

MOTION TO ALLOW DEPARTMENTS TO DEVELOP DISCIPLINE-BASED ALTERNATIVES TO CORE 201 AND CORE 202

Referred by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee

The Faculty Senate directs the Core Director to issue a call for course proposals that would allow departments to develop discipline-based alternatives to Core 201 and Core 202.

- A. Interested departments would be invited to develop or re-design a class within its discipline that meets the learning outcomes emphasized in Core 201 or 202. The proposal would follow the normal curriculum path for courses put forward for inclusion in the Core Curriculum.
- B. The class must include the Core 201 or Core 202 assessments and apply any required measures from Core 201 and 202 for those assessments. The same raters who handle assessment of the Core 201/202 learning objectives would assess the required products of these courses. Departments would commit to providing these section(s) every year for at least five years. The Core Director may end an agreement with a department if the course no longer meets the requirements for a Core 201 or Core 202 equivalent.
- C. Credit for CORE 101 and CORE 102, or their equivalents, will be a prerequisite for courses designated as CORE 201 equivalent.
- D. Credit for CORE 101, 102, 201 or their equivalents will be a prerequisite for courses designated as CORE 202 equivalent.
- E. Faculty members teaching these courses would be hired and supervised by the departments. Their annual evaluations will be the purview of the departments, but will be communicated to the Core Director.
- F. Faculty members who teach the departmental course must be willing to attend training sessions scheduled by the Core Coordinators or Core Director.
- G. These courses would be exempt from the following existing characteristic of Core Curriculum courses: "So that a student's RU education might have as much disciplinary breadth as possible, students must fulfill core curriculum requirements with courses with prefixes different from that of their major. An exception may be made for one course." **The new wording would be:** "So that a student's RU education might have as much disciplinary breadth as possible, students must fulfill core curriculum requirements with courses with prefixes different from that of their major. An exception may be made for one course in Goals 5-11 and either a Core 201 or Core 202 equivalent."
- H. Core 201 or Core 202 equivalents must meet all other characteristics of a Core Curriculum course and use the revised Core A Handbook as a supplemental text. Other readings will be chosen by the instructor.
- I. Courses may be sent through the curriculum process beginning in fall 2014.

RATIONALE:

In response to one of its charges, the Senate Curriculum Committee worked during 2011-2012 on issues associated with University Core A (Core 101, 102 and Core 201, 202). Discussions with the Core Director (Steve Owen at the time) and others led to the formulation of a report on Core 201, 202 submitted to the Senate and two motions. On April 19, 2012 the Faculty Senate passed the following motion: The

Faculty Senate supports a meeting of the Provost, the chair of CCAC, the chair of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, the Core Director, and the Faculty Senate president to discuss ways to meet faculty concerns with Core 201/202 within the current Core framework and discuss strategies for providing the Core with needed resources.

Meetings were held that summer and in the fall the Senate passed the following motion:

Title: Improving the Delivery of Core 201 and Core 202

Date Introduced: September 13, 2012

Sponsor: Faculty Senate Executive Council

The Faculty Senate supports the following plan for improving delivery of Core 201 and Core 202 and the timetable associated with it:

- I. Core Director and Core Coordinators complete work on simplifying and realigning learning outcomes with specific classes in University Core A and revise the official course descriptions for Core 102 and 201 in order to eliminate any unnecessary overlap.*
- II. Radford University administration will develop a staffing strategy for Core 201 and 202 and departmental courses that meet the learning outcomes for Core 201 and 202, including some provision for new faculty resources within departments.*
- III. Once steps 1 and 2 are completed, the Core Director will issue a call for course proposals (in Senate this was amended to: "If steps I and II are completed to the satisfaction of the Faculty Senate, then the Core Director will issues a call for proposals").*
 - A. Interested departments would be invited to develop or re-design a class within its discipline that meets the learning outcomes emphasized in Core 201 or 202.*
 - B. The class must include the Core 201 or Core 202 assessments (subject to change, this currently includes a textual analysis paper in Core 201 and 202; research document argument in Core 201; and oral presentations in Core 201 and Core 202) and apply any required measures from Core 201 and 202 for those assessments.*
 - C. Faculty members who teach the departmental course must be willing to attend training sessions scheduled by the Core Coordinators or Core Director.*
 - D. Departments would commit to providing these section(s) every year for at least five years.*

The motion passed. Work has continued over the past two years to implement this motion. Under the leadership of the Core Director, the learning outcomes and course requirements for Core 101/102/201/202 have been updated and streamlined. In addition the Provost has begun to commit faculty resources to these classes (3 positions for 2013-2014 and the likelihood of 3 more for 2014-2015). It is now time to finish implementation of the fall 2012 motion as amended by the Faculty Senate. The Committee has added only some additional detail to smooth the implementation process.

Issues continue every semester with the staffing of these courses, the burdens placed on the Core Director, and the lack of secretarial/administrative assistance for the Core Director. These issues led Faculty Senate at its August 2013 retreat to charge the Senate Curriculum Committee with investigating ways to improve the delivery or the learning outcomes and assessment regime associated with the Core Curriculum. Work is moving forward on the revision of the learning outcomes in Goals 5-11. It is now time to implement the second part of the Senate Motion passed during the fall of 2012. Senate rejected

the Committee's first attempt at improving the delivery of University Core A. The above motion offers a different way forward that would not only improve delivery of these courses by (1) removing some of the burdens of staffing from the Core Director and (2) increasing the possibility of discipline-based faculty (even though some will be adjuncts) teaching the courses, but also obviate the need for a complete administrative structure for University Core A with its accompanying financial obligations. Further the motion remains true to the spirit of University Core A's vision of the Core belonging to the entire university. This is a particularly good time to implement this motion because CCAC is in the process of revising the university's assessment plan.