussen

Sharan Mehta (2011-12)

Sarah Theobald (2011-12)

(The non-voting members are invited to attend all Committee meetings, except when the voting members decided to meet in executive session.) In addition, the Committee invited the Dean of Studies (Judy Balthazar) and the Registrar (Kirsten O’Beirne) to be in regular attendance at its meetings. The Committee notes its thanks to the Dean’s Office for providing administrative support through the **able assistance of Joann O’Doherty**.

The committee formed three subcommittees for processing new course proposals, with the Registrar serving on all three:

Allen, Balthazar, Barber

Balthazar, Hemmeter, Ross

Harte, Rasmussen, White

The committee selected liaisons to various committees and working groups:

Ad hoc Committee on Implementing 2/2+ Balancing Model – Michael Allen

CAP- David Ross (Alison Cook-Sather was CAP liaison to CC)

CLIC-David Ross

Community College Connection working group – Don Barber and Tim Harte

Psychology External Review – Susan White

Haverford EPC – David Ross

Praxis Steering Committee- David Ross

Quantitative & Mathematical Reasoning Working Group - Don Barber

TCCAC- Susan White

Writing Initiative- Gail Hemmeter

The committee met weekly through both semesters and held no executive sessions.

Judy Balthazar, Sharon Mehta, David Ross and Sarah Theobald (for the committee) and Ignacio Gallup-Diaz (for the Curricular Renewal Working Group) participated in a student forum November 2 to discuss the revised General Degree requirements.

# Collaboration with CAP

When the Faculty By-Laws were changed to call for more cooperation between CAP and CC, no clear guidelines were created to guide that cooperation. Both “consultation” and “cooperation” have been variously interpreted in different years and under different circumstances. Building on this experience led the two committees to pilot more specific procedures for sharing perspectives on position requests. The pilot procedures and revisions for 2012-13 are described on pages 3-6 of the CAP annual report.

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/cap/documents/CAPAnnualReport2011-2012_42012.pdf>

CC’s greater involvement in the process of considering position requests involves a significant time commitment in the middle of the academic year, but the committee members found the investment well worth this price: We found the experience deeply informative -- providing us a perspective on the rationale for curricular choices we could not have obtained in any other

way. It is reassuring going forward that a) CC generally raised the same concerns and questions as CAP, but b) we also brought new perspectives. We faculty representatives came away impressed with the collegial nature of the final meetings with departments and hope that our presence helped further dissipate any taint of confrontation. CC’s more visible involvement in the position request process helped to implement the Faculty’s commitment that new positions be conceived broadly as serving inter- and cross-disciplinary needs. Balancing this commitment with the immediate goals of submitting departments remains the greatest source of tension between departments and the committees evaluating requests.

CC looks forward to facilitating conversations about curricular needs in the spring of each year that grow out of annual course planning and that might lead to position requests in the fall.

# Revisions to Major, Minor and Concentration Curricula

## Department and Program Proposals

The committee approved a proposal for a new major in International Studies (Appendix C) and the conversion of the Neural and Behavioral Sciences Concentration to a Neuroscience Minor (Appendix D). We clarified language or otherwise approved minor changes in the requirements for the Child and Family Studies Minor and the Economics Major and Minor. We endorsed the Penn Engineering 4 + 1 partnership (Appendix E).

## New Course Proposals

CC continues to review new course proposals, primarily to assist faculty, particularly those new to the community, in matching learning goals and assignments to the expectations and capabilities of students at the level designated for the course. These reviews also assist the committee in staying current with curricular developments in majors, minors and concentrations between major department or program reviews.

The course proposal form seeks to serve as a checklist for instructors and chairs to ensure that additions to the curriculum address items the Faculty has identified as important considerations. We have asked the Registrar to take responsibility for revising the form each semester in consultation with the Committee

The challenges of filling interim positions mean that some new courses need to be added to the Curriculum after the close of the spring semester. CC has authorized the Deans’ Office in consultation with the Register to review course proposals during this period on a one-shot basis with a CC review to follow in the fall semester.

CC reviewed 18 new course proposals for spring 2011 and 30 new course proposals for 2011-12 (Appendix F). We also reviewed one course change from focus (half-credit) to full semester course; and two changes in course level/number.

# Responding to our Diverse Student Body

This past fall, we found it hard to ignore the possibilities and challenges of the increasing diversity of our students, their backgrounds and expectations. In collaboration with the Admissions Committee, the Academic Support Council, and the Teaching Learning Institute (TLI), CC fostered a series of conversations within the faculty focused on helping one another identify changes we can make to better meet the needs of our students today.

The Admissions Committee (Appendix G1) shared a profile of the changing applicant pool and application review process. The Provost and Dean of the Undergraduate College (Appendix G2) led us through a review of academic success resources available to students outside of the classroom. David Ross (for CC) and Alison Cook-Sather (TLI) facilitated a faculty discussion April 18 (Appendix G3 and G4) designed to identify concrete next steps for better teaching, supporting, and learning from our students. CC, the Academic Support Council and the Provost will work together to facilitate next steps emerging from this conversation.

Overlapping this work, CC continued to focus on the components of Bryn Mawr’s writing program. We looked for ways to improve how we teach students to develop as writers and to ensure that we prepare them for the writing challenges of our liberal arts curriculum as well as those of their future careers and professions. We asked Kim Cassidy, Michele Rasmussen and Gail Hemmeter to draft a framework for moving forward and brought that document to the January faculty meeting.

That discussion guided our revision of that document (Appendix H). The revised report now details several initiatives that will be implemented in 2012-2013. We recommend that next year’s CC bring forward a few proposals (some complementary, some offering alternative investment of resources) that require more seasoning within the full faculty, among them

* Requiring a writing-intensive course beyond the Emily Balch Seminars for all students;
* Requiring all students to write a proposal for entering a particular major (as students now do for independent and double majors);
* Asking students to compile a writing portfolio during their four years at the college, containing samples of their written work and reflections on their development as writers;
* Creating a stand-alone Department of Writing or Writing Program.

# General Degree Requirements

Our discussions here focused primarily on how to apply the general degree requirements to Haverford courses, non-native English speakers and transfer students (including McBrides and participants in the Community College Connection [C3])

## Emily Balch Seminar

CC has advised the deans to keep the ESem requirement in place for all students entering as McBride Scholars or through the C3 program.   Those who enter Bryn Mawr in the spring semester will take ENGL 125 instead. The Registrar and Dean of Studies will evaluate each non-C3 and non-McBride transfer student's transcript on a case-by-case basis.  Only those who have taken similar reading- and writing-intensive, text-focused seminars that focus on critical thinking will be allowed to satisfy the requirement via a course completed prior to matriculation at Bryn Mawr.

## Foreign Language Requirement

### Meeting the Requirement Away from Bryn Mawr

CC has endorsed the following criteria for evaluating course work students wish to transfer-in to Bryn Mawr. Students who complete a minimum of 8 credits (that is, 8 semester hours) of consecutive foreign language courses prior to matriculating at Bryn Mawr will have satisfied the Bryn Mawr foreign language requirement. In practical terms, this means that C3 students must complete three consecutive 3-credit courses.

Transfer students who have completed one 4-credit course and C3 students who have completed two 3-credits courses may take our placement exam and may complete the requirement with one more course in that language at Bryn Mawr. Students who have completed fewer than 4 credits (that is, 4 semester hours) prior to matriculating at Bryn Mawr will take our placement exam and proceed to complete the entire foreign language requirement at Bryn Mawr. CC approves granting these students transfer credit for coursework completed prior to matriculation at Bryn Mawr, even if the titles of those courses imply that the student is “repeating the same material” at Bryn Mawr.

CC endorsed the recommendation of the language departments that Penn Language Center (or other courses that meet for less than 150 minutes per week) NOT satisfy the Foreign Language Requirement, although students could receive elective credit.

### Non-Native English Speakers

CC advises defining a non-native English speaking student as one who presented a TOEFL score as part of the application process.

As best we can determine, the last sentence of the foreign language general degree requirement (section II.B.3.b of the Curricular Rules) – “Non-native speakers of English may choose to satisfy all or part of this requirement by coursework in English literature” – received virtually no discussion on the floor of the Faculty when adopted in 2010. The policy has left a number of faculty, staff and students dissatisfied. However, CC has concluded that it makes sense to proceed with the existing requirement until the general degree requirements are reviewed in AY13-14.

A misunderstanding of the revised rules allowed non-native English speaking members of the class of ‘15 to count ESEM toward the 2-credit requirement. That will not be true with future classes. CC agreed that any 2-course combination of ENGL 125 and 200-level English courses would be consistent with the foreign language requirement as listed in the current Curricular Rules.

## Distribution (Approaches) Requirement

CC grappled with a number of issues related to implementation of the Approaches to Inquiry distribution requirement.

1. As discussed in the 2010-11 Annual Report, identifying courses at Bryn Mawr that would satisfy the new requirement was a challenging process. We received relatively few examples of learning goals that clearly articulate how individual courses help students articulate what it means to engage in the designated approach. CC sponsored a discussion during the October faculty meeting to discuss strategies and challenges faced by faculty. We came away from that discussion (and responses to queries circulated before that discussion) with a sense that many faculty had in fact revised courses and syllabi to better reflect a focus on cross cultural comparisons, inquiry into the past and critical interpretation. Most faculty teaching SI courses felt that few changes were needed to ensure adequate engagement.
2. The Curricular Rules specify that the courses a student identifies as meeting the Approaches requirement must be located in four distinct departments. As a practical matter, CC approved allowing compliance by designating courses with four different 4-letter prefixes, even though those courses may be cross-listed in one of the other four departments or programs.
3. CC confirmed that 300-level courses would not be listed in the catalog as meeting the distribution requirement. Students typically would have met the requirement through prerequisite courses; listing the courses would give students a false sense of the number of options available to them.
4. CC agreed that students wishing to count toward the Approaches requirement a course not taken at Bryn Mawr must bring the request to the special cases committee. We will follow this procedure for 2012-13 and see if it presents problems.
5. The C3 working group has identified a set of courses that will allow CCP and MCCC students to satisfy as many as four approaches prior to matriculating at Bryn Mawr College. For non C3 transfer students, the Registrar and Dean of Studies will evaluate each student's transcript on a case-by-case basis.
6. CC asks the Provost to distribute a list of courses with general degree requirement designations before fall staffing meeting as a prompt to see if changing staffing alters the appropriate designations.
7. In April 2011, the Haverford faculty agreed to allow individual departments and faculty to designate courses satisfying Bryn Mawr’s Approaches requirement. By the end of March 2012, no Haverford courses had been designated. This situation limits choice for our students and weakens the Bi-Co relationship. The number of courses taken by first-year students at Haverford declined significantly this year. For example, enrollments by first-year Bryn Mawr students at Haverford in spring 2012 were down 33% from last year. We expect the trend to get worse, not better, in the sophomore year, as students become more focused and strategic about completing requirements.

One challenge to classifying Haverford courses is lingering dismay that Bryn Mawr did not discuss changes in the general degree requirements before adopting them in Spring 2010. A second, which was also felt by Bryn Mawr faculty, is the requirement that faculty proposing courses articulate in some fashion the way the course will engage students in the appropriate Approach.

* 1. In April, CC accepted Approaches designations for EDUC courses taught at Haverford.
  2. CC has created a form to allow faculty on either campus to nominate existing courses on either campus to satisfy the Approaches requirement.
  3. One strategy for focusing our effort to increase the number of Haverford courses classified would be to start with courses that are similar to ones that satisfy the Approaches at Bryn Mawr.
  4. A special outreach strategy may be needed for students who want to study subjects that Bryn Mawr doesn’t offer, such as music, fine arts, religion, and Japanese. Students who go to Haverford to study these subjects have a harder time meeting their requirements, first because these subjects themselves do not meet Approaches (yet) and second, because their schedules get complicated if they must return to Bryn Mawr to take a course that meets an Approach.

## Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning Requirement

1. CC agreed to allow students who matriculated in August 2011 (and thereafter), to complete the Quantitative & Mathematical Reasoning Requirement through QU courses taken at Haverford.

1. CC confirmed that 300-level courses would not be listed in the catalog as meeting the QM requirement. Students typically would have met the requirement through prerequisite courses; listing 300-level would give students a false sense of the number of options available to them.
2. CC agreed that students could routinely fulfill their QM requirement elsewhere with prior approval from Registrar.
3. Many C3 students (and other transfer students) must complete a math course at their community colleges to meet the requirements of the associates degree. However, many will not be prepared for calculus or statistics and must instead take lower-level math courses equivalent to QUAN 001 and MATH 001. CC agreed to allow all transfer students to earn up to 2 units of Bryn Mawr credit for courses taken at other schools that are the equivalent of QUAN 001 and MATH 001. If they need to enroll in QUAN 001 or MATH 001 upon matriculation, they will not retain the transfer credit.
4. CC asked the Quantitative Reasoning Working Group to confirm the preliminary QM classification for Bryn Mawr courses. The new requirement expands the range of courses that fulfill the new requirement but anticipates that those courses will engage the material with greater depth now that all students will have fulfilled the quantitative readiness requirement.

## Physical Education Requirement

The Committee moved and the Faculty approved (September and November faculty meetings) a revised physical education requirement for the Curricular Rules (Appendix I).

## Credit/No-Credit and the Major Requirement

CC agreed that catalog copy describing the CR/NC policy be made consistent with the Curricular Rules so that only those courses used to satisfy the major requirement cannot appear as CR/NC on the student’s transcript.

# Other 2011-12 Agenda Item

## Assessment

CC collaborated with the Student Curriculum Committee in advising the Provost on revisions to the College Course Evaluation forms. We agreed to review results tabulated from “page 2” of the form for a sample of courses to consider the usefulness of the form in assessing, for example, the implementation of the revised general degree requirements.

## Cross-Listing Courses

Cross-listing of courses has a number of practical difficulties including bumping up against the limited range of course numbers, administering enrollment caps and prerequisites, updating course information, monitoring degree requirements and double-counting enrollments in College resource planning. As the number of potential linkages across departments and programs grow, these practical difficulties will become insurmountable.

The committee would prefer to replace cross-listing of courses with a more flexible system that identifies for students and advisors courses that meet or complement major requirements and other pathways through the curriculum. We see such a system as an important goal of the Bi-Co administrative system under development.

At the same time we need to address the concerns of colleagues who see the four-letter course prefix associated with particular programs and departments \as an important tool in identifying curriculum and transcript credentials and in fostering dialog across disciplines.

## 360 Courses

Students, faculty and the greater Bryn Mawr community have welcomed the 360º program with great enthusiasm. CC endorsed a preliminary report and set of recommendations for on-going coordination with the 360 steering committee. A revised version will be shared with the faculty in the fall. CC will identify a liaison to serve on the steering committee.

Ideally, interested faculty would develop 360º cluster proposals two years before the target semester and coordinate scheduling to accommodate faculty leave schedules and department and program needs. CC will evaluate the proposal in the fall of the year before the cluster is to be offered (once new courses for spring semester have been processed).

## Community College Connection Initiative

Last spring, Bryn Mawr College was awarded a three-year grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to develop connections with the Community College of Philadelphia and Montgomery County Community College, with the goal of enrolling five transfer students from each community college each year. Bryn Mawr was the ninth selective college or university in the country selected for the Foundation’s Community College Transfer Initiative, joining Amherst College, Bucknell University, Cornell University, and Mt. Holyoke College in paving the way for exceptional community college students to enroll at some of the nation’s most elite institutions.

Judy Balthazar and Christina Dubb convened a working group to oversee the process of identifying courses at CCP and MCCC that would meet general degree and major requirements (the former are discussed in Section V above). Appendix J contains the C3 handout shared with the faculty in November as well as evaluations of ways CCP and MCCC transfers could meet the Bryn Mawr general degree requirements.

## Credentials

The Advisory Council of the Faculty asked the CC chair to organize a meeting to discuss a concern about the growth of credentialing programs and activities that are implemented under the auspices of the College over which there has been no oversight by the Faculty, which has responsibility for academic matters, including curricular standards. That meeting provided a sense of the rich array of co-curricular learning opportunities available to our students, which will only multiply in the future.

Some students receive Commonwealth sanctioned certificates (e.g., for Home and School Visitor or Secondary Teacher programs); others receive certificates for meeting standards set by the Red Cross or some other organization.  Arts and Sciences graduate students receive the Dean’s Certificate in Pedagogy for participating in a series of co-curricular activities.     Undergraduate departments will often acknowledge in letters of recommendation that students have completed a track or concentration (in contrast to Concentrations approved by the Faculty).   Students who have attended one of the recent week-long finance or management workshops receive a certificate of completion.    Students admitted to participate in the post baccalaureate program receive course-credit on a transcript.   The June 2010 Curricular Renewal Working Group final report recommended that the Faculty explore setting standards for Global Focus, Global Scholars and International Social Work certificates as well as exploring a process by which students could attain a credential in enterprise leadership.

Among the suggestions that emerged from this meeting and subsequent discussion are resuming conversations about creating a co-curricular transcript or database of such learning opportunities, creating a small committee o faculty and staff to review new certificate opportunities, making members of CC available to individuals or groups who are proposing new certificate programs, helping students better articulate their co-curricular learning experiences without the need for formal credentials.

# Future Agenda

CC will have discussed at its May 9 final meeting recommendations for next year’s committee. Potential items (not yet approved) include the following:

## For Next Year or Beyond

CC should move quickly next fall to solicit nominations for Haverford courses that will satisfy the **Approaches to Inquiry distribution requirement**. The goal is to have in place by spring pre-registration in November a substantial number of Haverford courses meeting one of the four Approaches. We will provide a simplified form for nominating courses, will reach out to individual departments, and will consider asking for time on the September Haverford faculty meeting agenda.

**Quantitative Skills:** The Quantitative Skills Working Group should work with the Director of the Quantitative Learning Program to assess the administration of the Quantitative Readiness Diagnostic Placement Exam, the effectiveness of the QSems, the experience of students in courses requiring a Quantitative Readiness prerequisite; and to support the development of the Quantitative Learning Center. CC should complete its review of QM courses – those courses satisfying the second part of the Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning general degree requirement.

CC, the Academic Support Council and the Provost should work together to facilitate next steps in responding to the **evolving diversity of the student body**.

CC should be prepared to work with CAP and individual departments and programs to implement elements of **CAP’s 2010-11 working model** related to the multiple pathways through the major, the senior capstone experience, and the first-year experience.

**Writing Initiative:** CC should evaluate steps taken next year to support successful student writing and facilitate a conversation among the faculty on additional proposals (some complementary, some offering alternative investment of resources) that require more seasoning.

**Pathways and Cross-listing**: CC should continue working with the Registrar to find ways of identifying courses that complement one another in meeting student learning goals and that will one day substitute for cross-listing of courses. CC should find ways to address concerns raised by faculty who are loath to eliminate cross-listing. Two projects begun in 2011-12 were note completed: (1) Contact students over the past 15 years who have entered A&S PhD programs sorted by undergraduate major; survey them to determine how the combination 4-letter course prefix codes on the transcript affected admissions decisions. (2) Contact Liza Jane Bernard to discuss addressing student concerns about how prospective employers evaluate Bryn Mawr transcripts.

**Transitional Planning**: CC, CAP and the Provost should work together to encourage departments affected by future post-retirement FTE line reductions and changes in graduate programs to think through implications for the undergraduate curriculum, to foster cooperation with other departments and programs, and to request transitional support for experimenting with curricular innovations.

**Focus Courses:** CC should consider student and faculty evaluations of focus (half-semester, half-credit) courses introduced since fall 2010.

**Course Credits:** CC should continue to monitor the impact of the current Credit/No Credit option on the quality of learning in courses where a relatively large number of students select the option. CC should consider a Curricular Rule over whether faculty should have the option of offering courses with only a Credit/No Credit option. CC should consider the merits of limiting the number of independent research opportunities that can be counted toward the number of credits required for graduation.

**Education Major:** CC should review in consultation with CAP and EPC, the proposed Major in Education Studies, which CC had solicited during the 2010-11 year.

**Conditionally Accepted Courses:** CC should review new courses proposed during summer 2011 and “Theory and Practice: Humanities” (Phil 253), conditionally approved for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 academic years.

Appendix I of the 2010-11 Curriculum Committee Annual Report (Section V repeats the recommendations from the **Curriculum Renewal Working Group** May 2010 Final Report with a number placed by each recommendation that arguably requires action by Curriculum Committee. Continuing to review these recommendations remains part of our agenda. But, candor requires that we note that ranking the importance of these recommendations will be largely a function of the degree to which they attract sponsors and advocates in the College community.

**Grading:** CC should work with the student curriculum committee to formulate a proposal for considering the effectiveness of the current grading system.

**Curricular Rules:** CC should review discrepancies among the Curricular Rules, college catalog and current administrative practice.

## 2013-14

### The Faculty agreed to review the revised general degree requirements adopted in 2010.

### CC will review the Child and Family Studies Minor and the Environmental Studies Minor.

## 2014-15

CC will review the International Studies Major and Neuroscience Minor.

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