

University Studies Council
2020-2021 Faculty Senate Report
 Prepared by Albert Spencer, Chair

Council Membership: Aleksandar Jokic, Amy Larson, Rachel Webb, Vicki Reitenauer, Jeff Conn, Mary Morningstar, Amy Borden, Nancy McClintock, Kimberly Willson, Wu-Chang Feng, Leslie Batchelder, Stephanie Bryson, Amy Spring, William Jones, Pronoy Rai

Consultants: Rowanna Carpenter (University Studies Director of Assessment), Linda George (Interim Executive Director of University Studies) Sara Newlands (Associate Executive Director) Connor Underwood (ASPSU Representative)

I. Curriculum: The UNST Council approved the following course additions and removals which have been confirmed by the Faculty Senate.

Course Number	Course Title	Cluster
ANTH 379	Practicing Forensics	Science in Social Context
CCJ 325	Crime in the City	Healthy People/Healthy Places
CCJ 390	Crimes of the Powerful	Healthy People/Healthy Places
ENG 383	Topics in Comparative Literature, Film and Comics	Adds crosslist with already approved WLL 383U
GEOG 375	Maps, Culture and Society	Design Thinking
GEOG 375	Maps, Culture and Society	Popular Cluster
HST 361	France and the World since 1815	Interpreting the Past
HST 363	The British Empire	Global Perspectives
HST 384	The Ottoman World	Interpreting the Past
INTL/WS 349U	Gender and Development	Global Perspectives
INTL 367	The Global Drug Trade	Global Perspectives
PHE 323	Intro to Fat Studies	Healthy People/ Healthy Places
PHL 303	Early Modern Philosophy	Knowledge, Values, and Rationality
PHL 319	Asian Philosophy	Knowledge Values Rationality
PHL 379/WS 379	Feminist Care Ethics	Gender and Sexualities
PS 316	Politics and the Arts	Popular Culture
PS 316	Politics and Art	American Identities
PS 319	Politics of the Environment	Environmental Sustainability
PS 335	Race and Politics in the United States	American Identities
PS 381	Women's Leadership	Leading Social Change
PS 389 U	Environmental Political Theory	Environmental Sustainability
USP 301	Introduction to Community Studies	Understanding Communities
WS 374	Memoir, Gender and Sexuality	Gender and Sexualities
WS 344	Queer Ecologies	Gender and Sexualities

Removals:

Course Number	Course Title	Cluster
HST 332U	History of North American Fur Trade	
HST 336U	Lewis and Clark and the American West	
PHL/WS 312U	Feminist Philosophy	Freedom Privacy Technology

- II. Program: Throughout AY 2020-21, the UNST Council discussed and/or completed the following tasks during its monthly meetings.

10/9/2020: At our first meeting we welcomed Sara Newlands attendance as the first Associate Executive Director of UNST, reviewed the results of the 2018 PSU Exit Survey, and determined that our top priorities for the year would be to reform the Junior Clusters and support the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work across campus and within UNST. With regards to the former goal, we reconstituted the Cluster Curriculum Committee with the following faculty members: Linda George (Chair, Executive Director UNST), Joel Bettridge (English), Amy Borden (Film Studies), Peter Chaille (Leading Social Changer Cluster Coordinator), Patrick Edwards (Natural Science Inquiry Cluster Coordinator), Amy Larson (Environmental Sustainability Cluster Coordinator).

11/13/2020: At this meeting we discussed the scope, charge, budget, and composition of a potential DEI Subcommittee to support DEI initiatives across campus. We also discussed revisions to the American Identities Course Description proposed by the Cluster's Coordinator, Marie Lo, which would later be approved at the following meeting after minor revisions.

12/11/2020: At this meeting we congratulated Kimberly Willson's on her new title and position as the 1st University Studies Librarian, voted on the first batch of course proposals for the Junior Cluster, and moved to postpone the Revision of the Communication Goal until after the pandemic. A revision of this scale requires multiple conversations and symposiums with the relevant stakeholders and faculty which cannot be effectively facilitated until normal operations resume.

02/12/2021: At this meeting members of the Race and Ethnic Studies Requirement (RESR) working group presented their proposal and fielded our questions. The Executive Director signaled her intention to bring two reforms of UNST before the Council at our next meeting. Our DEI Subcommittee was approved and populated with the following members: Sara Newlands (Chair), Leslie Batchelder, Amy Borden, and Stephanie Bryson.

03/12/2021: We began the meeting with a moment of silence to mark the first anniversary of the Coronavirus pandemic. We voted to issue a Memorandum of Support for the RESR proposal shared during the last meeting and approved another batch of courses for the Junior Cluster. The major topic of discussion were the two proposals presented by Executive Director Linda George: 1) to reduce the number of SINQ from 3 to 2 and 2) to decouple the SINQs and Junior Cluster courses. After much discussion, the first proposal passed unanimously, but we voted to postpone a vote on the second proposal until the next meeting to allow more research, consideration, and conversation.

04/09/2021: I began this meeting by announcing that after five years on the UNST Council including two as the Chair that I would be cycling off the committee at the end of my term and encouraged members to either share nominees or express their interest in serving as Chair before the next meeting. We then reconsidered the postponed proposal from our last meeting to decouple the SINQs and Junior Clusters. Executive Director Linda George presented new assessment data and other evidence to show the benefits of this proposal to student retention

and success. Likewise, I presented an exposition of one of the founding documents of UNST (Chuck White's "A Model for Comprehensive Reform in General Education" (1994)) to determine if there were any specific curricular reasons why the link between SINQs and Junior Clusters were required. I could find no clear explanation of an essential link and in fact discovered that the current policy ironically reinforced several problems that the original implementation of UNST hoped to solve. The proposal passed. Finally, the DEI Subcommittee shared their plan to use their budget to facilitate an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) for Junior Cluster Coordinators to help them incorporate more DEI content into the curriculum. The Council voted unanimously to approve this project.

05/14/2021: At this meeting we welcome Dean Shelly Chabon who discussed the upcoming search for a new Executive Director for UNST. We also received updates from the DEI Committee that preparation for the IDI were underway and from the Awards Committee that we had received several nominees for each award, that these applications were being reviewed, and that they would be presented at the UNST End of the Year party (6/11). Finally, I shared with the Council that after much consideration, the Executive Director and I recommend Amy Borden (Film Studies) to be the next Chair of the Council and she was unanimously confirmed.

Beyond the tasks mentioned in these meeting summaries the Council currently has two motions before the Faculty Senate, the proposals to reduce the number of SINQs from 3 to 2 and to decouple the SINQs and Junior Clusters, that will appear on the June agenda. Likewise, the Council will convene in June to reflect on the past year, set the agenda for AY 2021-22, and pass the position of Chair from me, Albert Spencer to the new Chair, Amy Borden.

I would like to conclude by thanking PSU, UNST, and the Council for the opportunity to serve as a Council member and Chair. Our general education program is special and I hope that the revisions I have developed, supported, and overseen will continue to drive innovation, scholarship, and student success.