

SSIS Policy and Guidelines For Consultation and Dispute Resolution Regarding New Course Proposals

(Amended October, 2003)

(Approved by the SSIS Faculty Council on May 17, 2002)

Rationale

The increasingly interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter of the various SSIS programs and the growing number of new SSIS faculty members proposing courses within their departments suggest the likelihood of contested “ownership” of curricular themes. Recognizing this, the SSIS Faculty Council has enacted policy by which to structure and insure consultation across programs regarding new course proposals. As well, the Council has constructed guidelines by which programs and the SSIS Curriculum Committee might address disagreements and disputes within the College regarding new course proposals.

The policy and guidelines offered below seek to facilitate the process and product of curriculum development in our college. As such, they address one of the most significant dimensions of our collegiality: the collective responsibility to our students, our academic fields, our university, and our community. As in all such endeavors, we are aware of the pitfalls of attempting to regulate the robust intellectual life that defines our very purpose. The Council wishes instead to encourage curricular innovation in a manner that, on balance, serves our collective interests.

Guiding Principle

The overriding goal of the proposal of new courses is curricular innovation that serves the College and its students. This means that the College (whose interests are represented in this regard by the Curriculum Committee), not individual departments or faculty members, “owns” or “controls” courses. In putting forth the best curriculum possible for our students, we encourage consultation and compromise whereby as many departments and faculty members as is reasonable might offer courses of interest and importance to their students. This would include courses covering similar subject areas.

Policy Regarding Consultation

In line with the above principle, the Faculty Council has determined that

1. The Curriculum Committee shall specify the elements of consultation necessary to the proposal of a new course within the College. The goal of consultation shall be the resolution of problems or disagreements regarding the proposal by the departments and programs directly involved. At a minimum, consultation shall involve:
 - a) The publication of a proposed course description on a College-maintained List-Proc. Chairs and directors of departments and programs shall be responsible for placement of the proposal on the List-Proc and for monitoring of the List-Proc in line with department or program interests. Publication of a proposal shall occur at least *two weeks* before Curriculum Committee deliberation concerning the proposal.
 - b) The direction of queries, concerns, and reservations concerning a proposed course to the chair or director of the program from which the proposal emanated in as detailed and timely a fashion as possible, with copies to the chair of the curriculum committee and the SSIS Associate Dean.

2. In cases of disputes between or among departments or programs regarding a particular proposal, absent resolution by the parties directly involved, the SSIS Associate Dean shall attempt informal mediation before the proposal is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The Associate Dean shall notify the chair of the Curriculum Committee that an attempt at mediation is occurring and, at its conclusion and without prejudice, shall report the outcome of the mediation effort to the chair of the Curriculum Committee. Importantly, the Curriculum Committee is not bound to honor a mediated agreement regarding a course proposal.
3. In cases in which the Associate Dean's attempted informal mediation regarding a disputed course proposal was unsuccessful or in which the Curriculum Committee chooses not to honor a mediated agreement, the Curriculum Committee shall meet with the affected parties (including the chairs or directors of the programs in question) to review the contending proposals and arrive at a determination in line with the Guidelines for Dispute Resolution enumerated below.

Guidelines for Dispute Resolution

In reaching a determination regarding a proposed course, elements of which are in dispute, the Curriculum Committee should observe, at a minimum, the following guidelines:

1. The primary determinants of the viability of a proposed course should be its integrity, curricular currency, and student demand. The fact of current "ownership" or "control" of a curricular theme or specific course by a given department or program should not, in and of itself, determine the outcome of a proposal by another department or program to offer a new course.
2. However, in examining new course proposals, the SSIS Curriculum Committee should be attentive to the potential impact of a proposed course upon the economic (i.e., FTES-related) well being of all parties citing an interest in the outcome of deliberations regarding the proposed course.
3. Whenever possible, crosslisting and scheduling of courses (across semesters and times) should be encouraged with an eye to permitting the greatest number of offerings to our faculty members and students.