

Baccalaureate Core Committee

Annual Report 2015-2016

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 three designations: Provisional Recertification, Incomplete Submission, or Decertification as a Baccalaureate Core course. For courses that are provisionally recertified, they have 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. In a departure from previous year's reviews, 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. Previous category review results were sent collectively at the end of the Spring term. This change has 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 Cultural Diversity, Western Culture and half of the College of Liberal Arts WIC courses (N=115). Approximately 21 follow-up reviews were also completed for these courses. All but four of these re-submissions yielded a change in status from the initial review. Sixteen courses were decertified for failing to submit materials to the committee, and 18 courses in these categories were not offered in academic year 2014/2015 and, therefore, were not reviewed. Additionally, reviews were completed on courses provisionally recertified in previous years (N=32). For your convenience, these data are presented in tables 1-1 and 1-2.

Table 1-1* Western Culture, Cultural Diversity, WIC – CLA review

Designation	Number of Courses
Recertification	86
Provisional Recertification	25
Decertification from Bacc Core, no submission	16
Decertification from Bacc Core	4
Total	131

Table 1-2* DPD, WIC COE review

Designation	Number of Courses
Recertification	26
Provisional Recertification	3
Decertification from Bacc Core	3
Total	32

The BCC made several observations about the entire review process and regarding both of the categories under review. Common problems were identified in each category.

Overall observations:

- The communication and working relationship with the OSU-Cascades campus prevents a successful review process.

- The lack of information submitted from OSU-Cascades counterparts prevented a majority of those courses from completing a successful review.
- The two campuses lack a culture of communication.
- Corvallis courses lose certification due to lack of assistance from OSU-Cascades.
- Best practices developing:
 - Units that engaged the process as a unit with a central coordinator were well situated.
 - The School of History, Philosophy and Religion stands out as an example.
 - The School of Writing, Literature and Film organized an “assessment retreat” that worked well to revise materials and prepare for next year’s category reviews.
- Workload
 - The committee would not have been able to complete its work if all courses in the category submitted the materials.
 - The committee needs representation from the entire university.
 - The committee needs personnel that will contribute to the workload.
 - More courses are added to the baccalaureate core each year, increasing the workload for all of the category reviews.
- Resources for faculty
 - All the information necessary for all courses should be on one page. The minimum syllabus requirements page does not contain the DPD statement, for instance.
 - The DAS language changes trip up many category reviews and category II proposals. Would a stable link work in lieu of the full statement?
 - The student conduct link changes. Can this link be made stable even if the language behind the link changes?
- The committee recommends revisiting the category learning outcomes for the Speech category in two years with a broader committee examining the outcomes. In the previous iteration, the outcomes were usually crafted by a team of faculty that teach in that area; however, the many majors on campus use or require certain courses from this category to ensure students engage in particular activities. The outcomes currently do not represent those needs.

In the Western Culture and Cultural Diversity categories, the committee identified the following:

- Many faculty preparing their materials proceeded with the assumption that since the subject matter was clearly related to one of the categories, the course automatically fulfilled the category without thinking through the assessment.
- Courses that tried to bridge both categories were not meeting either category particularly well.
- Syllabi not meeting requirements.
 - Common problems include: lack of statement saying the course is in the Bacc Core, no Bacc Core Category Learning Outcomes (CLOs) listed at all or not listed separately from other course outcomes, and a lack of basic syllabi requirements (such as a statement for students with disabilities). The most egregious error was failing to make adequate connections between category student learning outcomes and course activities and assessments.
- Unexplained differences between different versions of the same course.
 - The committee acknowledges that different instructors and different locations (such as OSU-Cascades) will approach the material differently. However, some courses either did not adequately explain the differences or did not provide information about all sections to demonstrate all sections were equally and adeptly addressing and assessing the CLOs.
- Identified assessment of specific outcomes – Several courses did not adequately describe how specific outcomes were assessed in the course.

In the Writing Intensive Courses (WIC) – College of Liberal Arts, the committee identified the following:

- Student revision
 - Students in WIC courses are required to revise a major paper after receiving constructive feedback. Several courses did not provide enough information for the committee to adequately assess if these student revisions were a mandatory part of the assignment. However, it was clear that some courses did not require revision at all.
- Feedback to students
 - The required student revisions, mentioned above, must be based on feedback received by the student. The committee often had difficulty determining the type of feedback students received, as well as who was responsible for delivering the feedback.
- Assignment length
 - WIC courses are required to have at least one 2000 word assignment. Several courses did not have an assignment that met this requirement.

Again, it is clear to the chairs that had all reviews been submitted, the committee did not have enough contributing personnel to complete its work.

2015-2016 Membership

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 Statistics
Weihong Qiu '19 College of Science
Inara Scott '19 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

Report submitted by Rorie Spill Solberg, Baccalaureate Core Committee co-chair