

Faculty Senate

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Baccalaureate Core Committee

Annual Report 2006 - 2007

The Baccalaureate Core Committee (BCC) met 15 times during the 2006-07 academic year. Membership and major activities are described below.

Membership

	Term Ends	College/unit
Patricia Muir	2007	COS
Cheryl Middleton	2008	Library
Margie Haak	2008	COS
David Bernell	2009	CLA
Jay Noller	2008	CAS
George Caldwell	2008	CLA
Denise Lach	2009	CLA
John Bailey	2009	FOR
Annette McFarland	(2007)	Student
<i>Ex-officio:</i>		
Vicki Tolar Burton		WIC
Susan Shaw		DPD

Jay Noller and Pat Muir served as Co-chairs during this academic year; **Jay Noller and Cheryl Middleton** will be Co-chairs during the upcoming year.

A new member from COS is needed for 2007-08, as BCC standing rules indicate that two members should be from that College. In addition, two students should be on the BCC; this year, Annette McFarland joined us for several meetings, but she will be unable to participate during 2007-08; student members should be sought.

General Category II Bacc Core Course Reviews

We reviewed and approved 27 Category II proposals for changes in existing or for new Bacc Core courses. All proposals that were submitted by the end of spring term 2007 were acted on.

Category Review

We completed reviews of all Synthesis, **Contemporary Global Issues**, courses whose review from 2005-06 had been delayed or deferred. All were approved, with two exceptions.

ANTH 487 – instructor filed a request to remove its Bacc Core status.

H 312 – the BCC's concerns about evenness of course quality across offered sections, degree of oversight of graduate students who teach the course, and an appearance of grade inflation remain. Noller and Muir met with the course organizer, Donna Champeau, and the Chair of Public Health, Marie Harvey, and were assured that changes to improve the course are being made. It was agreed that the course will be reviewed again at the end of winter term 2008. In the meantime, it continues to be offered as a Contemporary Global Issues synthesis course.

Review of courses in the other Synthesis category, **Science, Technology, and Society (STS)**, which was to be reviewed during the 2006-07 academic year was initiated. A list of courses in this category that have not been reviewed in at least 5 yrs, along with enrollments over recent years, was created and BCC members

were assigned courses to review. The category review web site was updated and began accepting review materials. However, the review was delayed until the 2007-08 academic year, as the BCC became heavily involved in issues that arose from potential credit increases in certain Bacc Core courses (see below). This activity took priority over the category review; STS courses will be reviewed during the 2007-08 year.

Standing Rules and Operating Procedures

One formal change in Standing Rules was requested, which allows the BCC to remove Bacc Core status from courses that no longer meet criteria (see text in Appendix 1). This change was approved by vote of the Faculty Senate on June 14, 2007.

We discussed whether the BCC needs to be more explicit about some of the rationale that we use to make decisions (e.g., that courses with disproportionately large enrollment and multiple sections receive closer scrutiny than do smaller, single-section courses; that, when reviewing course change proposals, we will consider impact of changes in course credits on access; and others – see list in the Agenda for the May 18, 2007 meeting). **Decision:** It is important for the BCC to be transparent about operating procedures, but flexibility is needed for dealing with new or unanticipated situations. As new situations are encountered, procedures to address them will be recorded in BCC minutes. Be it here noted that (in addition to items listed in operating procedures, on the Cat II proposal web site, and on the annual category review web site) the outcome of the BCC's review of proposed changes to existing Bacc Core courses and of proposed new Bacc Core courses can be affected by:

- impact of proposed change on access to courses in the relevant category and
- considerations of consistency in course quality across multiple sections or offerings.

Furthermore, courses that do not appear to meet one or more criteria can be re-reviewed at a set date in the future, pursuant to notice to appropriate department Chair and faculty.

In addition, we **recommend** that the BCC continue to send beginning-of-term notice to Chairs/Heads and Office Managers of Departments that will offer Bacc Core courses that term, asking them to remind the appropriate faculty to make the role of the course in the Bacc Core clear to students early in the term.

Overall Baccalaureate Core Purpose Statement

Students and faculty often do not understand the role of the Bacc Core curriculum. To help redress this, we created an overall purpose statement, which is now found in the OSU Schedule of Classes information on Bacc Core categories, criteria, rationale, and courses. See Appendix 2.

Baccalaureate Core Outcomes

In response to a request from OSU's Academic Programs, driven by standards established by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, we crafted outcomes for the Bacc Core. The effort was spearheaded by Co-chair, Jay Noller. The outcomes are hierarchical, being derived at the levels of the Bacc Core overall, highest levels within that (e.g., Skills, Perspectives, Synthesis, WIC), and levels within each of those (e.g., Biological Science, Physical Science, Fitness, Mathematics, Writing, Western Culture, etc.). The outcomes were approved by the BCC on April 20, 2007, and forwarded to Academic Programs, Curriculum Council, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for comment. No comments were received; we assume that the outcomes met the needs of Academic Programs. The [Learning Outcomes of OSU Baccalaureate Core Curriculum](#) and [Report of OSU Baccalaureate Core Committee on Baccalaureate Core Learning Outcomes](#) are both available online.

Implications for the Bacc Core Curriculum of course credit increases from 3 to 4

The latter part of winter and most of spring term were occupied with considering potential implications for the Bacc Core models if many Departments increased credits for Bacc Core courses from 3 to 4. Serious discussion of the issue was incited by discussions with English, which contemplated increasing all of its current 3-cr classes to 4-cr, with obvious implications for WR I, II and III, as well as for Western Culture and Literature and the Arts categories. Departments including History were also considering such a change. Further, we were charged by Faculty Senate President Mike Quinn to develop a preferred alternative Bacc Core model that could accommodate such credit increases without increasing (at all or substantially) the number of credits that the Bacc Core comprises. This model would then be presented to faculty and students at forums late in spring term. To ensure representation of all colleges during this discussion, the following *ad hoc* members were added to the committee: Liz Gray (HHS), Kenneth Winograd (ED), Manolete Gonzalez

(COB), and Deb Pence (ENGR); their participation during this time is gratefully acknowledged. A moratorium on all Category II proposals for new Bacc Core courses was imposed, along with a moratorium on Cat II proposals involving credit increases in existing Bacc Core courses, given uncertainty about the possible future form of the Bacc Core. Committee members proffered various Bacc Core models, and Jay Noller and his assistants compiled data on Bacc Core enrollments by course category and department from 2002-2006, to facilitate our analysis of possible impacts of credit increases. The need to develop an alternative Bacc Core model was, however, averted, when English agreed to keep all WR courses at 3 credits, and to do the same for all 100-level Literature courses. Further, the numeric analysis of enrollment suggests that the Bacc Core will probably be reasonably resilient to future increases in course credits because its courses are broadly distributed across Departments – no critical bottlenecks are apparent.

The following motions were approved unanimously at the May 4, 2007 BCC meeting: (1) There is no current need to make adjustments to the Baccalaureate Core, (2) These discussions need to continue in a larger forum to determine if a task force should be convened to review the Baccalaureate Core, and (3) We propose that a funded assessment of student and faculty perception of the Baccalaureate Core be conducted. The Executive Committee later expressed agreement with Motion 1, but indicated that Motions 2 & 3 would be tabled for possible future consideration.

APPENDICES

1. **Change in standing rules:**

Memorandum to: Vickie Nunnemaker, Special Assistant to OSU Faculty Senate and Michael Quinn, President, OSU Faculty Senate

RE: Change in Baccalaureate Core Committee Standing Rules

From: Patricia Muir, Co-chair, Baccalaureate Core Committee

Date: Jan. 31, 2007

At its meeting on the morning of Jan. 31, 2007, the Baccalaureate Core Committee unanimously approved the following addition to its Standing Rules:

Under Section B, BCC Reviews, add item 4. *The BCC has authority to deny continuation of Baccalaureate Core status for courses that no longer meet the appropriate criteria.*

Previously, the Standing Rules did not acknowledge this authority explicitly.

Please advise if you need more information, or when this addition has been approved.

2. **Description of Baccalaureate Core for inclusion in Schedule of Classes**

Overall Baccalaureate Core Description – approved by the BCC 2/14/07

For placement in OSU web site, catalog, schedule of classes and other uses.

The Baccalaureate Core (Bacc Core) Curriculum represents what the OSU faculty believes is the foundation for students' further understanding of the modern world. Informed by natural and social sciences, arts, and humanities, the Bacc Core requires students to think critically and creatively, and to synthesize ideas and information when evaluating major societal issues. Importantly, the Bacc Core promotes understanding of interrelationships among disciplines in order to increase students' capacities as ethical citizens of an ever-changing world.