Arts and Sciences (LA & J) Curricula Committee
Annual Report 2003-2004 Academic Year

The A&S Curricula Committee had an extremely busy year. In addition to reviewing and bringing to the faculty the normal proposals from departments and programs, a major proposal to overhaul the Culture Option of the Foreign Language Requirement and the World Civilization Requirement was brought to the A&S Faculty and passed. We also took care of the normal business of reviewing new Interdisciplinary Minors and Plans of Study. An Excel spreadsheet summary of our course/program activities is included in a separate document that shows the details of our work on faculty proposals this year.

This year 17 new courses were reviewed by the committee and brought before the faculty for vote from the following subject areas: American Studies (1), Chemistry (1), Chinese (1), Community Health (1), Comparative Religion (2), Economics (3), French (1), Interdisciplinary Studies (1), Italian (1), Political Science (1), and Psychology (4). The new CIS course is an honors thesis that was presented to the faculty with co-sponsorship from EPC and passed this spring. It will allow students to write an honors thesis in a topic that does not fit into an existing department/subject area or Plan of Study. In addition we reviewed minor changes in course numbers, titles, and descriptions, as well as some course deletions, some of which required faculty vote, in the following subject areas: Economics, French, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, Swahili, and UEP.

The committee reviewed and brought before the faculty the revision of five majors in Architectural Studies, Comparative Religion, Geology, Geological Sciences, and Peace and Justice Studies. The changes in Comparative Religion and Peace and Justice Studies are significant updates of these major programs reflecting an evolution in these subject areas and a broadening of Tufts’ course offerings over the past decade. In addition new courses were instituted to change the economics major from having a two course to one course introductory sequence in the coming year. The interdisciplinary minor in Comparative Religion was dropped. A new interdisciplinary minor in Latino Studies was reviewed and presented to the faculty for vote and will be implemented this coming fall.

By far the largest and most time-consuming project that the committee handled this year resulted in a proposal passed by the A&S Faculty on February 25 to overhaul parts of the Foundation Requirement including the Culture Option of the Foreign Language Requirement and the World Civilization Requirement. This process began in the fall with the committee unanimously agreeing to address proposals received from various faculty and student groups over the last three years that had largely been ignored. These proposals requested that Diaspora courses in subject areas such as Asian American and Latino Studies be allowed to count as culture courses in a way consistent with Bulletin language and in the same way other Diaspora courses, most notably African American courses, have been included in the Culture Option. In the fall there was an atmosphere of growing frustration and increasing student and faculty pressure, as well as a realization that there were major inconsistencies in the way we administered the Culture Option vs. how it is described in the Bulletin. Through much of the fall and early spring semester the Curricula Committee spent considerable time consulting with representatives from the ARB, EPC, EEOC, student organizations, and several academic departments as well as deans as to how to proceed with this delicate issue. These consultations led to the proposal to overhaul the requirements over the next two years (Phase 2). In the interim (Phase 1) Diaspora courses will be reviewed by the Academic Review Board and should count as culture courses under expanded culture area descriptions.

The committee’s handling of Plan of Study proposals by students, especially prior to this year, has been less than efficient. These problems are largely but not entirely related to the compression of committees that occurred several years ago resulting in the Curricula Committee assuming greater responsibilities with fewer members. For most of the fall semester the administration of the Plan of Study Program, not just reviews, also became a responsibility of the Curricula Committee. Over the past few years rules regarding when Plan of Study proposals were due had also changed (by end of sophomore year) but had not been adequately communicated to students. Beginning in the Fall 2003 it became necessary to process Plan of Study requests that had not been acted on, or that had their reviews delayed, since as far back as the Fall 2002. This effort began with the chair of the committee communicating with four students over the summer and finalizing their Plans of Study by September. This year the Curricula Committee received three new Plan of Study proposals. Two of the proposals were from juniors and
involved extensive review, revision, and re-review in communication with reformulated advisory committees. The work required by a subcommittee of three (indicated below) from the Curricula Committee was enormous and unfortunately came late in the spring semester. These two proposals are close to ready at the time of this report preparation. The third proposal by a sophomore was received during the reading period and will be reviewed early in September 2004. Although it was a goal for this year to stabilize the Plan of Study program it has literally become a moving target. Our plan is to overhaul the requirements for Plan of Study proposals and revise the information given to students in conjunction with Jeanne Dillon over the summer so that we can start fresh this fall with a more efficient system that takes advantage of online resources. It is extremely important to have one or two members of our committee review proposals every year who have done it before, thus passing along the process to newer members of our committee.

A continuing problem for the Curricula Committee has been finding a suitable meeting time and place for such a large group. Times that do not interfere with departmental and other faculty activities are very few. We must meet frequently, open blocks seem to always have departmental conflicts, and there is no other regular meeting time when even half of our membership is generally available during the course of a semester. The Resource 25 room reservation system has also not been friendly to us. It has assigned us class room space in an engineering department (once also an environmental engineering water quality lab by mistake), which has not been very conducive to handling our reviews.

Overall the Curricula Committee needs to find ways to revamp its review processes in order to handle all of its responsibilities. The current course review procedures and submittal process place an extremely heavy work load on the chair of the committee. One saving soul this year has been Catherine Doheney, Secretary of the Faculty, who has greatly facilitated our communication with the faculty and deserves our thanks and recognition for her work in assisting us. Improved communication between the Curricula Committee and both EPC and the ARB has alleviated some problems but our course proposal and revision system is still in bad need of an overhaul.

On Behalf of the Committee
Jack Ridge, Geology

Committee Membership:

Francie Chew (PoS subcom.) Biology
David Feldman Child Dev.
Catherine Freudenreich Biology
Gerald Gill History
Deborah Pacini-Hernandez Soc./Anth.
David Krumme Comp. Sci.
Brigitte Lane Rom. Lang.
Sharun Mukand Economics
Peter Reid Classics
Joel Rosenberg Ger/Rus/Asian
Christina Sharpe English
Alice Trexler (PoS subcom.) Drama/Dance
Arthur Utz (PoS subcom.) Chemistry
Kyra Jackivicz (A06) Head of Ref and Collections, Tisch Library
David Proctor (graduate student) 
James Glaser (ex-officio) 
Laura Walters (ex-officio) 

Support staff: Catherine Doheney, Secretary of the Faculty