

July 1, 2006

To: Members of the Faculty
From: Jim Swartz, Chair
Curriculum Committee
Re: 2005-06 Annual Report of the Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee's responsibilities are two-fold: routine supervision and approval of all specific course changes, and discussion of and recommendations on curricular policy guidelines. Students are voting members of the Committee. Student members were identified early and carried a full share of the ongoing work. Their participation was exemplary. In almost all cases, the Committee achieved a consensus.

The Curriculum Committee acted on a number of routine changes to courses including title changes, modifications of descriptions, additions or deletions of prerequisites, and approval of new courses. The Committee recommended to the faculty and the faculty approved a new concentration in neuroscience. These changes are reflected in the 2006-07 Interim Academic Catalog which can be found on the web.

The Committee considered a proposal that registration on Sunday would be eliminated on a trial basis. In addition, on a trial basis the signature of the instructor to add a class not at capacity would not be required until the starting of classes second semester. Classes at capacity would still require the signature of the instructor to add. A final decision regarding doing an experiment on the elimination of Sunday registration and signature requirements for registration would be made by the Curriculum Committee in the fall.

The Dean has asked the Registrar to work with key individuals from our IT staff to streamline our registration with the understanding of the importance of our advising relationships and procedures. The project will start by looking at the feasibility of allowing students to enter courses directly into the Datatel system after course selections have been reviewed and approved by the adviser. The Registrar will present to the Committee next year several scenarios concerning an online registration adviser approval workflow.

With regard to MAPs, the Committee noted that some individuals expressed concerns that departments were not holding MAPs to a high standard of academic quality. The Committee believes that it is important that MAPs be of the highest quality. While the Dean's Office is able to assess whether MAP applications meet the expectations outlined in the College catalog and MAP web site, they are not able to assess the scholarly quality of projects in all disciplines. Furthermore, they are not able to assess the quality of projects for which there is no application (currently independent major senior theses and other projects within the context of courses not including 499). For this reason, the Committee would like to undertake an assessment of the MAP program. Since all MAPs are completed in majors or concentrations and all majors or concentrations recommend approval of all MAP projects, the Committee believes that majors and concentrations are the best places to begin an assessment of the MAP program. The Committee has invited all departments and concentrations to do an assessment of the quality of MAP applications and projects completed in the department or concentration. For those interested in assessment of the MAPs completed in their department or concentration, the Dean's

Office will provide each department and concentration with a list of all MAPs for recent years and copies of the applications. The department or concentration can collect the final products from the faculty mentors. While the Committee will not require all departments and concentrations to do such assessment, it would like any department or concentration wishing to conduct an assessment of MAPs in its area to submit that assessment to Gerald Adams by Fall break in October, 2006. We will also request comments from supervisors on process and quality of independent major theses.

The Committee has reviewed various forms of independent study in the curriculum trying to make sense out of the various types of independent study that the college offers. In this review, it was noted that we offer Mentored Advanced Projects (MAPs) under a variety of guises. The vast majority of MAPs are registered for as Dept 499. There are, however, a number of other course numbers that are considered MAPs but are referred to with such titles as Senior Thesis, Senior Essay, or a course which offers a MAP option. The Committee unanimously concluded that it would be far preferable for all MAPs to be registered for as 499s. This change will take effect beginning in the Fall semester of 2006. In addition, students will need to complete the standard application form for all MAPs. Included in this are all independent major senior theses, and any other individual projects or courses that majors or concentrations wish to count as MAPs. Majors and concentrations may continue to require a senior project or thesis that is not a MAP, by simply using a course number other than 499. Alternately, a major or concentration may change its requirements to allow either a 499 or project with an alternate number to fulfill a requirement. In the case of a seminar course where some students complete a MAP and others do more standard course work, the students who wish MAP credit will complete the standard MAP application and register for 499 while the other students will register for the standard course number. The Committee has requested that we begin archiving all MAP products in the Library.

The committee approved a recommendation that was sent to the Curriculum Committee for the extension by one year of the experiment of cutting back the number of final periods from 9 to 8 for one more year only. This will leave Monday as a full reading day.

The Committee presented to the faculty the following draft proposal for discussion: The Curriculum Committee recommends that the committees and individuals responsible for approving 1) graduation without completing residency requirements, 2) applications for double and independent majors, and 3) off-campus study, factor into their decisions students' statements on how their studies at Grinnell College have included or will include the six elements of a liberal education as described in the College Catalog, pages 6-7. Students will be asked [required] to submit these statements along with their applications.

The Committee spent a great deal of time revising the section of the catalog that describes the various types of independent work that students may do. The complete text of those changes is at the end of this report. In summary the following policy changes were approved by the committee:

1. The application for 387's will be similar to that for independent study, but approval is needed only by the student, faculty director, advisor, and department chair.
2. Senior Thesis 497 for independent majors will be replaced by MAP 499: Senior Thesis.
3. The removal of the eight credit limit for MAPs.

4. Directed Research (299 and 399) will no longer be reserved for summer only.
5. The following statement:
“No student may count more than 10 credits of independent study courses (297, 387, and 397) in any one department toward satisfaction of graduation requirements. No student may count more than 8 credits of internship toward satisfaction of graduation requirements. Credits earned through completion of “Plus-2” projects, MIP 299, MAP 499, or Directed Summer Research (399) are not included in this 10-credit limit”

will be replaced in Fall 2006 by this statement:

“Although students are not limited in the total number of Independent Study/Directed Research courses (Plus-2, 297, 299, 397, 399, and 499) they may take, they may apply only twelve of these credits in any one department toward satisfaction of graduation requirements.”

In addition, the committee reviewed the applications for MAPs and Independent Study and suggested a variety of changes reflecting the changes made in the catalog copy.

The committee briefly discussed the following proposal to create a two day end of year period for celebrating student accomplishments. The proposal was forwarded to the Committee on Academic Standing for further consideration.

Proposal: The College should establish a 2-day period at the end of the semester for student presentations and performances and related celebrations of student accomplishments. This period would be Thursday and Friday of the last week of classes. Thursday’s 11 am Convocation slot would focus on recognition of major awards, fellowships, and scholarly accomplishments achieved by students. MAP presentations and other presentations of students’ scholarly and artistic work could be scheduled during limited parts of these two days so that other times remain open for study. Student presentations normally scheduled during the last two weeks of classes could be moved to these days, easing the crowding and stress of the final two weeks of classes.

To make up for these two ‘lost’ class days, classes would begin on a Thursday (four days earlier than in our current calendar). Since the day before classes would be a Wednesday, this would facilitate students’ adding or dropping classes during a normal business day prior to the first day of classes.

Rationale: This proposal is in accord with strategy two from our Strategic Plan: **“Foster student, faculty, and staff sense of ambition, adventure, and well-being”**

A & B:

(A) Strengthen opportunities for, and celebrate, achievement inside and outside of the classroom to encourage the aspirations and leadership potential of students, faculty, and staff.

(B) Enhance programs that connect College life with students’ futures (such as increased internships and active alumni networks) to promote the transition from College to a successful, professional life.

In addition, the proposal responds to concerns about end-of-semester stress, crowding of the calendar, and limited time between the end of classes and the beginning of the final exam period. With these two days set aside for celebrating student accomplishments and preparing for exams, we could return to a 9-period exam schedule beginning with two exams on Monday and ending by noon on Friday, allowing faculty more time to confirm grades for graduating seniors and allowing earlier departure for returning students and more time for socializing and leave-taking for graduating students.

Thanks once again to excellent work by Steve Langerud, Internship Coordinator, the Committee's internship review process continued to work well. During the academic year 37 students were approved for internships (15 for GIL, 10 for GIW, and 12 for academic semesters). There were 98 students approved for internships for summer 2006. For the summer of 2006, 25 students have completed the process for receiving academic credit. The committee approved 17 students for credit. In addition, there were 3 CPT applications reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee for summer 2006.

2005-06 Curriculum Committee members:

James Swartz	Gerald Adams	Wayne Moyer	Elizabeth Dobbs
Lee Sharpe	Erin Hurley	Chris Ochoa	Margaret Toomey
Caitlin Skinner	Uday Chandra		

Individual Study

The College encourages students to develop initiative and take responsibility for their own education through a variety of means: Plus-2, Independent Study, Directed Research, and Mentored Advanced Projects.

Plus-2

A course-related independent study option, referred to as the “Plus-2,” permits a student to choose an independent study component that adds two credits to a regular course. With the approval of the instructor, this option is available in most courses above the introductory (100) level. The Plus-2 provides opportunities for more extensive work in some aspect of a course, for more extensive exploration of general literature of a course, for additional studio or laboratory activity, or for other corollary work.

Independent Study

Guided Reading 297 and Independent Study 397 provide an opportunity for a student to explore an academic area not part of the present College offerings. Either might include reading of a body of literature, reproducing published scientific experiments, learning advanced techniques, or exploring an art. The design of an independent project is very much in the hands of the student with advice from the faculty director. Guided Reading and Independent Study, in comparison to projects conducted under the rubric of a Mentored Advanced Project, have less formal application procedures, require significantly less faculty direction, and do not have the expectation of producing results intended for dissemination to the wider scholarly community.

297 Guided Reading**2 credits**

Guided Reading focuses on the reading of a body of literature under the direction of a faculty director and may culminate in a paper, examination(s), or other gradable product. A student is expected to meet once a week with the faculty director for discussion and analysis of the readings. Prerequisites: second year standing; proposals must be approved by the faculty director, the academic adviser, and the Dean of the College.

397 Independent Study**2 or 4 credits**

Independent Study is intended for select students who are competent to participate in a program of study under faculty supervision. Independent Study culminates in at least one product (a paper, laboratory report, work of art, etc.). A student is expected to meet at least once a week with the faculty director. Prerequisites: second year standing; proposals must be approved by the faculty director, the academic adviser, and the Dean of the College.

Directed Research

The College also encourages students to engage in faculty directed research projects. Directed Research (299 or 399) is an opportunity for a student to work under the continuous direction of a faculty member on a research project, often of the faculty director’s design. Directed research, in comparison to projects conducted under the rubric of a Mentored Advanced Project, has less formal application procedures and does not necessarily have the expectation of producing results intended for dissemination to the wider scholarly community.

299 Directed Research**2 or 4 credits**

Directed Research at the 200 level is intended for select students who have the appropriate academic preparation to benefit from an early research experience. The research project may be pursued in Grinnell or on a field excursion, always under the direct and continuous supervision of a Grinnell faculty member. Directed research will involve a search of the necessary literature and result in a written report. Offered during the academic year and summer. Prerequisites: completion of the first year and course work related to the topic of the research project; proposals must be approved by the faculty director the academic adviser and the Dean of the College.

399 Directed Research**2 or 4 credits**

Directed Research at the 300 level is intended for select students who are competent to participate in an

advanced research program. The research project may be pursued in Grinnell or on a field excursion, always under the direct and continuous supervision of a Grinnell faculty member. Directed research will involve a search of the necessary literature and result in a written report.. Offered during the academic year and summer. Prerequisites: completion of second year and course work related to the topic of the research project; proposals must be approved by the faculty director the academic adviser and the Dean of the College.

Mentored Advanced Projects

At the time of declaring a major, students submit a comprehensive plan that lists the coursework they have completed and outlines a plan for the remaining semesters of study. At this time, it is appropriate for interested students to discuss with their advisers how a Mentored Advanced Project, or MAP, might help to shape their program by culminating a sequence of academic work.

Mentored Advanced Projects provide a chance to work closely with a faculty member on scholarly research or the creation of a work of art. A MAP can be the capstone of the academic major or a concentration, or it can culminate a separate sequence not recognized as a formal program. The MAP may be done individually, conducted with a research team, or developed in the context of an advanced seminar. In many fields, MAPs are connected with the faculty member's scholarship and may contribute to ongoing faculty research. The MAP opportunity is made available by specific programs and individual faculty members at their discretion, so students should not expect to set the terms for a particular MAP. Sound planning and attentiveness to the available opportunities are recommended to students who seek a chance to culminate their undergraduate work in a creative or scholarly way. Products of MAPs are expected to contribute to the original scholarship of the field of study and may be disseminated professionally through a scholarly publication or presentation.

499 Mentored Advanced Project

2 or 4 credits

A Mentored Advanced Project is an approved course of faculty-directed scholarly or creative work that is the culmination of significant preparatory work and aims to produce results that merit presentation to the College community or the wider scholarly world. The Mentored Advanced Project takes place under the direct and continuous supervision of a Grinnell faculty member. Since MAPs are advanced and intensive, the first component of a multiterm MAP must earn four credits. Subsequent portions (such as a "follow-up" MAP) may earn two or four credits. Each component of a multiterm MAP will receive a grade. Prerequisites: completion of second-year student status and approval by the faculty director, the academic adviser, and the academic program in which the MAP takes place. Specific MAP offerings are described in greater detail by departments, concentrations, divisions, and nondepartmental majors.

Group Projects

Any instructor may permit students to work or meet together if joint work will be advantageous to all the students. Applications for all students in a group project should be submitted together, with the student statement attached to each application.

General Regulations for Plus-2, Independent Study, Directed Research, and MAPs

Independent Study, Directed Research, or a MAP may not substitute for a course regularly offered by Grinnell College even though the course is not offered every year.

Directed Research 299 may be undertaken after completion of the first year; Independent Study (297 or 397) and Directed Research 399 may be undertaken when a student has attained second year standing. A MAP may be undertaken after completion of the second year.

Students having less than third year standing who have satisfied the tutorial requirement or its equivalent may take one Plus-2 or an Independent Study/Directed Research course (297, 299, 397, 399, and 499) per semester. There is no semester limit for third- and fourth-year students.

Although students are not limited in the total number of Individual Study/Directed Research courses (Plus-2, 297, 299, 397, 399, and 499) they may take, they may apply only twelve of these credits in any one department

toward satisfaction of graduation requirements.

An application for Independent Study, Directed Research, or a MAP must be completed with the required project statement and with all faculty signatures before submission to the Office of the Registrar. All applications are subject to the approval of the Dean of the College.

The S/D/F grading option is not available for Plus-2, Independent Study, Directed Research, or MAPs.

General Application Procedures for Independent Study, Directed Research, and MAPs

An application for a Guided Reading (297) requires a description of the topic accompanied by a bibliography. Arrangement for a Guided Reading project must be made before the work is done; credit is not given for reading done in the past.

An application for Independent Study (397) or Directed Research (299 or 399) requires a thesis statement or equivalent, an outline of the project, and a bibliography. After consultation with the potential faculty director, a student submits an application first to his/her academic adviser for approval and then to the proposed faculty director, who will decide whether to accept the application. The registration process is completed when the application is accepted by the faculty director and is approved by the Dean of the College.

A Mentored Advanced Project (499) has the most formal and developed application. In consultation with the potential faculty mentor, a student develops a thorough description of the topic and project, a clear statement of the relation of the project to his or her previous studies, a bibliography or list of sources, and an explanation of the planned product of the project. After securing the approval of the faculty mentor, a student submits the application for approval to the faculty adviser, the academic program in which the MAPs takes place, and the Dean of the College. The final product of a MAP should be worthy of dissemination to the wider scholarly community.

An application for Independent Study, Directed Research, or a MAP (297, 299, 397, 399, and 499) is due the term prior to that in which such work is to be performed. All such applications for the following term will be due in the Office of the Registrar two school days after the end of preregistration for each term. A completed application for a summer Directed Research or a MAP is due in early June.