

The Process for LA&S Cluster Approval

Part One: Introduction

The goal of this new LA&S curriculum is to simplify the requirements for students, while allowing them more electives. Not every course is expected to need LA&S designation, for students will be able to take a greater variety of other courses as their electives. With the current core curriculum, students had little freedom to choose electives, particularly those students with double majors or with majors that had lots of requirements. The new curriculum provides students with more freedom to choose electives, so faculty and departments should be less concerned about securing LA&S designation for their courses in order to ensure sufficient enrollment.

Furthermore, it would not be desirable for every course that currently has LA&S designation to automatically receive LA&S designation under the new curriculum, due to the need to assess the new curriculum. In the past, courses were given such designations without sufficient consideration of whether or not they were meeting the objectives of the various clusters. The LA&S Council sincerely hopes to avoid such a situation from happening again. We hope that by streamlining the number of courses that fulfill these objectives, students will be more likely to learn what is necessary for successful LA&S assessment. Additionally, this will enable the departments to select those courses that they believe are the most appropriate ones to introduce the students to their disciplines.

For LA&S cluster approval, departments will need to fill out a simple one-page form (see Appendix A) for each course it would like to see designated part of the LA&S curriculum. On the form, they will be asked to note why each proposed course fills one or more of the goals of the cluster. The goals and objectives of the new curriculum are discussed below (Part Three).

Part Two: Structure of the New Curriculum

A) Science, Math, and Technology: 4 Courses (minimum 12 credits)

- 1 math course
- 1 lab course
- 1 health/fitness related course
- 1 elective

These courses should work towards some of the following goals (discussed in part three):

Problem Solving and Synthesizing
Communication
Citizenship

B) Citizenship and the World: 3 Courses (Minimum 9 credits)

- 1 history course
- 1 human behavior course

- 1 elective

These courses should work towards some of the following goals (discussed in part three):

Citizenship
Ethical Reasoning
Problem Solving and Synthesizing
Aesthetic Appreciation

Also, at least one of these courses must address Global Diversity (discussed in part three).

C) The Arts: 5 courses (including Writing I & II, Minimum 15 credits)

- 1 arts course
- 1 literature course
- Writing 1 & 2
- 1 elective

These courses should work towards some of the following goals (discussed in part three):

Communication
Aesthetic Appreciation
Citizenship
Ethical Reasoning

Also, at least one of these courses must address Global Diversity (discussed below).

Part Three: The Goals, Objectives, and Global Diversity

The new curriculum has five primary goals (aesthetic appreciation, citizenship, communication, ethical reasoning, and problem-solving.) In attaining these goals, there are a number of objectives that the curriculum seeks to attain. In determining whether a course belongs in a specific cluster, one should look at the goals of that cluster to see whether the course meets some of those goals, as well as some of those objectives.

a) Goal one: Aesthetic Appreciation:

The curriculum should strive to foster within the students an appreciation of the various art forms that people have developed to express themselves, their beliefs, values, and cultures. Through an examination of various literary, fine and performing arts, students will attain a greater understanding of how different societies throughout time have used the different texts and art forms to express what was happening politically, economically, socially, culturally, and aesthetically in their world. The curriculum should also strive to foster within the students an ability to express how the various texts or artworks engender a response within themselves.

Objectives for Aesthetic Appreciation:

- The students will demonstrate understanding of the different characteristics of the texts or artworks from various cultural backgrounds from antiquity to the present. They will discuss these texts or artworks within their historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. They will identify where, when, how, and by whom a text or an artwork was created.
- The students will interpret primary and secondary literary texts in terms of their historical or cultural context, form, or meaning. They will express and justify their critical judgments in writing and in speech. Finally, the students will make academic arguments using reasons and evidence appropriate to their field of study in writing as well as speech.
- For creative work in the arts, students will work to establish effective form (in creative writing, music, theater, or the visual arts) that expresses strong, personal, and if possible, unique content.
- The students will express their own response to a particular artwork in a manner that is thoughtful, informed, and nuanced. The students will demonstrate an appreciation of beauty, and of the significance of aesthetics as a fundamental characteristic or mode of expression of the human experience.

b) Goal Two: CITIZENSHIP

There are two major meanings of citizenship: national and world. National citizens are full-fledged members of a nation-state, and enjoy the rights and privileges of their society. Correspondingly, they have obligations to their fellow citizens and to their nation as a whole. Similarly, world citizens recognize that they have a moral responsibility to promote the good of persons anywhere on the planet. This recognition stems from the fact that in an increasingly globalized world, all human beings are connected with each other.

Citizenship promotes the good of persons on two levels. The first and basic level is that of justice: what is owed others as a matter of right and reciprocal duty or obligation. The second level consists in actualizing the potentialities of persons as beings endowed with reason and conscience. By actualizing the potentialities of students, we empower them to actualize the potentialities of others in the national or international arenas. The students will be members of an academic community that fosters pluralism, mutual respect, appreciation of divergent views, and awareness of the importance of individual rights. As John Dewey succinctly put it: the school should be a microcosm of society.

Objectives for Citizenship:

- Students will identify justice and injustice in such realms as the political, social, and economic arenas and discuss ways to promote justice.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of our political system and identify various means by which individuals may participate in our society as a constitutional democracy.
- Students will show an understanding of how American diversity best flourishes when it also promotes the common good of America as a unified community.

- Students will exhibit an understanding and/or participation in the ecological health of the earth and the good of its diverse species.

c) Goal Three: COMMUNICATION

The ability to communicate effectively with others is of paramount importance in the lives of all citizens. Our modern world--- comprised of people with different perspectives, cultural experiences, and values--- requires that we speak, write, and listen with sensitivity and skill. Communication holds for us all the capacity to create new understandings and to negotiate new meanings. As both an attitude and a skill, communication lies at the center of an educated citizenry.

Effective communication is fundamental to students' general education as well. The capacity to listen respectfully and critically, to explain points clearly, and to write effectively to a variety of audiences enables students to extend their learning throughout their entire college careers. Understanding the potential of emerging media technologies will enable students to acquire new communication literacies and enhance their education within and beyond the classroom.

Objectives for Communication:

Students will:

- Engage critically and constructively in the exchange of ideas.
- Express thoughts orally and in writing with clarity and precision.
- Integrate knowledge from different scholarly sources.
- Exhibit a facility with using a variety of rhetorical strategies in writing and speaking.
- Employ a variety of media to express meaning clearly and creatively.
- Listen to others in order to understand purpose and meaning.
- Recognize how to participate in/or lead groups to accomplish goals.
- Recognize and express multiple viewpoints and the pros/cons of them.

d) Goal Four: Ethical Reasoning:

Our students will be faced with both personal and professional dilemmas that can have substantial impact on themselves and others. It is our responsibility to help our students develop as grounded, ethical thinkers. In this way, they will be able to face these dilemmas in a thoughtful and positive fashion. Our students will recognize the ethical issues involved in human actions and be able to formulate a set of principles and virtues which can be brought to bear on personal and public decision making. They will learn to recognize manipulative and faulty reasoning used to influence public thought and action.

Objectives for Ethical Reasoning:

1. Students will identify ethical issues and differentiate between ethical and nonethical issues.
2. Students will intelligently discuss values, principles and virtues as a part of a discussion of ethics.
3. Students will articulate and rationally defend a position on an ethical issue.
4. Students will explain how they would resolve a personal dilemma based on their personal values and principles.
5. Students will apply their understandings of values and principles to the ethical dilemmas faced within their field(s).
6. Students will apply their understanding of values and principles to a discussion of a broad, social ethical dilemma.
7. Students will recognize and assess faulty ethical standards based on flawed or limiting reasoning.

e) Goal Five: PROBLEM-SOLVING AND SYNTHESIS

Students will develop skills in problem solving, synthesizing information, and working collaboratively on problems. Students will acquire the skills needed to disentangle objective data from personal beliefs. Students will approach problems from multiple perspectives, such as empirical, cultural, or post-modern, and will synthesize multiple and contradictory ideas simultaneously. Students will apply problem-solving skills in different contexts.

Objectives of Problem-Solving and Synthesis:

- **Students will identify problems, carry out analyses and interpret data in a cohesive manner.**
- **Students will integrate multiple inquiry methods to identify and solve problems.**
- **Students will recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments.**
- **Students will apply problem-solving skills learned in the classroom to practical issues.**
- **Students will use collaborative problem-solving skills.**

f) GLOBAL DIVERSITY

Global diversity courses will provide a context for understanding the political, economic, cultural, and historical events or experiences of other countries, including those that are non-Western. Western means Europe (including Russia) and North America. It is more of a cultural than geographical term.

Several types of courses in Global Diversity are envisioned:

- Courses addressing global concerns, providing that they are not treated from an exclusively Western perspective. Or,
- Courses devoted exclusively to the study of a non-Western culture or region. Or,
- Courses comparing Western with non-Western views. Or,
- Courses devoted to the study of a non-Western subculture within a Western national culture. Or,
- Courses dealing with Western nations or regions other than the United States and North America.

Students will take two courses in Global Diversity, one in the cluster "Citizenship and the World" and one in the cluster "The Arts." At least one of these courses must address the relationship of two or more global regions.

Part Four: Process for approval:

1) Each professor who believes that an existing course fulfills some of the goals of a certain cluster will fill out a one-page form to note why the course fulfills one or more of these goals. The departments will gather the forms most pertinent for **freshman classes** and submit them as a packet to the Liberal Arts & Sciences Council by Oct. 1, 2007. All courses above the freshman level will be due by February 1, 2008. Departments are welcome to submit all of their courses by October 1, 2007, but all freshman level courses will be prioritized.

2) The forms will go first to the LA&S Council for preliminary review; the LA&S Council will advise whether it approves of such designation or not. If it disagrees, it will state why it disagrees. However, the LA&S Council's role is strictly advisory.

3) The ACC will send each departmental package of forms to the ACC Curriculum Committee for formal approval.

4) The ACC will review, debate and decide whether to approve the course for LA&S designation, by February 1, 2008, in time for fall registration for the freshman classes.

**Cluster Approval Form: Liberal Arts and Sciences
Science, Math and Technology**

Course Name _____ Course Number _____

Department _____

Which of the goals associated with this cluster does this course address?

- Problem Solving and Synthesizing
- Communication
- Citizenship

How does this course address this goal or goals?

Department Curriculum Comm. Chair **Date**

Department Chair **Date**

LA& S committee recommends this course for this designation **Yes** **No**

Curriculum Committee approval _____

ACC approval _____

**Cluster Approval Form: Liberal Arts and Sciences
Citizenship and the World**

Course Name _____ Course Number _____

Department _____

Which of the goals associated with this cluster does this course address?

- Citizenship
- Ethical Reasoning
- Problem Solving and Synthesizing
- Aesthetic Appreciation

How does this course address this goal or goals?

Does this course satisfy the global diversity requirement?

Yes No

If yes, does this course address the relationship of two or more regions, at least one of which is non-Western?

Yes No

Department Curriculum Comm. Chair Date

Department Chair Date

LA& S committee recommends this course for this designation Yes No

Curriculum Committee approval _____

ACC approval _____

**Cluster Approval Form: Liberal Arts and Sciences
The Arts**

Course Name _____ Course Number _____

Department _____

Which of the goals associated with this cluster does this course address?

- Communication
- Aesthetic Appreciation
- Citizenship
- Ethical Reasoning

How does this course address this goal or goals?

Does this course satisfy the global diversity requirement?

Yes No

If yes, does this course address the relationship of two or more regions, at least one of which is non-Western?

Yes No

Department Curriculum Comm. Chair Date

Department Chair Date

LA& S committee recommends this course for this designation Yes No

Curriculum Committee approval _____

ACC approval _____