

The Provost's Office requested the University Council on Teaching (UCT) examine interdisciplinary teaching at Boston College with an eye toward what might be done to encourage more such teaching and what hindrances to it currently exist. During our deliberations we found wide interest in and excitement for interdisciplinary teaching from all segments of the University: students, faculty and administration. We also found a desire for interdisciplinary teaching at all levels, from freshman core to upper level major and even some graduate courses. The UCT discussed this topic at length and met with a group of faculty who are doing or have done interdisciplinary teaching in the recent past. While some believe interdisciplinary teaching can involve a single faculty member teaching a single course, throughout this report interdisciplinary refers to team-taught courses involving more than one faculty member from different departments and/or different schools.

The UCT heard many reasons why interdisciplinary courses are desirable and useful including but not limited to the following:

Upon leaving the classroom Boston College students (and all of us) must integrate material from many disciplines in their daily lives and careers. To some extent academic

A great many opportunities exist at BC for more interdisciplinary interactions. For instance, a large population of students double major and/or minor in different subject areas, but few opportunities exist for them to link these majors and minors together. In addition, many of our students go on service trips in the US or abroad or participate in study-abroad programs. Using these experiences to segue into a variety of interdisciplinary courses could help students increase what they get out of both the trips and the courses.

Students who are writing papers in interdisciplinary courses would be exposed to different writing styles in different specialties and critiques from faculty in different disciplines. Existing campus resources like the BC Writing Fellows Program could be used or expanded to support interdisciplinary writing projects in these classes.

Interdisciplinary teaching is a potential means to develop and expand learning communities such as Portico in the CSOM.

Faculty teaching interdisciplinary courses with colleagues are required to think carefully about their teaching and develop paradigms to get their material across to those with diverse backgrounds. This alone would undoubtedly help promote better teaching at BC and more teaching creativity.

Getting faculty from different disciplines together to teach courses in areas of mutual interest will undoubtedly lead to increased interdisciplinary research collaborations among the faculty. It will also facilitate a better appreciation of our colleagues in other departments and their roles at BC.

The UCT found that three broad problem areas act as impediments to increasing the amount of interdisciplinary teaching at Boston College. These include (1) assigning credit for students; (2) faculty workloads and support; and (3) getting people together. These are addressed separately below.

Faculty interviewed in our discussions made it very clear that the current method of counting students and assigning student credit hours is a hindrance to interdisciplinary teaching in team-taught courses. Currently, in a team-taught course with two faculty members, each gets credit for one-half the student credit hours; if three faculty are involved, one-third. Since student credit hours

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keynote speaker to act as a draw. The names of those attending would be circulated to all attendees, and it would be clearly stated at the session that it was hoped that those attending might be willing to