

**MINUTES OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION COUNCIL CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**  
March 17, 2009

**Members present::** Drs. Barduhn (Chair), O'Callaghan, Gravani, Grantham, Janke and Governali  
**Guest:** Dr. A. Lachance

**To:** Dr. Mark Prus, Provost

**pc:** B. Buxton, Chair, Faculty Senate  
B. Mattingly, Interim Dean, School of Arts and Sciences  
J. Cottone, Interim Dean, School of Professional Studies  
G. Porter, Dean, School of Education  
R. Kendrick, Chair, Educational Policy Committee  
B. Smith, Chair, Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee  
J. Hendrick, Chair, Professional Studies Curriculum Committee  
S. Davidenko, Chair, Education Curriculum Committee  
C. Benton, Chair, College Curriculum Committee  
N. Aumann, Associate Provost for Curriculum  
J. Walkuski, Chair, Graduate Faculty Executive Committee  
A. Lachance, Chair, Childhood/Early Childhood Department

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**

On March 17, 2009, the Teacher Education Council Curriculum Committee met with the chair of the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department (Dr. Andrea Lachance) to discuss proposed changes to the concentrations for the Childhood/Early Childhood Education majors. The meeting lasted more than an hour; the discussion involved basic philosophical differences between the committee's view of a concentration and the view of the department.

The committee believes that a concentration needs some degree of coherence in terms of theme and/or course content. It believes that one approach to achieving this end could be a group of common courses which all students in a concentration need to take or a lesser expectation that at least three courses in the concentration would have to be in one discipline. The present proposal does not include any such requirement and could result in students using a broad variety of unrelated courses from a variety of departments to meet requirements. The committee does not believe that this is consistent with the concept of a concentration. The committee believes its recommendations for all three concentrations would enhance their coherence and depth. The committee has further considered the Environmental Studies concentration and offers a suggested revision to the department for their consideration (see attachment A).

In contrast, the department supports its approach both philosophically and in terms of availability of resources. From a philosophical perspective, the department believes that this approach provides maximum options for students, gives students the opportunity to pursue personal interests and increases the probability of student success in upper division liberal arts courses. From a resource perspective, the department maintains that a more restrictive program would create problems in terms of availability of courses and degree completion. The department believes there are sufficient theoretical underpinnings across a wide variety of courses to justify the term "concentration."

The committee believes that the proposed concentrations are inconsistent with the general approach to concentrations at the College and questionable in terms of meeting the spirit and intent of the SUNY New Vision requirements. The committee cannot find a comparable concentration in the college catalog. Programs with interdisciplinary concentrations, such as African American Studies and International Studies, retain significant amounts of content focus that is not apparent in the proposal. (Attachment B contains sample curricula from the proposal. Regarding hypothetical students A, B, C and D, each has complied with the requirements of the Humanities concentration as proposed. For student E, the expectations of the Environmental Studies concentration have been met).

The committee also believes that the approach taken by the Department does not really respond to the

requirements of "*A New Vision in Teacher Education: Agenda for Change in SUNY's Teacher Preparation Programs*," that was described as a basis for the changes which are being proposed. In this document, the following is noted about the preparation of elementary education students:

Students preparing to teach in the elementary grades will complete an approved major or Concentration directly related to the elementary curriculum (i.e., language arts/English, mathematics, etc.) of at least 30 credits with at least 18 credits at the upper division level.

Both the tone and contents of this statement would seem to indicate that the expectations for a concentration are more along the lines of a discipline (e.g. English, mathematics), rather than a broad area such as the humanities. This is directly supported by the mention of a "major" as an example. The department appears to believe that it is in compliance with this requirement; the committee believes that the concentrations need more focus and cohesion in order to comply with the requirement.

Similarly, the Association for Childhood Education International's position paper titled "Preparation of Elementary Teachers" notes the following: "Teacher preparation programs must have a broad foundation in the sciences, humanities (including the fine arts) and social sciences with advanced study in at least one specialty area (emphasis ours), in order to be able to optimally expand children's ability to grow and develop in all areas." This may not be a guiding document for the development of concentration areas, but is offered as additional support for the committee's position related to the need for more focus and cohesion in the concentration.

Dr. Lachance raised several concerns about the process used for review in this case. The committee is in general agreement with Dr. Lachance that neither the TEC nor the Curriculum Change Guide provides explicit criteria for curriculum review by the TEC Curriculum Committee. It is clear from the minutes of our December 2008 meeting that the committee did look to the feasibility of the program, the coherence of the content areas, as well as the expectations of external agencies. Dr. Lachance also noted that the composition of the TEC Curriculum Committee lacks representation from the School of Education. The decision to remedy this situation, or not, lies with the TEC. There would be no objections from the committee itself if representation were expanded. Dr. Lachance also noted with evident frustration the extensive delays that occurred in the review of this proposal. The committee noted that there were delays in the distribution of the minutes, in responding to emails and in organizing the meeting. The committee apologizes to Dr. Lachance for those delays.

The committee believes that its position is well grounded and its actions are consistent with its role outlined in NCATE's Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Institutions and SUNY Cortland's Institutional Report, 2004. The TEC has the responsibility for curriculum review and its curriculum committee is the group that has been assigned this specific task. The committee believes it has performed its role, has reviewed the proposal a number of times and has finally met directly with the department chair to attempt some resolution of differences. The differences appear to be too fundamental for compromise on the part of the department or the committee. To the extent that compromise is possible, the committee has made the suggestion of a three-course discipline-specific requirement. Under these circumstances, the committee has decided not to forward this proposal to the Provost for his review. (See p.9 of the Curriculum Change Guide, which states "Teacher Education Council Curriculum Committee reviews and, if approves, submits its recommendation t the Provost.")

MB/gh 3/24/09

## Attachment A

EST 100: Introduction to Environmental Studies  
SCI 141: Integrated Biology and Geology  
SCI 142: Integrated Chemistry and Physics  
POL 100: Introduction to American Government and Politics  
BIO 411: Ornithology  
SCI 325: Biotechnology and Human Aging  
ANT 300: Human Evolution and Survival  
GRY 481: Geography of New York State  
REC 315: Ecotourism  
GRY 486: Monsoon Asia

ATTACHMENT B

<p><b>STUDENT A</b></p> <p><u>PHI 203 - Social Ethics</u>  <u>ENG 250 - Introduction to Jewish Authors (3 cr. hr.)</u>  <u>THT 100 - Introduction To Theatre Arts (3 cr. hr.)</u>  <u>ATH 121 - Art in the Ancient World</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>ATS 330 - Artist's Books</u>  <u>COM 436 - Films of Spike Lee</u>  <u>THT 470 - Theatre Management</u>  <u>PHI 331 - War and Terrorism</u>  <u>PWR 340 - Writing Sports Literature</u>  <u>ENG 440 - The Age of Satire</u></p>	<p><b>STUDENT B</b></p> <p><u>PHI 205 - Prisons and Punishment</u>  <u>PHI 100 - Introduction to Philosophy (3 cr. hr.)</u>  <u>PWR 315 - Writing Creative Non-Fiction (3 cr. hr.)</u>  <u>MUS 100 - Music in Western Society</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>ATH 323 - North American Art: Colonial Period to World War II</u>  <u>EDU 303 - Fine Arts and Early Learning</u>  <u>THT 399 - Participation in Theatre (multiple)</u>  <u>PHI 375 - Science, Truth and Bias</u>  <u>PWR 324 - Grant Writing</u>  <u>ENG 355 - Major Figures in British Literature to 1780</u></p>
<p><b>STUDENT C</b></p> <p><u>PHI 270 - Race and Racism</u>  <u>ENG 257 - Introduction to Irish Literature (3 cr.)</u>  <u>INT 300 - Interdisciplinary Studies: The Artist in Modern Society (3 cr.)</u>  <u>MUS 101 - World Music</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>ATS 316 - Silk Screen Printing</u>  <u>THT 321 - Acting Shakespeare</u>  <u>PHI 382 - Marxist Philosophy</u>  <u>ENG 402 - Grammar</u>  <u>PWR 397 - Writing for Online Publication</u>  <u>MUS 331 - Musical Theatre Performance I</u></p>	<p><b>STUDENT D</b></p> <p><u>PHI 272 - Utopias</u>  <u>ENG 251 - Introduction to African-American Literature (3 cr. hr.)</u>  <u>IST 100 - Culture through Film (3 cr. hr.)</u>  <u>ATS 113 - Three-Dimensional Design</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>THT 330 - Literature in Performance</u>  <u>ATS 342 - Art and The Internet</u>  <u>PHI 400 - Seminar in a Major Philosopher</u>  <u>PHI 321 - Medical Ethics</u>  <u>PWR 398 - Business Writing</u>  <u>MUS 332 - Jazz</u></p>

<p><b>STUDENT E</b></p> <p>EST 100: Intro. To Environmental Studies          SCI 141: Integrated Biology and Geology          SCI 142: Integrated Chemistry and Physics          POL 100: Introduction to American Government and Politics                    or ECO 105: Political Economy and Social Thought          SCI 325: Biotechnology and Human Aging          SCI 304: Plants and People          REC 379: Outdoor Recreational Activities          REC 402: Management of Recreation Resources          REC 315: Ecotourism          GRY 486: Monsoon Asia</p>
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