

Dear Colleagues –

We are moving into the final stages of implementing the revised curriculum as voted by the Faculty in Spring 2009.

One of our major tasks has been to revise the current clusters, vastly reducing their number and enhancing their stability. This document presents the results of that process, reducing the number of clusters from almost 300 to less than 25. We are calling these re-imagined clusters “Integrated Inquiries” (IQs).

At this point, we would like to submit them for your review and approval, and we kindly ask that you complete this process by March 1st. Please note that in all cases, the IQs have already been previewed at least twice, once by the Curriculum Implementation Committee and once by the different faculty members who have been most generous in writing descriptions for them and providing feedback.

It is crucial to remember that these IQs will have a significantly reduced role in the revised version of the Curriculum. Since new students will be required to complete three Integrated Learning Experiences rather than the four clusters currently required, a significant number of students will complete only one of the IQs and a not insubstantial number will complete none at all. For example, looking at the major program data for a recent graduating class, about 20% of the students completed three majors/minors. As majors/minors themselves count as Integrated Learning Experiences, none of these students would have been required to complete an IQ under the revised curriculum. Another 50% of the class completed two majors/minors, meaning that they would have been required to complete just one of the IQs.

Our methodology for creating these IQs was closely based on the recommendations outlined by the Curriculum Review Committee and included the following considerations:

1. Courses included were drawn from the list of those participating in the current clusters. In other words, if a course was not included in a cluster at present, it was not considered for inclusion in the new IQs. This is your opportunity to request the inclusion of additional courses, as long as they meet the guidelines outlined by the Curriculum Review Committee (see item 2).
2. As mandated by the Curriculum Review Committee, the IQs are structured with a sharp eye toward sustainability, robustness, and choice according to the following parameters:
 - a. they must be topically broad
 - b. they must be multi-disciplinary (we strove for at least 5 departments per IQ)
 - c. they must have many options within and between disciplines (we strove for at least 10-12 courses per IQ but worked also to balance choice against unruliness)
 - d. all courses must be regularly taught (we strove for annually but were keen to include courses from smaller departments that offer their courses on a regular biannual schedule)

- e. all included courses must be accessible to the non-major since the IQs are by definition positioned outside the major, as a complement to it, and as an integral element of a liberal arts education. Therefore, courses included meet the following parameters:
 - i. no 400-level courses
 - ii. no freshmen seminars
 - iii. few if any pre-requisites (If they do have pre-requisites, they should be those that the vast majority of our students can and do take; e.g., Social Psychology has Psych 100 as a pre-req, and more than 600 students take Psych 100 annually.)
 - iv. no courses with very limited enrollment limits and/or courses habitually over-subscribed
3. As majors/minors are themselves Integrated Learning Experiences and as the new IQs are required by definition to be multidisciplinary, we worked hard to avoid replicating departmental programs whenever possible.
4. Some IQs may overlap (e.g., "The Atlantic World" and "The Americas"), but in an effort to not to pressure individual course enrollments, unless a course's frequency and enrollment allows for many students to take it, we tried to limit the number of IQs in which it appears to just one or two. In some cases, a course may be appropriate for more than one IQ or would be more appropriate for one IQ than for another, and we welcome your input on such courses.
5. Finally, the IQs are intended to suggest enduring, multi-disciplinary questions or meta-issues that liberally-educated students should consider. As such, while we are mindful of our mandate to drastically reduce the number of clusters (a.k.a. IQs), we are equally mindful that there are likely omissions, and we would welcome proposals in accordance with the parameters set by the Curriculum Review Committee (see point 2, above).

We thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. We certainly understand that this has been a lengthy and involved process, and that some of you may not be familiar with all of the stages through which the curriculum revision and its implementation have progressed. Please feel free to get in touch with myself, Trevor Bilhorn, or Jennifer Romney if you have questions, need information, or if anything seems unclear. Again, in order to ensure that the revised curriculum is fully up and running for the class matriculating this Fall, we need to have your responses by **March 1st**.

Sincerely,



Matt Erlin
Chair, Implementation Committee