

University Studies Council (USC)
Faculty Senate Annual Report 2022 - 2023
Prepared by Chair Kimberly Willson-St. Clair & Submitted May 5, 2023

Council Membership: Pelin Basci, Adam Booth (2023), Chris Butenhoff, Esperanza De La Vega, Hillary Hyde, Daniel Jaffee, Dan Jang (2023), Erika Kimball, Marie Lo, Caroline Miller, Chris Monsere, Jen Morse (2022), Leslie Bienen (2022), Zapoura Newton-Calvert (2023), Annie Knepler (2022), Pronoy Rai, Marvin Washington, Lindsey Wilkinson, Shoshana Zeisman-Pereyo, Kimberly Willson-St. Clair

Council Consultants: University Studies Executive Director Alex Sager, University Studies Associate Director Sarah Newlands, University Studies Director of Assessment Rowanna Carpenter, Associate Director Becki Ingersoll, Advising and Career Services, Enrollment Director Katherine Barich

Curriculum - Junior Cluster Courses

Approved for Fall Term 2023

HST 331U - Queerness and Difference in European History - Gender & Sexualities Cluster
JST 336U - Gender and Judaism - Gender & Sexualities Cluster
SOC 330U - Sociology of Food Inequalities- Healthy People/Healthy Places Cluster

Approved for Winter Term 2024

AGE 340U - Aging and Justice - Families and Society Cluster
AGE 340U - Aging and Justice - Leading Social Change Cluster
HST 367U - The Haitian Revolution 1790-1804 - Global Perspectives Cluster

Approved for Spring Term 2024

USP 314U - The Global City in Film - Popular Culture Cluster

Curriculum - University Studies Program (UNST) Collaborations

The USC supported two major initiatives regarding junior clusters and senior capstones. The USC unanimously supported the Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) proposal allowing students in four interdisciplinary majors to take junior cluster courses within their majors. The USC passed two motions in support of the proposed 2 + 2 elementary education degree (Dot

McElhone and Amanda Suugimoto, 22/23), whereby students take required courses within the College of Education that are tracked to the goals of the Understanding Communities junior cluster, along with a peer reviewed Senior Capstone, Equity in Classroom Teaching, counting toward six credit hours of student teaching.

The University Studies Council met on December 9th and unanimously approved the ARC proposal allowing students declaring interdisciplinary majors to use courses from their majors to fulfill the 12 hours of junior cluster courses requirement, a part of the University Studies core curriculum. This motion addresses the following interdisciplinary degrees: CLAS-Arts and Letters, CLAS-Social Sciences, CLAS-Sciences, and CUPA-Urban & Public Affairs. This exemption, taking junior cluster courses in the students' majors, addresses a significant problem whereby students unintentionally take more courses than they need in order to graduate from Portland State University (PSU). The limited junior cluster courses interdisciplinary students encounter leads to excessive petitions; thus creating inequity due to the fact that the students may not even know that they can file petitions for exemptions in order to graduate on time.

On December 9th, the USC unanimously approved junior cluster courses for the proposed, augmented, elementary education degree at PSU. The Council notes that this is an exemption from the traditional junior cluster requirement of students taking junior cluster courses in disciplines outside of their major. College of Education (COE) students in this major will take designated junior cluster courses in their major that track with courses already designated for the Understanding Communities cluster. The UNST Council recognizes the strict curriculum requirements for this augmented, licensed degree that supports the 2+2 higher education model, Portland State's dual admittance agreements with Metro community colleges.

The approved courses (12 credits) for the Understanding Communities junior cluster requirement are:

ITP 356U Social Studies Methods, Racial History of Portland, Indigenous History/Present, Teacher as Activist (4 credits)

ITP 357U Culture, Politics, and Law (4 credits)

ITP 361U Methods for Science, Health, and Environmental Justice (3 credits) +
ITP 309U Junior Practicum (1 credit)

The potential undergraduate degree in elementary education is a rigorous, augmented licensure degree with an ESOL endorsement that will produce well-prepared and licensed elementary education teachers for the Portland Metropolitan area and Oregon. The UNST Council is a

strong advocate for the success of this proposed degree program and recognizes the importance of offering this undergraduate degree at Portland State University.

Teaching Excellence Awards for UNST Faculty

During Spring Term 2023, Chair Kimberly Willson-St. Clair asked the Council to consider stopping the administration of Teaching Excellence Awards for UNST faculty. Due to the intensive evaluation process, the awards had been tabled by the Council for two years. A motion was passed to stop administering these awards, and to recommend that the UNST administration and faculty carry on these awards within the UNST program with support from the UNST Council.

Curriculum - UNST Freshman Inquiry /Senior Inquiry

On February 10, 2023, the UNST Council passed a motion to redistribute the fifteen credit hours of Freshman Inquiry and Senior Inquiry (FRINQ /SRINQ). The traditional distribution of FRINQ/SRINQ was

- four credits of arts & letters
- four credits of social sciences
- four credits of science
- three credits of writing

The new credit distribution, stipulated in the motion, follows:

- four credits of arts & letters (this remains the same)
- four credits of social sciences (this remains the same)
- four credits of writing (one additional credit for recommended WR 121)
- three credits of science literacy

The FRINQ Working Group, formed in Fall Term 2022, was charged by the Council to evaluate the Freshman Inquiry curriculum in regards to credit distribution and the PSU grid. Membership included Chris Carey, Annie Knepler, Sonja Taylor, Shoshanna Zeisman-Pereyo, Katherine Barich, Lindsey Wilkinson, and Kimberly Willson-St. Clair. This group worked closely with University Registrar Cindy Baccar to understand the definition of the PSU credit hour. This recommendation was sent to her in February in order to make this change to the transcript legend for freshman Inquiry courses effective immediately.

In Winter Term 2023, the FRINQ Working Group brought another motion to the UNST Council to advise Executive Director Alex Sager, Associate Director Sarah Newlands, and the current

UNST faculty convener Sarah Dougher to form an UNST Curriculum Committee to revitalize the UNST faculty's engagement with shared governance at PSU.

Curriculum - Junior Cluster Courses

For Academic Year 22/23, Pronoy Rai chaired the Junior Clusters Evaluation Subcommittee, and members included Marie Lo, Chris Monsere, Alex Sager, Matt Carlson, Andreen Morris, and Katherine Barich. Their charge, examining the Junior Clusters experience for PSU students, especially transfer students, led to two significant proposals at the April meeting. A motion was passed to accept:

PROPOSAL 1

- Requirements maintained as status quo;
- Courses that directly articulate to a cluster course will be allowed to articulate with the cluster designation (i.e., they will transfer as the "U course") and apply to the cluster requirement;
- Students will be allowed to petition to transfer upper-division courses at other four-year institutions to PSU to meet cluster requirements (i.e. U classes), and this information will be clarified on UNST documents;
- Students will continue to see the name of their cluster on their transcripts.

(Pronoy Rai, April 2023)

The motion is being reviewed by the Senate; it was discussed in detail by the Senate's Academic Requirements Committee, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the Budget Committee. This motion is currently under review by the Steering Committee, which will determine whether it should be sent directly to the Registrar's Office or brought to a vote at the June Faculty Senate Meeting.

At the May UNST Council meeting, the subcommittee will lead a discussion regarding the future of the junior-level, general education requirement at PSU to address the needs of the 21st Century PSU student population, advance the general education mission, and address important concerns around equity, inclusion, and student success. In order to draft a proposal, gather data, and advance changes through the Faculty Senate process, Pronoy Rai will lead the subcommittee to continue their work during AY 23/24.

In AY 22/23 the UNST Council actively engaged in shared governance at PSU in order to make the interdisciplinary, general education experience for undergraduate students an essential part of their college success. The Chair commends the UNST Council on their active commitment to engage in this important work throughout the academic year.