

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**  
**University Curriculum Committee**  
**2003-2004 Report**

Meeting Dates: September 11 & 25, October 9 & 30, November 13, January 22, February 12 & 26, March 18, April 1 & 29

Members: R. Alterman, A. Antracoli (fall), S. Dibble, T. Doherty, B. Friedman, R. Hanus, A. Jaffe, P. Jordan, J. Plotz, E. Sheppard, J. Sholes (spring), A. Tannenwald, R. Thaxton

Ex officio: M. Hewitt, M. Kornfeld, M. Rosenthal, E. Wong

Review of “2002-2003 UCC Report”

The “2002-2003 UCC Report” was approved by consensus, and then posted on the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences web site. The committee also reviewed and approved a statement of procedures for the conduct of UCC meetings.

Appointment of Subcommittee on Independent Interdisciplinary Majors

John Plotz and Rick Alterman volunteered to serve on the UCC Subcommittee on Independent Interdisciplinary Majors.

Discussion of “The Relationship between Interdisciplinary Programs and Departments: Report of the AdHoc Committee”

Dean Jaffe initiated discussion of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on “The Relationship between Interdisciplinary Programs and Departments.” This report, prepared by a committee charged by former Dean of Arts and Sciences Jessie Ann Owens, discusses systemic problems that arise from the differences between programs and departments, and also suggests recommended solutions and next steps.

How much empirical analysis was conducted by the authors of the report? While enrollments and other numbers were reviewed, most of the thinking was philosophical. The university continues to emphasize interdisciplinary study, but control of the curriculum rests with departments, not programs. One UCC member believes that programs are too often created with insufficient faculty resources. Another member asked: doesn't the university need the ability to undertake new academic initiatives without providing all the rights of established fields? Should there be an intermediary structure between the status of departments and non-existence?

If the Ad Hoc committee's recommendations regarding interdepartmental programs (e.g., autonomous tenure lines, joint appointments with departments or other programs) were implemented, what would be the difference between departments and programs? Which groups and individuals are likely to oppose aspects of the report? All of the following might oppose specific report recommendations: departments, small programs that might be eliminated, students enrolled or interested in these programs, and faculty planning new programs.

How has the university considered comparable issues, and what should be the UCC's role? Instead of forming a new committee, the UCC or Faculty Senate could become the forum for reviewing recommendations. The UCC is not prepared to refuse consideration of new program proposals at the moment.

Committee members agreed with Dean Jaffe's plan to circulate the report to departmental and interdepartmental program chairs and members of the Faculty Senate, with the intention of beginning a community-wide conversation about issues raised by the report. While the report articulates a clear point of view and action plan, it should also stimulate discussion and other possible solutions.

### Approval of Independent Interdisciplinary Majors

In November, committee members discussed and approved five petitions for Independent Interdisciplinary Majors, all of which had been reviewed and approved by the UCC Subcommittee on Independent Interdisciplinary Majors. The titles of the majors, and the names of the student petitioners were: "Early Childhood and Special Education"- Kate Shoolman; "Environment and Society"- Karen Lutsky; "Environmental Education"- Dan Guertin; "Environmental Studies"- William Ryal Gynan IV; and "Philosophy, Politics, and Economics of International Development"- Ammad Bahalim.

In April, Andrew Simmons, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, presented petitions for three other Independent Interdisciplinary Majors (IIMs) recently reviewed and approved by the UCC Subcommittee on Independent Interdisciplinary Majors. Dean Simmons noted that three other petitions were not approved by the subcommittee; one other petition was still pending. The UCC unanimously approved IIMs in "Cognitive Science" for Lalitha Chandrasekher, "Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Studies" for Julia Kleyman, and "Conservation Ecology" for Rachel Anne Kramer.

At a later meeting, Simmons presented an additional petition for an Independent Interdisciplinary Major in "Geography" from Samuel Petsonk. The UCC conditionally approved the petition subject to the review and approval of the final course list by the UCC subcommittee.

### Review of Recommendations from the UCC Subcommittee on Study Abroad

J. Scott Van Der Meid, the Director of Study Abroad, presented the recommendations of the UCC Subcommittee on Study Abroad, which was convened last year to review study abroad academic policies and procedures related to the fall 2004 implementation of financial aid portability via "home school fees." The subcommittee's members were Seyom Brown, Dan Perlman, Mark Hewitt, Michele Rosenthal and Van Der Meid.

The UCC reviewed the proposed list of programs approved for home school fees, which the subcommittee would like to prune from 270 programs to 230 for management and quality control reasons. About 60-70 of these programs are used by students each year, with about 200 used in a three year period. Criteria for removing a program include feedback from students; health, safety, and academic concerns; quality of student services; availability of similar programs in the same area; amount of structured interaction with the population of the country; site reviews, etc. All programs are initially proposed/requested by students, and then approved by the UCC, which annually adds 5 to 15 new programs and removes a similar number for reasons of discontinuation or lack of Brandeis student participation in several years. Roughly 20% percent of each graduating class, or 250 students including 50 in the summer, now study abroad each year. Home school fees will likely raise this percentage; at many of our peer institutions, 40 to 50% of a class study abroad.

Committee members asked if Brandeis ensures that programs are available in all areas of the world. At the moment, the list is student initiated, but Van Der Meid would support approving programs in underrepresented areas of the world to which students might then be recruited. Could a program be approved for a single student? No, a program approved for one student is available to all students.

After discussing several specific programs, the UCC approved the list of programs eligible for home school fees. The committee also approved the following subcommittee recommendations: The approval process and existing criteria for program approval will remain the same, as will the process for student appeal of a study abroad decision. Because home school fees will also be instituted for approved domestic leaves of absence with credit, the same forms and services will also be provided for these programs. Students at approved off-campus study programs will be subject to the same standards of academic discipline as students at Brandeis. As of fall 2004, Brandeis transcripts of those studying abroad will list the titles in English of courses completed while abroad, annotated with either CR (credit) or NC (no credit) grades. The course drop deadlines of each program will be observed, but students who completely withdraw will be subject to the same conditions as students at Brandeis (that is, courses on transcripts will be annotated with “W’s”, and students will be withdrawn from Brandeis for a minimum of one semester.) The UCC also removed the limit (20) on the number of students per year allowed to participate in domestic leaves of absences with credit.

The Dean of Arts and Sciences agreed to discuss with department chairs a subcommittee recommendation that faculty advisors for study abroad be designated in each department/major.

### Approval of New Study Abroad Programs

In October, J. Scott Van Der Meid, Director of Study Abroad, presented several new study abroad programs for UCC provisional approval. The criteria for program approval continues to include: the program’s academic credentials, duration and credit hours; its language requirements, student services, and course offerings; and support from both peer colleges and universities and Brandeis faculty. The UCC unanimously approved the programs of CET Academic Programs, University of Nice, in Nice, France; IFSA Butler, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, in Mendoza, Argentina and Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan, in Merida, Mexico; Institute for the International Education of Students, Libera Universita Internazionale degli Studi Sociali, in Rome, Italy; and Middlebury College, Johannes-Gutenberg Universitat, in Mainz, Germany. The committee did not approve the programs of Santa Reparata International School of Art in Florence, Italy and University of Greenwich (through Arcadia University) in Greenwich, England, both of which lack strong support from Brandeis faculty and would not be approved by such comparable institutions as Barnard, Bates, and Harvard. The UCC also reviewed a list of programs no longer approved due to discontinuation, cancellation by sponsoring institutions, or zero participation from Brandeis students in the last five years.

Later in the term, the UCC approved three additional domestic study/study abroad programs: National Theater Institute, Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, in Waterford, CT; CET Academic Programs, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and History of Art and Italian Studies at the University of Siena for Foreigners, in Siena, Italy.

In March, Van Der Meid presented other new study abroad programs for the UCC’s provisional approval. The committee unanimously approved the programs of American University of Beirut in Beirut, Lebanon; Georgetown University, The McGhee Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, in Alanya, Turkey; and the Council on International Education Exchange at Vesalius College at Vrije Universiteit Brussels, in Brussels, Belgium and at the Baobab Center, Universite Cheikh Anta Diop, in Dakar, Senegal.

### Review of the Journalism Program

Michael Socolow, Chair of the Journalism Program, was invited to answer questions from the committee related to the report of the UCC’s Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs.

Students in the program may elect to complete two of three core courses, one of which is AMST 137b, "Journalism in Modern America," which enrolled about 70 students in the fall of 2003, and another of which is JOUR 120a, "The Culture of Journalism" with 46 students enrolled in the fall. The flexibility of the core is one of the program's strengths as is the internship option. There are more than 130 students in JOUR 103b, "Advertising and the Media", an elective for not only Journalism, but also Business. Although the number of students participating in the program has averaged about 20 graduates per year, if these course enrollments portend future program enrollments, the internship program will need to be greatly expanded. About 20 students completed an internship last year, with a few others completing independent studies. Identifying internship placement sites would not be a problem, because our students have been securing high quality internships and performing well in them, perhaps because they are required to complete a core course first. These internships often lead to excellent entry-level jobs. Socolow would like to offer a course in literary journalism and another course cross-listed in Internet Studies; he would also like to strengthen ties with the new International and Global Studies program by offering a course in "Global Communications" and internships abroad. He would prefer for more Journalism courses to be writing intensive, but this possibility is lost without limits on course enrollments. The best preparation for journalists is to learn to think critically and write clearly. Ideally, the program would be staffed by individuals with expertise in print, broadcast, and web journalism. The excellent adjunct faculty include Margo Melnicove, an award winning NPR producer, and Eileen McNamara, a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize. Although the program owns no equipment, it works collaboratively with Information Technology Services, which provides equipment and software for students to produce two-three minute "broadcast packages" or demonstration news/feature CDs in the two courses with production components. The Gralla Fund supports staffing and programming expenses.

The UCC unanimously approved a motion to continue the program in Journalism for a period of five years, beginning in 2004-2005.

#### Discussion of Changes to Pass/Fail Policies

Mark Hewitt, University Registrar, presented issues related to Brandeis's pass/fail rules as they interface with the new PeopleSoft student records database. Our pass/fail rules are different from other institutions in two ways: Brandeis students select the pass/fail option without their instructors' knowledge, and are then allowed to remove the option and "uncover" letter grades after learning what grades were earned. While PeopleSoft software could be modified through expensive, complex procedures to allow for these differences, constant modifications would be required for each upgrade to the system. Alternatively, the UCC could choose to modify our rules or ask the Registrar's office to enable students to manually continue current practices (that is, not via online or phone registration, but by completing hard copy forms filed at the Registrar's office). About 600-700 students utilize pass/fail grading each semester, with 300-400 later uncovering grades. Manual completion of these transactions would result in a fair amount of effort for both students and staff. A possible modification to pass/fail rules might be to allow the retroactive covering of two grades, again by manually completing forms, before the Monday preceding a student's graduation. Two retroactive passes were proposed because past research reveals that few students utilize all four of the pass/fail grades currently allowed; in one graduating class, 20-25 students used the option three times and only one student all four times.

Pass/fail grading was originally introduced to encourage experimentation and risk taking in course selection, although it is now sometimes used as a time management tool, through which students calibrate the amount of time they will devote to a course. Allowing students to uncover a pass provides an incentive to many students to work hard throughout the term for a possible "good" grade. The current system removes the risks of electing to take a course pass/fail and not being able to uncover an "A". UCC members agreed that almost all students would use the proposed retroactive

option to remove their two lowest grades, thus facilitating strategic improvement of cumulative grade point averages.

Students love the current pass/fail system; they might perceive the retroactive pass proposal as reducing their options, even if it is functionally equivalent to the average rate of utilization. Faculty members offered differing opinions about whether or not they wished to know which students are taking courses for letter or pass/fail grades. Some would rather know so that they could more quickly evaluate assignments (pass or fail, instead of finer gradations of A- or B+), and worry less about students who are not giving their maximal effort; others don't want to know, because they wish to treat all students equally and grade all with the same attention and standards.

What should be our guiding principles in deciding how to proceed? We should not be driven by the software but by what actions we want to encourage. How do we encourage risk-taking? Can we discourage grade gamesmanship?

Committee members discussed useful next steps to further this discussion. The UCC asked for research on the pass/fail policies of other institutions, information about the number of courses graded on a pass/fail basis in the last year, and an enumeration of the issues from the perspectives of students, faculty and staff. Faculty and students volunteered to prepare brief outlines on the following points: What is at stake for each constituency? What should be the desired objectives of pass/fail grading? What are the benefits and disadvantages of the current and other systems, and what are other concerns? A summary table on faculty, staff, and student views on pass/fail grading, incorporating the data on pass/fail procedures of other institutions, was also prepared. This table enabled the committee to see what items various constituencies were in agreement about, and on what areas consensus was lacking. The survey of pass/fail practices at other institutions showed that there is no standard practice.

Student representatives reported on undergraduate concerns about the implementation schedule of any new system. Would a revised system be applied to all current students, or only incoming students? Because pass/fail is not a degree requirement, it might not have to be phased in.

At a later meeting, committee members discussed the importance to students of "anonymous pass/fail declaration", which is one of the practices difficult to implement in the Peoplesoft system. Students asked if faculty are likely to give less attention (e.g., fewer and less careful comments on papers) to students who are known to be taking a course pass/fail. A faculty member shared that he would welcome as much information as possible about a student's situation and performance. If a student is taking a course pass/fail and doing well in the course, the faculty member might encourage the student to enroll in the course for a grade. If a student is taking a course pass/fail and doing badly, the instructor might worry a little less, and assume that the student had no interest in raising his/her grade.

In the opinion of one faculty member, grades matter more to students than to faculty. Pedagogically, faculty care about using grades as an incentive to encourage students to work hard all of the time. They also want students to be able to explore new topics and take intellectual risks. It is not appropriate to design a system that polices "grade grubbers" or students at the margins.

Covering grades at the end of one's college career could be viewed as contributing to grade inflation and lessening the value of Brandeis grades, or as fixing one's mistake in choosing the wrong course. If we allow students to cover grades with a pass, the deadline for doing so might occur closer to the date the grade is assigned (e.g., in the last two weeks of a semester before a grade is assigned, or within the first two weeks of the next semester after a grade is assigned). Very few students currently leave "B+" grades covered. One of the reasons that pass/fail is used as infrequently as it is, is that students mostly take courses for major, minor, or general education requirements, which ban the use of pass/fail

grading. Mark Hewitt distributed a list of Fall 2003 courses with pass/fail enrollments, including calculations of the percentage of pass/fail enrollments in each course.

In summary of the committee discussion after four meetings, faculty members unanimously agreed that students need not be worried about the loss of pass/fail anonymity. All members of the UCC also supported some form of pass/fail grading to encourage risk taking. Still to be decided was the number of pass/fail grades to be allowed, and when pass/fail should be declared. Should students have the right to see a final grade before deciding on the grading option? Students note that the final paper or exam is worth 30 to 50 % of the grade in many courses, so that a final grade is not assured until it is recorded.

At another meeting, UCC members reiterated that the discussion of pass/fail policies should not be driven by Peoplesoft considerations. Students prefer “anonymity” but might be convinced that it is not essential, if it shown that Peoplesoft cannot manage this process cost effectively. However, if there is no hugely expensive technical issue involved, anonymity should be preserved as part of a “best possible” system. Students are concerned that professors would not maintain their objectivity regarding pass/fail students, paying less attention and respect to such students in class, taking less care in grading their exams and commenting on their papers, and assuming that pass/fail students do not care about their learning in a course. They worry that pass/fail students would be more likely to fail courses. They also assume that all students intend to work hard in an attempt to eventually “uncover” a good grade, and fear faculty member’s assumptions about why a student is taking a course pass/fail when they may have strong interest in a field or subject.

Some UCC faculty members stated that they make an effort to reach out to students who are taking courses pass/fail because they know that these students have doubts about their performance in the course; others stated that there is no uniform faculty view of students enrolled in pass/fail courses. At the very minimum, faculty would prefer to know the percentage of pass/fail students enrolled in a course. Anonymity denies professors important explanatory information about the temper of the class as a whole and about individual students’ participation in class. Professors often receive far more sensitive information about students’ health and personal situations and are expected to use this information objectively.

UCC members noted that many students did not even know about pass/fail anonymity before the current discussions, but now feel that something is being taken away from them which they don’t want to give up. In the hierarchy of things that matter to students, however, the right to uncover a grade is the highest priority. Students argue that most grades are not determined until the final exam or paper, so the “uncovering” date should occur after final exams are over.

At a February meeting, UCC members briefly discussed a statement from students requesting that the pass/fail declaration deadline be extended until the sixth week of the term. Ignoring the constraints of PeopleSoft technology, the committee then discussed what each member would consider the “best” system. Students advocated for the current system because it provides incentives to try hard in pass-fail classes throughout the semester. Faculty members argued against “anonymity”. The committee also discussed changing the dates of pass-fail declaration and “uncovering.” A late declaration date does not encourage risk-taking in course selection; it simply provides insurance against or rescue from a bad grade. Students prefer to know their final grade before the “uncovering” deadline, and argue that the incentive of a possible A or B grade encourages students to maximize their effort throughout the course. Some students who know that they are not able to uncover a good grade would not study for the final exam, if already assured of a passing grade.

At the end of this meeting, the UCC approved a motion to inform faculty members about which students have elected pass/fail grading in their courses, while maintaining the current declaration and “uncovering” dates. The UCC also unanimously approved a motion to eliminate a requirement that students enroll in at least three courses for a letter grade in each term. This motion would enable students taking three courses in a term to take one of the three courses with the pass-fail grading option; it would also enable a student enrolled in four courses to drop one without uncovering the P/F grading option in a remaining course.

At the March faculty meeting, the UCC’s pass/fail legislation was referred back to the committee for further consideration. After reviewing the options (tabling its motions, revising and resubmitting them, or returning the original motions to the faculty for a formal “up or down” vote), the committee unanimously voted to return to the faculty the motion to eliminate the requirement that students enroll in at least three letter-graded courses before being allowed to utilize the pass/fail option in any semester. This motion was approved by the faculty at its April meeting. The committee chose to return the motion to inform instructors about which students have elected pass/fail grading in their courses to the faculty for a formal decision.

Committee members then addressed topics referred to the committee by individuals at the March faculty meeting. The first proposal involved changing pass/fail grading to a Pass/D/F system, with grades of A through C- counting as a pass, and grades of D or F figuring into a student’s grade point average. Very few pass grades actually cover D’s, so this new system would affect very few individuals. On the one hand, the classroom dynamic is affected by students who are not fully engaged; on the other hand, a D is in fact a passing grade, and instructors should not assume that students who earn D’s are not trying. To formally record the committee’s deliberations, a motion to establish a Pass/D/F system was rejected by the UCC. A suggestion that all University Seminars in Humanistic Inquiries be graded pass/fail was referred to the USEM oversight committee for its consideration. A suggestion that students be prevented from utilizing the pass/fail grading option in certain courses also failed.

### Review of Summer Internship Program

In the spring of 2003, the UCC approved a pilot proposal for a one-credit summer internship course limited to 15 students. Three members of the faculty committee that supervised this pilot (Tren Dolbear, Professor of Economics; Andrew Molinsky, Assistant Professor, Brandeis International Business School; and Michael Socolow, Assistant Professor of American Studies) and Rebecca King, Hiatt Career Center Assistant Director for Experiential Programs and primary staff support for the initiative, presented a report and recommendations regarding continuation of the summer internship course.

Credit for the program enables students to obtain internships they would not otherwise be able to obtain, and also facilitates a more reflective and valuable experience because students must write and prepare materials for a Brandeis professor. The faculty committee, chaired by Dolbear, reviewed forms, policies, and procedures, as well as participants’ learning contracts, mid- and final evaluations, and written assignments before awarding credit to all 15 students who enrolled in the course. The program is particularly useful for international students who must receive credit for visa purposes for their summer internships (9 of the 15 first participants were international students). Students interned at a variety of quality sites including investment, financial, public relations, internet and media companies; six of the internships were in New York, five in the Boston area, and others in Washington, D.C, Los Angeles, and Miami. Committee members reported that the quality of reflection and thoughtfulness in student assignments was high. Participants appear to have learned from their experiences, made contributions to their sites, and grown from their activities.

To what degree is this an academic experience? The summer internship is not like a textbook course, though students do develop writing, analytical, and oral presentation skills. It allows for a different modality of learning, through observation and modeling, and gaining practical intelligence. Were any reports unsatisfactory? Only at the early stages; King went over the learning contracts carefully with students and site supervisors, and stayed in contact with both via fax, phone, and e-mail. How many other students are doing internships that are not for credit? Many, many more; this is a drop in the bucket.

Dolbear and other committee members believe the pilot should be considered a success, and continued without a cap on the number of participants and with continued supervision by a faculty committee, which might expand so that each member would review the work of only three or four student interns. There was significant student interest in the program last year, even though it was announced late in the spring. If the program grows, the oversight committee may wish to recommend further modifications to the program (e.g., renumeration for professors, tuition hikes, etc.).

The UCC unanimously approved continuation of the program without a cap on the number of student participants.

### Review of the Legal Studies Program

Richard Gaskins, Chair of the Legal Studies Program, was invited to discuss matters related to the current status of the program and to comment on the report of the UCC's Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs. Legal Studies (LGLS) attempts to be a truly interdepartmental program and not a self-sufficient department. Its requirements include a core course, "Introduction to the Law"; three electives taught by faculty in a wide range of departments including history, economics, sociology, politics, and philosophy; one LGLS seminar; and either a senior thesis on a law-related topic or an internship. LGLS seminars are taught by attorneys, but their content is interdisciplinary, and many contribute to the curriculum of other majors and interdepartmental programs. Because of severe budget constraints and faculty departures, the program is no longer able to offer seven LGLS seminars per year; in 2003-2004, four seminars will be offered. Students have thus had to revise their academic planning. The program is hoping that funding for more seminars will be available next year.

The review committee found Legal Studies to be one of the most respected programs on campus. Students are enthusiastic about the interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum. UCC members asked: Could more of the seminars be taught by full time Brandeis faculty instead of adjuncts? In Gaskins' view, Brandeis faculty are more likely to offer courses from a disciplinary vantage point, instead of the interdisciplinary perspective that is the aim of the seminars. Does the program offer any courses on common law tradition, or the foundations of modern European law? There are no courses that trace these traditions, although the core course looks at the development of common-law and its 19<sup>th</sup> century roots. What would be lost if the seminars were taught as lecture courses with larger enrollments? A limited enrollment seminar facilitates the exchange of ideas by students with different backgrounds, and is also able to emphasize writing, analytical and oral presentation skills. Do most students who participate in the program go on to law school? Of the approximately 150 students who annually enroll in the core course, about half are considering law careers. Three quarters of the students in the LGLS seminars are actively thinking about law school, and about three quarters who complete the minor attend law school, although not all do so immediately after graduation. Students in law school often comment on the broader perspective and social context provided by the program, which is not always available in graduate and professional schools. Of the 50 Legal Studies programs across the country, none are structured like this one; Brandeis is unique because it doesn't have a law school, nor does it approach legal issues from the single perspective of philosophy or politics.

The committee unanimously approved the continuation of the Legal Studies program for a period of five years, beginning in 04-05. It also affirmed the findings of the review committee. While the UCC has no formal role in resource allocation, program reviews provide an opportunity for the committee to comment on such issues.

#### Amendment to the Residency Requirement for Mid-Year Students

Last year, when the UCC and the faculty approved modifications to the residency requirement, sufficient attention was not given to the situation of the mid-year class (that is, those students who apply for September admission, but are accepted for January admission instead). Although some students admitted at mid-year pursue travel, internships, and jobs during the fall term, others enroll in courses at local colleges. According to our current policies, these courses do not count toward satisfaction of the residency requirement.

Dean Jaffe and other senior administrators proposed to amend the academic residency requirement to enable midyear students to count toward the eighth semester of residency up to four semester courses through not only the previously approved combination of credits from courses taken as an “overload”, in Brandeis summer school and/or in the second semester of an approved study abroad program, and/or from AP and IB exams, but also through “approved college courses taken during the fall semester immediately prior to matriculation.” Only midyear students would be eligible for the latter category, and the total number of credits allowed for any student would remain consistent. For example, if a mid-year student completes two college courses in the fall prior to Brandeis matriculation and is also eligible for credit equivalent to four courses from scores on AP exams, only four courses in total would count toward the residency requirement. UCC members suggested an alternative wording for the *Bulletin* text before unanimously approving the amendment.

#### Postponement of the Review of the Writing Requirement

With the agreement of the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Director of University Writing, and the Committees on University Writing and University Seminars in Humanistic Inquiries, the UCC agreed to postpone review of the writing requirement until 2004-05.

#### Proposed Revision: From Comparative Literature to Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies

Ángela Pérez-Mejía, Associate Professor of Latin American Literature, and Erica Harth, Chair of the Romance and Comparative Literature Department, presented a proposal to modify and rename the existing Comparative Literature major. The new title would be Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies (CLCS). The new curriculum would include replacing the current core course, ECS 100a, “European Cultural Studies: The Proseminar”, with a new course, CLCS 101, “Introduction to Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies”, and requiring three upper-level literature courses taught in a language other than English and four other upper-level courses (two from CLCS and two from cross-listed electives). In addition, students would complete either a senior essay or a senior honors thesis, and be encouraged to study abroad for at least one semester.

UCC members asked: What principle explains why courses count or do not count as upper-level cross-listed electives? Cross-listed courses would be grouped under the following categories: post colonial studies; global literature and culture; gender, culture and literature; cultural intersections in arts and literature; and non-western literature and culture. Student would select these courses in consultation with their advisor.

Although the ROCL department leans toward not including the list of cross-listed courses in the *Bulletin*, the Registrar's office noted that it would be better to specify the most exhaustive list of courses possible in preparation for automation of the auditing process. Will cross-listed courses include ROCL courses? Yes, and English and American Literature courses, too. Committee members suggested that *Bulletin* text include information about why courses are cross-listed so that students know that other courses may also count toward the major. In what languages are upper level literature courses offered at Brandeis? All of the European languages and Hebrew offer such courses. What is the overlap of the CLCS curriculum with that of ECS? ECS is European focused, and not comparative. The CLCS program aims to increase global literary connections. Would the classic Comparative Literature major still be available under the new requirement structure? Yes. Do any students complete independent interdisciplinary majors similar to the proposed curriculum? No. Would a student be able to major in CLCS and minor in Spanish or French Literature? Yes.

After the presenters departed, the UCC continued discussion of the proposal. A student representative praised the new curriculum for its global perspective. A faculty representative wondered why the core course might not be consistently offered. Committee members were generally confused about the term "cultural studies". If the program title does not change, the curriculum modification might be viewed as relatively minor (i.e., changing the core course, and the mix of other courses).

The CLCS committee was asked to address the following issues in a revised proposal. What does "cultural studies" mean in the academic world today? How is it defined, and is it regularly linked with "Comparative Literature" or "Literary Studies"? Does the field usually include courses in Anthropology and History? Is it important to include Cultural Studies in the new title? What is the level of involvement and commitment from departments outside of ROCL? According to the proposal, the new major may be completed by enrolling in three CLCS courses, plus CLCS 97, and five courses from other departments. Are other departments willing and able to provide this much course support? Would faculty in other departments be willing to support CLCS 97 senior essays, and would the CLCS advisor allow them to do so? If one of the goals of the revision is to be more global, how do the requirements ensure that students will not focus on European literature? Could the faculty committee provide examples, using the new proposed curriculum, of three or four programs of study that might be models for students to follow? What are the most "central" courses to the program?

In April, Professors Pérez-Mejía and Harth presented the UCC with a revised proposal. The new proposal included examples of similar curricula from other schools, and explained the fields of Literary and Cultural Studies. The changes create a more realistic framework for faculty administering the program and for students. While some Comparative Literature courses are already well-enrolled, students do not take the next step of declaring the major. Pérez-Mejía and Harth reported that all instructors of program courses have been contacted by e-mail and have agreed to participate in the program and teach their courses in the near future. New courses will be added as the program evolves, and at least two professors are able to teach the core CLCS course.

A UCC member asked about the relationship of the proposed CLCS major to the major in European Cultural Studies (ECS). The major in ECS focuses on Europe, while the CLCS major is more global in scope. CLCS also attempts to incorporate current scholarship in Cultural Studies, and emphasizes comparative approaches and literature courses taught in a foreign language more than the ECS major does. Another committee member asked if the field of Cultural Studies, while recognized in academia and particularly by faculty in the humanities, would be understood by undergraduates reading college catalogs. Is it useful to substitute the word culture or text instead of Cultural Studies in the title?

UCC members mulled how these changes would affect the ECS program. Is ECS truly about Cultural Studies? Programs such as ECS and LAS focus on areas of the world, while Cultural Studies focuses

on art and texts, but also rituals, nontextual aesthetic events and social practices. Harth and Pérez-Mejía aim to add Cultural Studies to the curriculum, and also to reconfigure the substance of the Comparative Literature program, moving toward issues related to diversity and global perspectives.

Committee members suggested specific revisions to the proposed *Bulletin* text (e.g., specifically note the requirement of a senior essay or capstone course, clarify the text describing the requirements for the minor, and address the issue of double counting courses toward other majors or minors), before approving the new minor and changes to the curriculum of the Comparative Literature major. A new title for the program was not approved (and so the course abbreviation of CLCS will revert back to the COML) for the following reasons. The UCC was persuaded that the field of Cultural Studies is important and identifiable. However, before adding these words to a title, the university must ensure that faculty in other departments (e.g., History, Politics, Anthropology, and Sociology) whose work seems allied with the field, are involved on the ground floor in planning a coherent and rigorous curriculum. The UCC was willing to reconsider the title of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies, if an augmented committee returns in 04-05 to discuss their involvement in planning.

### Proposal for Changes in the Creative Writing Program

Olga Broumas, Chair of the Creative Writing Program, presented a proposal to change the requirements of the major in two ways: 1. increase the minimum number of required writing workshops from two to three for all students; and 2. require only honors candidates to enroll in a year long thesis course and complete a book length project. The total number of required courses would be 10, or 11 if a student completes the honors track. All other aspects of the requirement structure (ENG 11a; ENG 10a or HUM 10a; one course in Anglophone literature or literature in translation; one studio or performing arts course, and two English electives) would remain the same. Students who are not on the honors track would also complete a one semester independent study project in addition to three workshops. Most Creative Writing majors already enroll in more than three creative writing workshops, but not all students are capable of writing a full-length book in a single year. Interest in the major and minor appears to be rising; these changes will make the major accessible to more students. The new requirements will also better serve students with interests in other fields such as Education.

The UCC unanimously approved the proposed changes to Creative Writing requirements.

### Proposal for Changes in the History of Ideas Curriculum

Michael Randall, Chair of the History of Ideas (HOID) program; Robin Feuer Miller, Professor of Humanities; David Powelstock, Assistant Professor of Russian Language and Literature; Mark Hulliung, Professor of the History of Ideas; Richard Gaskins, Professor of American Studies; and Ellen Downes, History of Ideas Program Administrator, discussed proposed changes in the requirements for the HOID minor.

Professor Amelie Rorty, who no longer teaches at the university, chaired the HOID program for several years, also teaching almost all courses with HOID call numbers. The Faculty Executive Committee now proposes curricular changes which take full advantage of the strongly interdisciplinary environment at Brandeis, while helping students to understand how ideas and concepts are embedded within larger human and social frameworks.

Although the committee considered offering a seminar as its core course, it is instead proposing a core course selected from several options that represent the method and/or content of the HOID program. Students would also complete three courses that constitute the project's intellectual field and a senior

essay/independent study or thesis examining in detail the specific subject of the field, in its connections to historical, intellectual and disciplinary contexts.

UCC members asked the following questions. HOID is usually taught from the past, beginning with the Greeks, to the present. Why not choose problems, which can be excavated as archeological projects? The Faculty Executive Committee answered that it is employing just this strategy in organizing a conference on the Patriot Act. Guest speakers will expand on the ideas discussed in core courses. This public event will also draw the attention of undergraduates to the HOID minor.

If a sophomore wishes to enroll in the program, what would be the first steps? Students will take a core course, meet with the HOID advisor, and then write and submit a statement describing the subject and program of study. The student's courses should focus on a question that one can investigate, not just a broad concept. Is the executive committee prepared to offer the intensive advising necessary to support students wishing to enroll in the program? Yes. Is the program limited to the history of Western ideas, or could courses and topics pertaining to the Middle East, East Asia, and Latin American Studies be included? The structure of the program doesn't preclude such courses or topics, and committee members are in fact interested in adding non-Western core courses.

The UCC conditionally approved the proposed revisions to the HOID minor, subject to receiving more specific language for the *Bulletin* detailing how the "courses that constitute the project's intellectual field" identify not just "a complex of ideas in which a specific subject is to be studied", but a particular question, issue or problem, as described by members of the HOLD committee. Additional illustrative examples of courses pertaining to possible questions or current problems should also be included.

#### Proposal for Changes in the Computer Science Minor

Timothy Hickey, Chair of the Computer Science Department, presented a proposal to change the requirements for the Computer Science minor. The current requirements essentially replicate the first three semesters of the major. While these courses provide a strong foundation in theory and programming, they also include some of the most challenging courses in the major, offer little elective choice, and are not sufficiently flexible for students with multidisciplinary interests and other majors. Students with weaker preparation are also sometimes discouraged from completing the curriculum.

The existing structure requires four courses (COSI 21a and b, COSI 31a, and one elective) and two labs (COSI 22a and b). The proposed structure would require COSI 21a and 22a and five additional computer science courses, none of which may be cross-listed courses. Thus all students would complete a core course on data structures and several upper level electives, but the electives would be tailored to the interests of individual students. Some students who pursue the minor might subsequently choose to major in the field. The proposal provides examples of possible course sequences for students with interests in the arts, engineering, biology, neuroscience and math. Faculty in the department believe that COSI majors will benefit from having students with other majors in COSI courses.

The UCC unanimously approved the proposed changes to the COSI minor, with one small revision, which was discussed with Professor Hickey and then referred to the department for its review and approval. This change would enable one of the five elective courses to be a cross-listed course, or one approved by the undergraduate advisor.

#### Proposal for a New Interdepartmental Program and Minor in Sexuality Studies

Paul Morrison, Professor of English and American Literature, presented a proposal for a new Studies in Sexuality interdepartmental program and minor. The requirements for the minor would consist of a new foundational course, and four electives, one of which preferably would be a research project, thesis, or essay. UCC members asked how often the elective courses would be offered. Seven electives from the departments of English and American Literature, History, NEJS, and ROCL will be offered next year; all of the instructors have expressed willingness to participate in the program. Several have also indicated interest in offering additional courses that would contribute to the curriculum in future years. The content of the foundational course has been planned by all five members of the proposing committee (Brooten, King, Lanser, Mandrell, and Morrison), each of whom is willing and able to teach the course, beginning next year with Morrison.

A UCC member asked if the program would provide students with practical advice about their sexuality or such issues as date rape. Sexuality studies is an academic discipline; it is not the teaching of morals or behaviors, and its courses do not encourage a confessional or therapeutic mode. How many students are expected to pursue the new minor? Recent enrollments in elective courses have been as high as 75-90 students; there is significant interest in the minor from a large number of students. Is the committee prepared to advise or sponsor essays or research projects for all of these students? Yes.

In discussions after Professor Morrison's departure, UCC members raised different concerns, not all of which were agreed upon. The curriculum is heavily dependent on humanities courses. Does Sexuality Studies focus only on the political and cultural? What about biological and psychological perspectives? Should there be a course in physiology? Much of the scholarly literature in the field challenges the scientific view, but is there a science component in the programs of other institutions? One faculty member suggested that the program might be presented as a "well rounded program in Sexuality Studies" or more specifically focused on Queer Studies, which would require rewriting the initial introductory paragraph of the proposal.

The UCC will ask the Sexuality Studies committee to consider revising the proposal in the following ways. UCC members are concerned about how interdisciplinary the program is, and would prefer that more courses in the social sciences and sciences be identified as electives. What courses does the program hope or expect to develop in the future? How does the proposed Brandeis curriculum compare with that of the programs at Allegheny, Berkeley, Cornell, Chicago, Duke, NYU, and Smith, in terms of its emphasis on the humanities? Some members wish courses in the social sciences or sciences to be required, and others do not, but all would like a clear statement about either double counting or a requirement that courses be completed from different departments or schools. Some UCC members would like to see a member of the social sciences or sciences on the planning committee. The UCC also asks for the syllabus of the foundational course to learn how topics such as the history of sexuality or the construction of gender will be addressed.

#### Request for Writing Intensive Designation for 98 Courses

John Brereton, Director of University Writing, presented a proposal to allow specific independent study or "98" courses to count toward the writing intensive (WI) requirement. These courses, which would have to be approved by the University Writing Committee, would meet the same criteria as other WI courses (that is, a significant amount of writing used for teaching as well as evaluation, and opportunities for revision based on the instructor's feedback). Would all the 98 courses offered by a specific department be approved for WI credit? Perhaps. What about instructors who are offering different 98's for different students in the same semester? All would be approved for WI credit. What if a student in that department does not want a 98 that is writing intensive?

One UCC member noted that it is more efficient for 10 students to complete a single WI course, than for an instructor to teach 10 individual independent studies. Would each 98 have to be approved in advance, or would students just enroll and take their chances on WI approval? If a separate numerical designation, such as 95 or 96, were created for all independent study WI courses, and the standards for approval were clearly articulated, then some uncertainty about approval might be mitigated. The Registrar's office would have to "manually process" each individual 98 course approved for WI credit unless every 98 in a department is designated as writing intensive. Will faculty be pressured by seniors to offer independent studies to satisfy WI graduation requirements? Should we offer general education requirements as independent studies, and would this WI proposal set a precedent for other general education requirements? When the current writing requirement was established, the university intentionally chose not to utilize 98's in satisfaction of the requirement. However, if an independent study actually meets the WI criteria, why shouldn't the university certify this fact? If there are not a sufficient number of WI courses, is this the way to solve the problem? Many existing courses meet WI criteria and aren't so designated. Each department should ensure that it offers WI courses. However, it's not necessary for students to complete all general education requirements in their own major. We also want students to explore the curriculum and not become over specialized in their own departments. What else is the university doing to ensure the effectiveness and availability of WI courses? Brereton wishes to be pro-active in listing WI courses and criteria on a new web site and personally inviting departments to offer more WI courses. The university might also provide additional support for WI courses from undergraduate or graduate TAs, as discussed in the original legislation.

If the UCC chooses not to approve the general concept of WI 98's for an entire department, it could still allow students to petition COAS on an exceptional basis, if their petitions are approved by the writing committee. The proposal to allow specific independent study courses to count towards the writing intensive requirement was tabled by the UCC.

#### Proposed Changes in the Philosophy Major and Minor

Jerry Samet, Chair of the Philosophy department, met with the committee to discuss proposed changes in the requirements of the major and minor in Philosophy. His department's proposal aims to simplify the minor, which currently consists of five different tracks, by offering only one track. The proposed track, which is the one most students select, would remain five courses, but only one (instead of two) of these courses would have to be at an advanced level, and at least four of the courses would have to originate in the department, including at most one independent study. Regarding the major, the structure would be amended by eliminating the requirement of "Introduction to Philosophy", although all upper level courses would now have specific pre-requisites. Also, lists of approved courses for requirements in Moral, Social and Political Philosophy; Logic; and History of Philosophy would now be included in the *Bulletin*. Other revisions would require two, instead of one, upper level requirement in Metaphysics and Epistemology, and allow only one semester of 98 or 99 to count toward the major, so that a student would be required to complete at least seven "classroom" courses. The proposal would also require students to petition for approval to count at most one cross listed course toward the major, and allow only two courses to be transferred from another institution. The new structure provides students with two options to achieve departmental honors—those who complete year long theses or 99 courses would be required to achieve a 3.5 cumulative GPA in the major, and those who opt not to complete theses would have to complete a total of ten philosophy courses, five at the advanced level, and also achieve a 3.75 grade point average in the major.

In general, the changes encourage students to take more specific philosophy courses and fewer cross-listed courses to gain a less randomly assembled core knowledge of the field. Although the "Introduction to Philosophy" course was expected to serve as preparation for other courses, in fact,

many students declare the major after already completing advanced courses, and successfully petition to waive this course.

UCC members suggested that, rather than requiring students to petition for approval of a cross-listed course, the department consider stating that “With the approval of the Undergraduate Advising Head, one cross-listed course may count toward the major.” UCC members also noted that most other Brandeis humanities departments require theses for departmental honors. While short papers instead of theses may be the norm in philosophy, completing some form of independent writing signals a different level of ambition than completing additional courses, no matter how high the grade achieved in those courses. The UCC briefly discussed broader policy and equity issues related to honors qualification before asking the Philosophy department to reconsider its honors proposal.

Later in the term, the UCC unanimously approved a revised proposal from the department, which included changing the total number of courses required for the major from eight to nine, allowing cross-listed courses to count toward the major and minor as non-advanced electives, articulating the number of courses that must be taught by members of the Philosophy faculty (five for majors and three for minors), and offering only a thesis option for achieving departmental honors (the earlier proposal for a non-thesis honors track was withdrawn until further study by the department in the fall of ‘04). All other changes proposed at a previous UCC meeting were also approved.

#### Proposed Changes from the Music Department

Eric Chafe, Professor of Music, presented two proposals on different subjects from the Music Department. The first proposal would allow two semester “ensemble” courses taken for credit, or one semester of private lessons plus the co-requisite ensemble course, both taken for credit, to count toward fulfillment of the School of Creative Arts distribution requirement. This would enable two two-credit performance courses to count toward fulfillment of the requirement in a manner similar to full credit performance and studio courses in the School.

The second proposal would require all music majors to complete either MUS 108b, “Form and Analysis” or MUS 182b, “Advanced Music Seminar”. This would reduce the electives in the music major from three to two, so that ten of 12 courses would be required. The department believes that its majors do not have sufficient grounding in basic forms of music and that the content of 108b is not adequately covered in the music theory or history sequences; MUS 182 is good preparation for students interested in graduate study of musicology.

Pending and subject to School Council approval, the UCC approved both proposals; however, the Dean’s office was asked to convey concern that the second proposal might over constrain the requirements of the music major. Is a very structured major too specialized for a liberal arts institution? Does it allow for exploration of the field? Perhaps the department could consider offering different tracks in the major, in addition to the performance track. These tracks might include one that prepares students for graduate school, and another for students with other interests.

#### Module Courses for Undergraduate Credit

Both the Brandeis International Business School and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management offer six and one half week modules or two-credit courses. Students enrolled in the five-year BA/MA program in Economics and IBS are allowed to enroll in IBS module courses in their senior year. The new “Health: Science, Society and Policy” program offers a growing number of Heller electives; undergraduates now wish to take Heller module courses for credit. Should the university now allow HSSP seniors to complete module courses for credit or should it go further and

allow Arts and Sciences departments to create and offer module courses, and/or all undergraduates to enroll in module courses? A 6.5 week format with only 19.5 contact hours may not be appropriate for most undergraduate courses, but it works well for the professional schools. Course instructors should be trusted to decide which students may enroll in their courses, which will generally be limited to more advanced students with the appropriate background.

A motion to allow undergraduates to enroll for credit, with the permission of the instructor, in module courses offered by Brandeis professional/graduate schools was unanimously approved (a prior motion to limit this practice to juniors and seniors did not receive a second).

### Bulletin and Calendar Issues

Dean Jaffe noted that the Economics department had asked if it were necessary for the UCC to approve a proposal to add “Econometrics” to the requirements for achieving honors in that department; the dean did not believe this matter warranted UCC consideration.

Another proposal, first raised by department chairs, concerned the length of the “shopping period,” which many faculty consider too long, particularly since classes now tend to begin on a Thursday. While students may be held responsible for course work from the first day of classes, their ability to legally enter and enroll in classes up until the third Friday of the term puts some students at a disadvantage. The shopping period is formally 10 instructional days or 12 instructional hours. The university proposes to shorten the period, but still ensure that most classes meet at least twice before the end of the shopping period. The exception might be Monday only classes, which meet only once even during the current interpretation of the shopping period. Students would still maintain the right to return books until the end of the week on which the last day of enrollment falls.