

College of Arts and Sciences

Mission and goals

Paramount among the university's goals is a commitment to the continuing improvement in quality. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, the commitment to quality of all programs is its *highest priority*.

This is reflected in the regular review of programs (both internally and by outside reviewers) and in the careful recruitment and development of high-quality faculty selected to further its academic priorities. The college recognizes that a university, college, and department can be no stronger than its faculty and, therefore, have recruitment and retention of quality faculty as a very high priority.

Increasing the diversity of our faculty, staff, student body, and curriculum is a high institutional and college priority. Advances have been made in the hiring of faculty and staff, although some-

what less than aspired to; while the college has hired an increasing number of women, it has hired only two minority faculty for its last 20 tenure-track positions.

Significant progress has been made in increasing diversity in some curricula, most notably English, where the curriculum includes the writing of and about women and minorities as part of the fabric of many courses rather than as separate courses.

A third major area of institutional priority is the involvement of the community. The majority of departments have some form of community outreach, including community advisory groups, service learning programs, internships, talks to community groups, service on community boards and committees, and fundraising. The chairs of the journalism and engineering technology departments

have received awards for community outreach from the university during the past two years.

Resources

While there are never enough resources to fully meet their goals, the university and college have as a high priority the allocation of revenues to address their primary academic priorities. Programs are carefully analyzed on a regular basis to assess strengths and weaknesses, and decisions are made in consultation with academic departments and faculty advising groups to allocate faculty, staff, and operating resources where they will have the greatest impact on program quality and will best meet student needs.

During the past two biennia, sufficient resources have been allocated by the legislature and then internally to keep up with student growth and to increase the quality of programs by adding faculty, staff, operating dollars, and equipment. Central administration has demonstrated its commitment to quality education by giving priority consideration to the academic units in the allocation of resources. However, the student-faculty ratio has not improved for the college.

Three new buildings have recently come on line, serving the chemistry and biology departments and providing five lecture halls and space for science, math, and technical education. However, space for faculty offices and labs and for graduate students remains inadequate. The dean is involved in the first phases of planning for a new academic building to come on line in six years.

Curriculum

All departments and programs in the college define their missions and state specifically what they expect their students to learn. These appear in detail in the accompanying reports from each (see Volume 2). In addition, degree objectives are stated in the university *Bulletin* and are reviewed in annual meetings with the dean.

Curricular design, breadth, depth, sequencing, and outcomes measurements vary greatly by field. However, each department points to national or regional standards used to guide curriculum; these may be accrediting groups, surveys of other institutions, or professional organizations, including those in which faculty participate.

For departments in the natural and physical sciences, course sequencing often is prescribed by national standards. It is sequential by its nature, so it is clear to students as well as professors that one cannot move to a higher level without mastery of prerequisite skills. The same can be said for foreign languages.

Departments in the humanities state that clearly differentiated skills are taught at different course levels, that the skills are sequential, and that greater student performance is expected in upper-division classes in areas such as seminar participation, analytical papers on focused topics, ethical reasoning, in-depth knowledge in an area, and skilled use of English or a foreign language, or both.

Degree objectives

While national standards are often cited for questions of breadth and depth, the degree objectives

and outcomes measurements tend to be unique to each program. This reflects the fact that many have a distinct focus, differentiating them among other programs in the region. Both mathematics, with its emphasis on applied math, and biology, with its focus on teaching to multiple aspects of biology, mention that their courses would be taught by several different departments on other campuses.

Engineering technology, on the other hand, notes that its graduates have educational breadth and depth unusual in their field because they have completed the same GUR requirements as students in liberal arts majors at Western.

Historically, Western has encouraged each program to use its own approach to assessing student outcomes, rather than dictating one overall measure.

In the social sciences, most departments require that a graduating major demonstrate competence in the field's research methods. Various departments require a senior thesis, research studies, or clinical report writing. Several departments include practica or internships as another demonstration of student ability. The departments of Physical Education, Health, and Recreation and Speech Pathology and Audiology include as objectives the ability to

work with populations that are diverse in age, culture, and lifestyle.

Objectives for students graduating in the natural sciences are often expressed as the ability to design sound experiments, to show technical skills with instrumentation, and to conduct a research project as a capstone experience. The majority of programs measure success through



placement rates in entry-level jobs in their fields and through placement rates in graduate programs.

In the humanities, objectives for majors again focus on ability to do research, but in a format stressing analytical writing. In some areas, such as communication and foreign languages, emphasis is also placed on competence in oral presentation. The departments also state knowledge of focused subject areas as an objective, and stress writing-intensive final projects. The journalism and communications departments include internships or practica as additional performance-based objectives.

These departments tend to require capstone courses, major research papers, or oral examinations with exit interviews of all their majors. The foreign languages department, now called the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, strongly encourages study abroad.

General education

Many general education courses are also introductory courses to the curriculum in the majors. As such, there is concern that the level of instruction, rigor, and quality are commensurate with other courses required of the majors. Senior faculty regularly teach these courses. Only in English and mathematics are the GUR courses largely the responsibility of teaching assistants or part-time faculty.

In the social sciences, anthropology's large introductory sections draw hundreds of students, with the result that 40 percent of its student-credit hours come from GUR courses. Psychology notes that 1,500 students pass through its introductory course each year. Sociology also offers large sections, and faculty in that department and in anthropology report feeling strain between the desire to provide substantive upper-division courses and the need to serve large undergraduate courses.

Mathematics, history, English, communications, philosophy, and all of the natural sciences have heavy commitments to the GURs. The liberal studies department is devoted almost entirely to GUR courses in the humanities.

Service courses

In addition to its offerings in the GURs, mathematics has a heavy service component, serving majors in business, all of the natural sciences, and engineering technology. Biology, physics, and chemistry provide service courses to Huxley, engineering technology and each other.

Service courses of another nature are mentioned by the Department of Physical Education, Health, and Recreation and several other departments. In these cases, the need is from education majors who take a B.A. within Arts and Sciences in addition to their work in the Woodring College of Education. The sheer number of teacher-education majors on campus impacts numerous departments that provide courses for the B.A. in Education degree.

Curricular change

New courses are being designed and offered, as each department strives to keep current with changes in technology and in the knowledge base expected of undergraduates. However, the tight budgets of recent years have often meant that adding a new component required dropping another one or shifting departmental focus. The modern and classical languages department, for example, comments that budgets have constrained their decisions on which languages will be offered to majors and minors.

The curricular changes described in the departments' self-studies usually relate to geographic location, such as anthropology developing a Pacific Rim specialty or modern and classical languages focusing more on Asian languages; to social changes, such

as political science adding new courses reflecting current issues of society; or new instructional methods, such as sociology making use of Worldwide Web pages in classes, or journalism revamping its editing, reporting, and publications staff courses to incorporate electronic editing and delivery of media. Mathematics is making changes reflecting national reforms in teaching, including adding coursework using graphic calculators.

Natural sciences departments comment on the importance of having their own laboratories, and several benefit from being in new buildings with state-of-the-art laboratories, which enable more and better student lab experiences.

Curricular process

Within the College of Arts and Sciences, creation of a new curriculum is initiated by a faculty member or by a group of faculty, often the department curriculum committee. The first formal step is to obtain approval/endorsement from the department or departments involved. The early stages of this process are not formalized and vary from unit to unit. In most cases, informal discussion within the department is followed by presentation of a formal written proposal to the departmental curriculum committee(s). Approval by this committee is followed by review by the whole department, which can – and often does – recommend revision of the proposal. The department or departments must approve the proposal before it is transmitted beyond the department. At this stage, the proposing and the reviewing are completely in the

Concentrated time frames

The units within the College of Arts and Sciences do not offer any programs within concentrated time frames. Of course, a student may complete a program in less than four years by taking summer courses. However, this is practical in only a few of the largest majors because the lack of state subsidy for summer courses means that only a few advanced courses attract sufficient enrollment to justify summer offering. Within the college, this concentration of upper-division courses is currently possible only for psychology majors although students in other majors can reduce their time-to-degree by taking some major courses, GUR courses, and electives in the summer.

hands of the faculty. The same process is followed for course and curriculum revision.

Proposals approved by departments are forwarded to the college's curriculum review group, the Council on Arts and Sciences Curriculum (CASC). This is a committee of 12 faculty chaired by the associate dean (who is a half-time faculty member). Four of the faculty on CASC must be chairs of departments within the college; these members are selected by the collective chairs of the departments. The remaining eight faculty are elected by the Faculty Affairs Council, a representative faculty group which serves as the chief governing group of the college.

Submission of a new curriculum to CASC requires completion of a standard university form that requests information on prerequisites, resources required, possible overlap with existing programs,

and other administrative details. New programs require a draft of catalog copy. New courses require course outlines, reading lists, results of any prior experimental offerings, and a statement of the role of the proposed course in the overall program (e.g., GUR course, major course, service course, elective). The proposals are first reviewed by a CASC subcommittee that checks for compliance with policy (e.g., that an advanced course has suitable prerequisites) and anticipates questions that may arise during the CASC discussions.

The proposal is reviewed by CASC at a public meeting. Representatives of the proposing department may appear and speak, and in the case of a major curriculum change, invariably do. Several actions are possible, including rejection, return to the department for revision, revision at the meeting (only with the concurrence of the departmental representatives), tabling with a request for additional information, and approval. Approval completes the review at the college level.

Approved changes in the curriculum are forwarded to the university review committee, the Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC). While this group, whose membership is 75 percent faculty, has the authority to overrule the decisions of the college review committee, it seldom does so. On occasion, it returns proposals to the colleges for revision or for additional information. The focus of review at this level is elimination of duplication between the curricula of the various colleges and compliance with university policies on course numbering, size of majors, etc. Approval at this level completes the review process within the institution.

It is obvious from the above that the faculty controls the curriculum. The role of the academic administration in this process exists in two ways in which the dean and provost can influence the evolution of the curriculum. When new or replacement faculty positions become available, the dean and provost have ultimate responsibility for distribution of these positions. The departments must make their case for positions based mainly on curricular needs. Thus, the dean and provost exert some influence on the evolution of the curriculum via the priorities he or she assigns to the various requests.

Also, the curriculum of the department and particularly the future directions of the curriculum are major topics of discussion in the annual dean/chair meetings. Through these and other discussions, the dean can encourage selected faculty to initiate proposals for curricular change.

Accessible scheduling

The most effective tools in maximizing access to classes are maintaining open communications between units and responsive attitudes to student complaints.

The task of laying out a schedule from scratch that minimizes accessibility problems is daunting, if not impossible. However, each unit knows from experience how to schedule courses for majors so as to minimize problems.

Units whose students require courses taught elsewhere are informed of proposed changes in these courses and are asked to comment on problems that the changes may trigger.

In addition to careful planning based on historical information, the college also relies on students to let the department chairs know when problems arise. It has numerous examples that show that students feel free to do so, and that the departments are responsive to the degree that their resources allow.

While accessibility of major and service courses is well handled by the departments, the scheduling of the general university requirement courses requires additional supervision. After the annual time schedule is assembled, the number of GUR seats in each of the major divisions of the program is checked against the estimated enrollment. These numbers are checked to see that they are reasonably spread throughout the three quarters, throughout the day, and throughout the courses in the program.

The university registrar and director of academic advising prepare an annual and quarterly analysis of GUR seats needed and compare their analysis to our schedule. Modifications are made as necessary. In addition, several sections in high-demand areas are made available to the registrar to add as needed, without further consultation.

In summary, then, the problem (if indeed there really is a problem) is addressed by incremental changes to previous practice in response to student needs and interests.

Addition and deletion of programs

The college has intentionally limited the number of different majors and programs to assure that it can offer quality, in-depth

study in every major with essential courses taught by prominent faculty.

The college does not have a system for regular review of policies, regulations, and procedures for additions and deletions of programs and courses, other than the process previously described in the "Curricular process" section. The state, through the Higher Education Coordinating Board, requires review of a number of programs each year. The questions and organization of these reviews' concluding reports were revised during the last year as the result of a review process.

The course-approval mechanism on campus is in effect under continuous review because of the changing membership of the review committees and because of challenges and question raised by units that want to make changes precluded by existing policies. For example, the Council on Arts and Sciences Curriculum recently resolved a two-year debate on the advisability of offering five-credit, lecture-only courses. In this case, the decision was not to change the policy that allows such courses; but during the course of this debate, a number of departments changed the way in which some of these courses were offered.

Some aspects of every department and program curriculum are reviewed each year as part of the annual dean/chair meeting. These summer meetings usually include a department's self-evaluation and plans for the future. The department evaluations and plans form the principle basis for resource allocation. New faculty resources and reallocations resulting from vacancies are always allocated in response to departmental curricular analysis and future plans.

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Educational program planning and assessment

In most years, annual department reports include information regarding departmental assessment of program effectiveness, and this information becomes a basis for dean/chair discussions and planning. These discussions influence college planning and resource analysis and distribution. In addition, chair appointment letters and evaluations focus on program strengths and weaknesses and include the dean's expectations for change.

Though all units assess their programs, the methods vary by discipline, professional orientation, and whether separate accrediting bodies exist in their fields. Units also vary considerably in how frequently they use an assessment method, and in how

formally they review the results and incorporate them into making changes and improvements. Rather than relying on a single form, departments usually employ multiple methods in varying combinations, as can be seen in the detailed reports from each in the exhibits room.

All departments have internal procedures for regularly reviewing their curriculum, and chairs stress the rigor and frequency of these internal reviews. Some departments hold annual retreats for this purpose. Departments stress that the faculty-student teaching relationship is key, and that the most basic form of assessment is the faculty member's observation of whether a student is learning.

The faculty's second major role in this process is to set academic standards that reflect progress and change of knowledge in their fields. Faculty involved in their professional societies can impart as well as influence those groups' standards and curricular developments. Individual faculty have the responsibility to institute changes in the courses they teach in a way that complements the curricular processes in their units. Curricular review ties in to this process as each department sets its mission and goals statements, and it ties in to university processes when curricular changes are reviewed by all-college and all-university bodies. Data on effectiveness of programs is gathered in a variety of ways:

- Regular evaluation of courses by students, using both standard and department-specific questionnaires;
- Faculty attending each other's courses;
- Exit interviews with graduating seniors;

Transfer and award of academic credit

The determination to apply students' previous work at another institution to a specific degree at Western is made by reviewing students' transcripts and catalogs of the previous institutions. Sometimes it is also done by review of syllabi or contact with previous instructors.

Students are informed of how their previous work will transfer or apply to a major through information posted on web pages, through articulation agreements, and through community-college advising for students earning Associate of Arts degrees.

- Alumni surveys prepared by the university's research offices;;
- Job placement rates of graduates;
- Acceptance of students into graduate-study programs;
- Regular contact with employers;
- Internships and student-teaching positions, with evaluations;
- Professional advisory groups;
- Visiting professionals and practitioners;
- Outside consultants hired for evaluative studies;
- Accrediting bodies;
- Use of standards set by national or regional professional groups;
- Annual gatherings with alumni;
- Newsletters that include alumni reports and commentary;
- Fundraising results from alumni donors.

The university *Bulletin* lists mid-program checkpoints for most majors in arts and sciences. These vary from a formal application to the major or meeting requirements before declaring the major, as in psychology, engineering technology, communications, English, journalism, science education and physical education, health, and recreation.

Other departments review students' progress through advising sessions at that point: anthropology, political science, biology, ge-

ology, modern and classical languages, history, and liberal studies.

Departments with senior capstone courses or experiences are political science, psychology, biology, engineering technology, geology, communication, modern and classical languages, English, history, journalism, liberal studies, and East Asian studies.

Alumni satisfaction and loyalty

The alumni survey provides information regarding satisfaction with major courses, GURs, and advising, which has been incorporated into our curriculum planning and general procedures. For example, surveys have consistently indicated that students find a high degree of satisfaction with major courses and "get encouraged" with the curriculum when they enter the major; their time on academic tasks increases significantly, and their time spent on homework nearly doubles. They further indicate that advising is very important. Generally, students who get timely advising regarding majors exhibit a greater efficiency in their progress toward a degree.

These findings and others have led to a greater emphasis on encouraging students to get major advising at least by the end of their sophomore year. University policy has been changed as a result of survey data and other information to require that students declare a major by their next registration after they reach 100 credits.

In addition, the college intends to implement a degree-audit system during 1997-98 that will enable it to identify students who are not making reasonable progress to-

ward graduation. These students will be contacted for advising to help them get “on track.”

Employer satisfaction has been assessed through surveys and employer advisory groups. The information is especially valuable to professional and applied programs such as engineering technology, computer science, parks and recreation, and speech pathology and audiology. It is an important basis for curricular decisions.

College committees and membership

Dean’s Advisory Council. The Dean’s Advisory Council (DAC) advises the dean on all matters of common interest to the college, reviews organization and long-range plans, and suggests modifications where appropriate. It meets at least every two weeks.

- Membership consists of all departmental chairs and directors of programs within the college.
- The Steering Committee, comprised of a representative from each of the three divisions of the college and selected by the dean from nominations from the chairs, consults with the dean regarding the DAC agenda and items of concern to the college.
- The Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of the steering committee and three additional chairs selected by the dean, consults with the dean regarding the strategic short- and long-range plans of the college and related budgetary and other matters.
- The dean conducts the DAC meetings, which bring relevant information concerning aca-

demic, instructional, and budgetary matters pertaining to the college to the attention of the chairs and directors for discussion and recommendations.

Faculty Affairs Council. The Faculty Affairs Council (FAC) is the policy-making body for the College of Arts and Sciences. The dean is an *ex officio* member of this council.

- FAC is composed of tenure-track or tenured faculty members representing the three disciplinary divisions of the college. The term of office is two years, with half of the members elected annually. The council determines its own officers and procedures.
- In consultation with the dean, FAC selects the members representing the college faculty on the Council on Arts and Sciences Curriculum, the Budget and Planning Committee, the Tenure and Promotion Committee, the General/Special Merit Committee, and the Equity/Compression Committee.
- The council in its choice gives representation to the three divisions, but such representation is not specified by quota.
- The council reviews activities of the Faculty Senate and makes recommendations thereon, reviews regularly the tenure and promotion, merit, and equity/compression guidelines of the college and makes recommendations to the dean for changes as needed, and consults with individual departments concerning the proper application of these guidelines to their disciplines.

- The council formulates such further details of structure and operation as it deems necessary to the effective functioning of the college and its instruments, and proposes from time to time such amendments as in its judgment are called for and considers any matters bearing upon faculty well-being and makes recommendations thereon to the dean.

Budget and Planning Committee.

- The committee is composed of five tenured faculty members, with staggered terms of two years (three named in odd-numbered years, two in even-numbered).
- The committee recommends to the dean an appropriate division of the operational and equipment funds allotted to the college; recommends to the dean an appropriate apportionment of available faculty positions, this recommendation to be based upon consultation with department chairs, program directors, and other relevant groups or officers; identifies problem areas in the budget process and consults with the dean and others in an effort to deal with these areas; participates in the preparation of the college biennial budget request, and works with the dean in development of the college plans.

Computer Advisory Committee.

- The committee is composed of seven members, two each from the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities, plus the chair of computer science. A representative of the dean's office and the head of the college computer-support office may meet regularly with the commit-

tee. Terms on the committee are for two years and are renewable. Members are selected by the corresponding group of chairs during spring quarter.

- The chair of the committee and the chair of computer science are automatically members of the university-wide computer committee. Two other college representatives serve on that committee as representatives of the two areas not represented by the chair of the college committee. The four members of the college committee eligible for the university committee will automatically be nominated for those two positions.
- The committee advises the dean's office on all matters related to computer support and usage within the college. Matters of concern to the committee include purchase of computer equipment including establishment of baselevel hardware, criteria for purchases beyond the base level, priorities for establishment or upgrading of student laboratories, policies for the scheduling of limited computer resources, operation of and policies for the college computer support office, and other computer related matters which benefit from a measure of technical expertise and user input.

Council on Arts and Sciences Curriculum. The Council on Arts and Sciences Curriculum is the curricular governing body of the college. As delegated by the dean, the associate dean is the chair of the council.

- The council is composed of 16 members: four students, four department chairs nominated by the Dean's Advisory Council,

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and eight tenure-track or tenured faculty members appointed by the Faculty Affairs Council. The term of service for the 12 members representing chairs and faculty is three years; one-third are appointed annually. The council determines its own and procedures.

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Professional Leave Committee.

- The committee is composed of five tenured faculty members, one from each of the three disciplinary areas, plus two at-large representatives. There shall be no more than one representative from any single department and no more than two from a disciplinary area. The Faculty Affairs Council elects the members of the committee. The members are elected for two-year terms (three to be named in odd-numbered years and two in even-numbered years). Department chairs are not eligible for membership.
- It is the duty of the committee to consider the proposals for professional leave forwarded to it by the dean and to make recommendations to the dean. The committee may, through the office of the dean, request additional information and/or consultation.

Tenure and Promotion Committee.

- The committee is composed of five tenured faculty members, at least three of whom are full professors, selected by the Faculty Affairs Council. Department chairs are not eligible for membership. The term of service is two years. Three members are named in odd-numbered years, two in even-numbered years.
- It is the duty of the committee to consider the departmental nominations for tenure and promotion forwarded to it by the dean and to make recommendations to the dean. The committee is free to seek advice and guidance relevant to the nominations submitted.

General/Special Merit Committee.

- The committee is composed of five tenured faculty members selected by the Faculty Affairs Council from a list of nominated faculty, with one member representing each of the three divisions of the college and two at-large members.
Department chairs are not eligible for membership. The term of service is two years. Three members are named in odd-numbered years, two in even-numbered years.
- It is the duty of the committee to consider the materials submitted for general and/or special merit and to make recommendations to the dean. The committee may, through the office of the dean, request additional information and/or consultation.

Equity/Compression Committee.

- The committee is composed of five tenured faculty members selected by the Faculty Affairs Council from a list of nominated faculty, with one member representing each of the three divisions of the college and two at-large members.
- Department chairs are not eligible for membership. The term of service is two years. Three members are named in odd-numbered years, two in even-numbered years.
- It is the duty of the committee to consider the materials submitted in support of salary adjustments due to issues of equity and/or compression and to make recommendations to the dean. The committee may, through the office of the dean, request additional information and/or consultation.