



# THE COLLEGE

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## UNIVERSITY *of* ROCHESTER

### College Curriculum Committee Academic Year 2018-2019

The notes below summarize the activities of the College Curriculum Committee for the academic year 2018-2019. These include the approval of new majors, minors, clusters, and certificates; discussion of changes to several academic policies; and comprehensive review of faculty-led programs abroad.

#### **New Majors**

- B.S. in Biology [pending state approval as of May 2019]  
This degree will not require students to specialize within biology. It will retain the rigor of the existing specialized B.S. programs, while giving students more flexibility to choose their own program. The B.S. tracks each require about 20 more credits of biology and ancillary field courses than the B.A. track, and also require students to take most of their advanced biology courses within the specialty. Students will have more flexibility in which advanced and ancillary field courses they can take. At least one of the advanced courses will be required to be a course with a strong emphasis on reading and analyzing articles from the primary literature.
- B.A. in Italian [pending Faculty Council approval as of May 2019]  
The Italian major will have the same basic structure as other majors in Modern Languages and Cultures, with a comparable breadth and depth both in terms of language and culture courses, and an ample selection of upper level courses. As in most MLC majors, the Italian major requires eleven courses, seven of which are core courses, and four are electives. Candidates for the new major are expected to factor in their curriculum a study abroad experience.

#### **New Minors**

None.

#### **New Clusters**

- Community-Engagement in Performance, Dance & Movement  
Though open to students outside of engineering, the creation of this cluster will allow engineering students to fulfill a majority of the credits required for the Citation in Community-Engaged Scholarship.
- Entrepreneurship

The cluster is designed to meet student demands for a flexible Entrepreneurship cluster. Students taking this cluster will have the opportunity to explore the diverse facets of entrepreneurship that interest them.

- Marketing

The cluster provides students with the opportunity for exploration of advanced marketing concepts and a pathway to a BS in Business with a Marketing Track.

- Social Entrepreneurship

The cluster offers students the opportunity to learn about social entrepreneurship. Students will learn the basics of building a business while making a positive impact.

### **New Citations or Certificates**

None.

### **Changes/Modifications**

- Changes were approved for the following **majors**: Business, Chemical Engineering, Comparative Literature, East Asian Studies, English, Interdepartmental, Interdepartmental Engineering (Engineering and Applied Sciences), Music, Neuroscience, Public Health, Russian
- Changes were approved for the following **minors**: East Asian Studies, Computational Biology, Environmental Humanities, Interdepartmental, Legal Studies, Statistics, Theatre, Writing Studies
- The committee completed the comprehensive review of all **faculty-led programs abroad** offered to date: Advanced Research Topics at Chavin de Huantar, Peru; Biographies of Emancipation in the Black World; Experiential Learning in Procida; Field Methods in Archaeology; Field School in Ghana; French in France; French Sign Language and Deaf Culture in France; German in Germany; Malawi Immersion Seminar; Polish in Poland; Russian in Russia; Smiths Island Archaeology; Summer in Seoul

### **Policy Change**

- The major-minor restriction was relaxed for the specific minor in Computational Biology.

### **Discussions**

- **Review of the Senate Resolution to Establish Academic Policies for Instruction**

The committee discussed the report from the Student Association proposing ways to improve communication between faculty and students around various academic policies such as syllabus structure, grading and evaluation practices, and exam schedules. Building off the SA proposal, the committee drafted three distinct proposals: (1) the creation of a syllabus template or a checklist of items to include in a syllabus; (2)

a list of best practices for grading and feedback; and (3) the creation of a website containing key policy language. Due to time constraints, the committee chose to focus on drafting a recommended checklist of items to include in syllabi. These items included:

- Basic course syllabi elements: Instructor name and contact information; office hours and location; course description and learning objectives; prerequisites; credit hours; time and location of classes; required course materials; timeline for the course (e.g., exam dates, lecture schedule, due dates for assignments); and overview of assignments
- Policies: Attendance (even if not factored into the grade); auditing; academic honesty as it pertains to the course, with a link to the ASE site on Academic Honesty; course-specific accommodations for students with disabilities, with a link to the UR Office for Disability Resources; credit hour policy; missed or make-up exams; regrades and resubmissions; late assignments; group work; technology
- Grading practices: How assignments, exams, attendance, class participation, etc. are weighted to calculate the final grade; if class participation factors into the grade, and if so, the criteria used; and whether grade distribution is based on an absolute or relative scale
- Past syllabi: If possible, make the most recent syllabi available online to students prior to registration so they can get a better idea about course content and whether it is suitable for them.

The committee also discussed how best practices could be more broadly communicated early in the semester. It was recommended that this content be included in the Dean's Office communications that are sent to all faculty at the beginning of the semester. Guidelines could also be posted online for faculty and students to reference going forward. The committee will revisit proposals (2) and (3) at a future meeting.

- **Review of the Add/Drop Policy**

The committee discussed the advantages and challenges of reducing the add and drop/delete periods. Reducing the add period to two weeks would help ensure students are able to catch up with content, and would better align with peer institutions. The committee noted that students can likely explore a course within that timeframe. If students are allowed to enroll in a course even in the third week, it can be challenging to catch up on material. Shortening the add period to two weeks would also help to distinguish the add/drop period from the withdrawal period. As students explore courses during the add period, it is important that they have access to the full course

materials in Blackboard. Instructors could also post old exams to help students better evaluate the content and level of difficulty.

Depending on the week in which work or assessments are administered during the semester, a full 4-week drop period might be necessary so students can truly gauge whether they are enrolled in the appropriate course. Limiting the drop/delete could be problematic if students choose to remain in courses that are not a good fit in order to avoid withdrawing. Alternately, a longer drop/delete period allows for more variance in assignments or exams across course sections. For courses with waitlists, a longer drop/delete period can also be problematic. By the time a student drops the course, it is too late for another student to add it, as too much material will have already been covered. Shortening the drop/delete period would help avoid this issue and ensure that the limited space in a course will not go unutilized.

When students drop/delete a course, it will not appear on their transcripts. Alternately, students have up to the eleventh week to withdraw from a course. The committee discussed the negative perception of withdrawals. A primary concern is the "W" appearing on transcripts. In an effort to avoid the stigma of the "W," students may opt to take a course S/F (Pass/Fail). However, data from the past three years shows approximately 25% of students who applied to law and medical schools had at least one "W" on their transcripts. This suggests that withdrawals are not prohibiting students from pursuing graduate opportunities in practice. If desired, students can uncover the "W" before graduating and replace this with the letter grade.

In summary, the committee was supportive of reducing the add period to two weeks. At a future meeting, the committee will review data on the timing of the drop period to better understand when students tend to drop/delete courses.

## Curriculum Committee Members 2018-2019

Chair, John Jaenike	Biology
Loisa Bennetto	Clinical and Social Sciences in Psychology
Alan Czaplicki	College Deans' Office
Ian Krager	Student Association Academic Affairs Committee (spring)
Alison Frontier	Chemistry
Marcy Kraus	College Deans' Office
Michael Jarvis	History
Steven McAleavey	Biomedical Engineering
Alison Peterman	Philosophy
Jeffrey Runner	College Deans' Office
Allen Topolski	Art & Art History
Tarsha Vasu	Student Association Academic Affairs Committee (fall)
James Zavislan	HSEAS Deans' Office