

Baccalaureate Core Committee

Annual Report 2016-2017

Baccalaureate Core Category Review Assessment

Process

The category review process looks at courses over a seven-year cycle such that every "Bacc Core" course is thoroughly reviewed to ensure it is meeting the Baccalaureate Core requirements and to collect student learning data from each course for the applicable Baccalaureate Core Category Student Learning Outcomes. The Baccalaureate Core Committee (BCC) reviews each course in the category to determine how well it addresses and assesses Category Student Learning Outcomes and other category criteria. Upon review, if it is found that a course did not fully meet the category criteria, it is given one of two designations; Provisional Recertification or Decertification as a Baccalaureate Core course. For courses that are provisionally recertified, they have either one or three years to make corrections. These courses usually have a few issues that need to be addressed, but clearly fit the category. Courses designated with decertification either submitted insufficient information or were deemed inappropriate for the category. Decertified courses have one year to make changes to the course, at which time they are removed from the category simply because the BCC's completion of its work does not match with the registrar's schedule for the next academic year's catalog. Like last year, the committee sent notification to course contacts once a decision had been made. For courses that were provisionally recertified or decertified, a detailed letter outlining the BCC's concerns was provided for guidance and allowing for immediate revisions. Like last year, this process allowed many courses to respond to committee concerns and address issues immediately. As a result, many courses were able to improve designations yielding a larger number of recertified courses than in previous years.

The BCC has completed the initial review of all courses designated for review this year in Literature and the Arts, Social Processes and Institutions and the second half of the College of Liberal Arts WIC courses (N=94). The BCC has also completed approximately nine follow-up reviews for these courses and several that combined revisions from last year's categories along with this year's (N=9). Twelve courses were decertified for failing to submit materials to the committee. Additionally, reviews on courses provisionally recertified in previous years (N=9) were completed, and the BCC continued to work with several courses to obtain recertification from last year's reviews. For your convenience, these data are presented in tables 1-1.

Table 1-1* Literature & Arts, Social Processes & Institutions, WIC – CLA review

	Final Decision
Recertification	57 courses, 61%
Provisional recertification	14 courses, 15%
Decertification, incomplete	11 courses, 11%
No submission	12 courses, 13%

Category II Proposals

The BCC reviews courses submitted through the Curriculum Proposal System (CPS) on a revolving 9-month basis (the committee does not meet over the summer months, so the committee only reviews courses from the first meeting in fall term to Friday week 7 of spring term). Courses are submitted to the BCC for a change to their course or as a new course to the Bacc Core. The Category proposals are reviewed in conjunction with the Annual Category Reviews. Reviewers are assigned a CAT II course to review and asked to complete their review in a three-week time period.

The CAT II numbers

Courses approved through CPS by the BCC from September 5, 2016-May 19, 2017	34 courses
Courses expedited* past the BCC without our consent	3 courses
Proposals to add existing courses to the Cascades Campus^ without the BCC consent	6 courses

*Departments adding a cross-listed designator to an existing course are able to have their proposals expedited. The BCC is not able to verify if the existing course is meeting the BCC minimum standards and thus cannot guarantee if the new cross-listed designation is meeting the minimum standards to be considered an appropriate course for Bacc Core.

Currently, courses which already exist on the Corvallis Campus or E-campus can be expedited through the CPS system and bypass the Baccalaureate Core Committee to be added to the Cascades Campus (example – HHS 231 is an approved course in Corvallis and online). There is no mechanism in place to ensure that the Cascades Campus course will be taught in congruence with the main Corvallis Campus. There is also no way to verify that the home department in Corvallis is aware of or approves of a course being added to another campus location. BCC and the home departments do not have a mechanism to assess and approve courses. Courses on the Cascades and E-campus become the home department in Corvallis's responsibility when the course is up for review during the Category Review Process. If all syllabi and assessment information from all campus types and all instructors on those campuses do not submit materials and comply with the assessment process, the course can become decertified on all campuses. This runs a risk to our University's accreditation process.

Observations- Category Reviews and CAT II Reviews

Category Reviews

The process, while time consuming and onerous on faculty and the committee, seems to be working well. The clearest example is H 333. The instructors for the course thought that this course was in the Synthesis category rather than the Social Processes and Institutions category. The review process made sure that the faculty are now teaching the correct learning outcomes. Similarly, last year, one school in the College of Liberal Arts did quite poorly in their reviews (many decertification's and provisional recertification's). The school held a workshop/retreat and one co-chair of the committee and a representative from APAA also attended. This year that same school had a great deal of success.

In terms of the category outcomes, one overall observation deals with the third outcome in the Social Processes and Institutions category (Critique the nature, value, and limitations of the basic methods of the social sciences.) Faculty across schools and colleges had problems reconciling this outcome with the content and time constraints of their courses. In other words, faculty find it difficult to cover the general substance of their courses and also insert content regarding social science methods in a significant way. The BCC recommends revisiting this outcome and determining whether the methodology component is necessary and if it is, perhaps pursuing an alternative means for ensuring all students are exposed to social science methods.

CAT II Reviews

There were a few instances where a department would submit their course proposal for a change or as a new course and contact the co-chairs noting that their course had been in the CPS system for several months. The departments or originators may not understand the process of the CPS system and the various committees a proposal passes through. These committees can include a college's own curriculum committee or the university's curriculum committee with one of the last stops being the BCC. Many times, the BCC was blamed for stalling a course's approval progress and there was a sense of urgency to have a course approved by our committee and in the course catalog by the following term. The reality is that courses go through several steps and reviews before they reach the BCC. We review and either approve courses in the CPS or return the submissions with four weeks (excluding late spring and summer term submissions). The co-chair who manages the CAT II proposal side of the committee was met with a lot of undue pressure by faculty, including

department heads and instructors, to expedite our reviews to meet their timeline needs. The co-chair who managed the CPS system met with three separate originators to help them update their materials and expedite their proposals, a practice that is uncommon and a courtesy. There was push back in all three meetings by these originators including comments about not appreciating the committee and seeing us as a roadblock, not understanding why connections needed to be made between assignments and learning outcomes and basic minimum syllabus requirements. The co-chair recommends keeping a distance from originators from now on and only using the CPS system as means of communication, regardless of the time the CPS system takes, or allowing originators to meet with the entire committee when they need help or have questions or concerns.

General Committee Observations

The BCC did try and correct an issue that we mentioned on last year's report. Many, if not most, syllabi that come through the review process and the CPS have the wrong DAS statement and a broken link for student conduct. A member of the committee contacted both DAS and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCC) about creating a permanent link for the statements they wish to see on all syllabi. DAS said they would discuss it. OSCC was unresponsive.

In terms of the work of the committee, it is a great deal of effort and members of the committee expressed significant irritation with the amount of time spent checking syllabus issue like the DAS statement and the student conduct link. The co-chairs agree that using the CPS and the category review process as a means of policing these syllabi requirements is not an efficient or cost effective use of faculty time. We recommend that syllabi come to us vetted for minimum requirements from APAA first.

As we stated last year, as the assessment and review process has developed the work of the committee is almost completely consumed by reviewing Cat II and category review responses. There is little time for the members of the BCC to consider larger issues that might relate to the baccalaureate core. It is clear that it is still difficult to find faculty members willing to serve on the committee and the increasing workload will not make that job easier.

Finally, the BCC presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (EC) our concerns about the relationship with the Cascades campus (and less so Ecampus) with the Corvallis campus in terms of the category review process. This discussion lead to a change in our Standing Rules and next year there will be two full members of the committee serving from Cascades. We hope these two members will serve as liaison for the BCC and help the Cascades campus improve their responses to the assessment process. One outcome of this meeting was the EC became interested in creating a task force to implement changes to the CPS expedited proposal policy which allows Cascades campus courses to be added to the catalog without first being assessed and approved by the BCC.

We close with a thank you to Heath Henry, our support from APAA. Without Heath, the work of this committee would be impossible.

Membership

McKenzie Huber Co-Chair '17	College of Forestry
Rorie Spill Solberg, Co-Chair '18	Political Science
Dennis Bennett '17	Academic Success Center
Kira Hughes '17	College of Forestry
Qinglai Meng '17	Economics
Isabelle Brock '18	School of Writing, Literature & Film
Steve Giovannoni '18	Microbiology
Filix Maisch (v. Gable) '18	College of Science
Dana Sanchez '18	Fisheries & Wildlife
Bill Smyth '18	College of Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences
Nancy Barbour '19	Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies

Alix Gitelman '19
Weihong Qiu '19
Inara Scott '19

Statistics
College of Science
College of Business

Student Members:

- TBA
- TBA

Ex-Officio Members:

Academic Affairs – Heath Henry
Difference, Power & Discrimination – Nana Osei-Kofi
Writing Intensive Curriculum – Vicki Tolar Burton

Executive Committee Liaison – Dwaine Plaza