

FS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
REPORT NO. 1 – FEBRUARY 10, 2011
CORE CURRICULUM SCIENCE LEVELS ONE & TWO

The following was the report given to Faculty Senate on December 9, 2010:

LEVEL ONE AND LEVEL TWO SCIENCE

Currently, the Core Curriculum requires six semester credit hours under Domain III (Natural Sciences). The intent of Domain III (2010-2012 UTSA catalog) is:

Students must demonstrate knowledge of the methods, intellectual approaches, social significance, and history of the physical and natural sciences. Students will typically complete the requirements in 6 semester credit hours of coursework. Students must complete two courses from the following lists. At least one course must be chosen from Level Two. Level Two science courses are more rigorous than those in Level One.

The proposal submitted to this Committee was a one-page statement requesting that the “Level One and Level Two Science” requirement be removed from the catalog and that students be allowed to take any six semester credit hours listed under this domain. The proposal suggested that a statement be provided in the catalog recommending that the two science courses be within the same discipline. However, it would not be a requirement. The only reason given for removing the requirement was that it was not enforceable for transfer students. The members of the Committee did not find any indication that the faculty members from the College of Sciences were aware of this change. A motion was made and seconded that the College of Sciences be contacted to provide input regarding this change. The motion was unanimously approved, and the Committee will reconsider the proposal after additional information is forthcoming.

After the December meeting Nancy Martin provided an ad hoc subcommittee report. This report and the one page statement are on RowdySpace. The Curriculum Committee reviewed the report. However, the report did not address the question as to removing the Level One and Two Science requirement.

The two options recommended by the ad hoc subcommittee are as follows:

“Option #1. This option was unanimously voted as the top option. The committee proposes that the structure for the natural sciences core curriculum should be modeled after UT Austin. That is, 1) six credit hours in a single of field of study, and 2) three credit hours in a field of study different from the field counted toward the preceding requirement. For the second three hours, as with UT Austin, we would like to propose an option of mathematics (along with an option of other science disciplines) similar to that of UT Austin –

‘Mathematics courses (excluding College Algebra and credit used to fulfill the core mathematics requirement), but after credit in any calculus course is earned only courses for which calculus is a prerequisite can be counted.’

Of particular importance to the committee was to have both the in-depth study within one discipline and the breadth within the sciences.

Option #2. The second option would be similar to several of the other UT System schools (including UT San Antonio) – a two-tiered requirement, with an introductory and intermediate course selection in one field of study. In contrast with UT San Antonio’s current science core requirement, a laboratory would also be required with this option.”

Although the Core Curriculum Committee recommended eliminating the two-level requirement, there does not seem to be any justification for that recommendation based upon the ad hoc committee’s recommendations. No further justification was presented to the committee. On January 24, 2011, Thomas Forsthuber, Chair of the COS Policy and Curriculum Committee, was informed of the proposed change and a copy of the subcommittee’s report was forwarded to him.

Thus, the majority of the FS Curriculum Committee members voted to reject any change in the Core Curriculum Science Domain. The vote tally: 13 voted to reject change, 1 voted to change, and 3 abstained.

Resolved that the requirement for two levels for the Science Domain remain the same (i.e., maintain Level One and Level Two).