

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
The Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

Minutes

240 SH

September 26, 2024

Attending: Cornelia Lang (chair), Asha Bhandary, Rodica Curtu, Noelle Franzone, Megan Gogerty, Anita Jung, Liz Lundberg (staff), Emilie Maurel-Destruel, Julianna Pacheco, Sanvesh Srivastava, DeAndre Steger, Amy Strathman, Rachel Young

1. First the committee reviewed and approved the minutes from September 19, 2024. All approved minutes can be found [here](#).
2. Next the committee continued the conversation from September 19, 2024, about out-of-class midterms. The conversation began with a summary of the most common reasons an instructor might choose to administer a midterm exam outside of regular class time. Then Associate Dean Lang presented a draft of some potential criteria. She suggested that courses would be eligible to offer midterms outside of class if they:
 - a. Have over 200 students enrolled and need students to sit more spaced out than they normally do for class; or
 - b. Are taught in multiple sections but need all students across those sections to take the test at the same time; or
 - c. Have over 50 students enrolled and meet for a 50-minute time block but require more than 50 minutes for a midterm exam.

There was a question about whether online testing would be an option for some of the courses that currently administer tests outside of class time. The committee was in favor of adding the following onto the criteria: to be eligible to deliver midterms outside of class, a course has midterm exams that must be administered in person AND meets one of the other three criteria.

Associate Dean Lang showed the spreadsheet the committee looked at in the previous meeting, of the courses currently giving out-of-class midterms, with the proposed criteria applied. Most of the courses meet criterion B, and only a handful of courses currently giving midterm exams in this way would not meet any of the criteria.

The committee discussed that a change like these criteria would ideally be part of a bigger picture, long-term shift around the culture of assessment in the college, with less emphasis placed on high-stakes infrequent exams and greater use of low- to mid-stakes assessments. It is possible that these criteria would be a good starting point just by asking instructors to consider their assessment practices and provide a rationale for giving midterms outside of class time. CLAS will begin working with the departments that would be most affected by this policy with the hope of having the criteria implemented soon.

3. The committee then discussed another topic related to examinations: final exam lengths, an increase in extended testing time accommodations, and the resulting pressure on test

scheduling and testing spaces. Currently there is a two-hour time block held for each final exam and no way for an instructor to indicate if their exam is expected to use the full two hours. Consequently, an instructor might design their final exam to be completed in an hour, but a student with a double time or triple time testing accommodation would have a space booked in a testing facility for four or six hours. What is currently happening is those students are finishing exams significantly faster than the time held for them, and testing spaces are sitting vacant at times that other students could have used them.

Associate Dean Lang proposed adding a field to the exam request form in which instructors could specify how long their final exam would be, perhaps by choosing from a set of options. That way students would be able to see the reported length of the exam in MyUI, and if an instructor specified that their exam would be only 60 minutes, for example, a student with a double time accommodation would have a testing facility space booked for 120 minutes. The standard exam schedule would still use two-hour blocks for classroom scheduling, at least for now, but reporting that the space would not be used for the full two hours would relieve some of the pressure on the alternate testing locations that serve students with accommodations. The committee was in favor of this proposal, with the caveat that if instructors report that their exam takes less than two hours, they should not be able to allow students to continue taking the exam past the time they reported (which would require proportionately longer accommodated testing). Related to this issue are questions of perception around final exams: Associate Dean Lang asked the committee if there is a perception that instructors are required by the college to give final exams. One potential benefit of asking about the actual lengths of final exams is communicating to instructors that they are not required to give a final at all.

4. Finally, the committee welcomed Downing Thomas (Professor, Department of French, and Director [Interim], School of Art, Art History, and Design) and Isabel Barbuzza (Professor and Area Head, Sculpture and Intermedia, School of Art, Art History, and Design) to discuss a proposal to combine the Sculpture and Intermedia emphases of the Art BFA.

Currently there are seven emphases in studio arts. In the past, Sculpture and Intermedia were two separate, fully-staffed emphases. Beginning about four years ago, due mainly to some faculty leaving, the School has faced challenges supporting the Intermedia emphasis. Professor Barbuzza explained that the School has considered whether they need to close the Intermedia emphasis but has decided against this course of action, because intermedia is too important to the history and legacy of studio arts at the University of Iowa. The committee discussed the importance of intermedia artists such as Ana Mendieta to the University and the School (as well as the Stanley Museum of Art and the recently dedicated Ana Mendieta Gallery) and agreed that we should not lose the ability for current students to study and practice in this area.

Professor Barbuzza also explained the relationship between sculpture and intermedia and the expanded field of sculpture as it is understood today, including performance, installation, video, and site-specific work. Because intermedia students have not been able to take enough intermedia courses to meet their requirements, the School has allowed them to substitute sculpture courses to meet intermedia requirements. The sculpture courses' topics have been good fits for the work intermedia students are doing, but the School has been approving these courses as exceptions. The School's proposal is therefore

to close the separate subprograms in “Sculpture” and “Intermedia” and open a new combined subprogram in “Sculpture and Intermedia” that would officially allow students to use both sculpture and intermedia courses to meet requirements.

The committee was supportive of this proposal and the ways it preserves the legacy of the School while leaving open the possibility of future growth in these areas. The committee discussed ways students could still focus their work on either sculpture or intermedia if they wish, including sample plans of study that direct students to particular courses depending on their interests. There was also discussion of a new combined subject course code (SCIM), but that piece of the proposal is not necessary to move forward with combining the subprograms. Because of the work involved in implementing a new subject course code and the Registrar’s other projects, this piece of the proposal would probably not move forward for at least a couple of years. The committee discussed some potential benefits of retaining the separate identities of the INTM and SCLP course codes, at least for now.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Jung
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Secretary, UEPC