

# Update

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## Curriculum Review Steering Committee (CRSC) September 27, 2012

Following the presentation of the Year-end Report (May 1, 2012) to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the end of the spring semester, members of the Steering Committee took a short break and then continued their work.

Over summer 2012 committee members continued to work on the proposal taking into account the questions posed by faculty during the spring semester in the “Conversations with the Faculty” (Feb. and April) and the May 1 presentation to FAS. The committee also met with individual faculty who asked to speak with the committee; the issue most frequently raised had to do with the language of the proposed “domains.”

In late August and early September, the committee made two changes to the proposal. The first is an adjustment to the definition of the domains:

- **Arts and Aesthetic Interpretation (AAI):** Courses in this domain study the realm of human expression through language, literature, art, music, and performance. Students engage the world in ways ranging from the making of their own innovations and performances to the interpretation of cultural products to the study of the social and cognitive processes involved in their creation and reception. Students are encouraged to see the act of making, whether their own or that of others, as a way of investigating the world.
- **Social and Humanistic Understanding (SHU):** Courses in this domain study the realm of human cultures, societies, and individuals through their development, organization, and interaction. Some reach their conclusions on the basis of statistical modeling and scientific experimentation, others on the basis of observation, inference, and extrapolation. Students learn to describe, theorize, and explain human cultures, societies, and individuals in their variety over time and space.
- **Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning (SQR):** Courses in this domain study the realm of the natural world and the means by which humans observe, measure, and model it. Students learn how to gather and assess empirical data, develop hypotheses, and investigate the predictions of existing theories. Courses in this domain enhance understanding of the foundations, uses, and implications of scientific knowledge.

The second adjustment is a clarification of the overarching structure. In the Year-end Report and in the May 1 presentation, the committee referred to the domains as if they only applied to

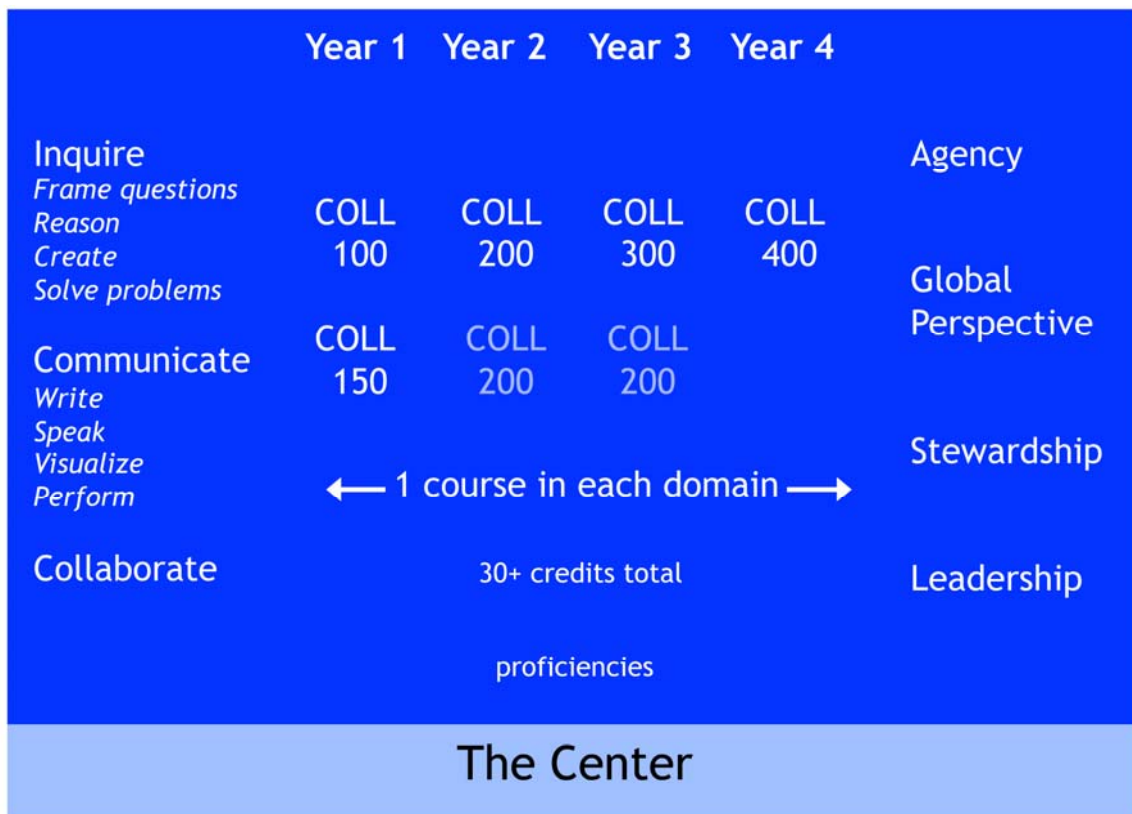
the COLL 200 courses and not to the “Rounding Out the Liberal Arts” section of the proposal. In late August and early September, we determined that there is a better, more cohesive and more inclusive way to think about the domains, their relation to COLL 200 and their relation to courses already taught in departments and programs.

The committee proposes that all (or most) courses in the undergraduate catalog would be located in a domain. Students would take two courses in each domain.

Three of the courses would be COLL 200 courses, one in each domain. Three of the courses would be departmental “domain” courses, one in each.

The COLL 200s emphasize an integrated approach to the Liberal Arts. The “domain” requirement honors and respects disciplinary boundaries and allows faculty to offer the same kinds of courses that are in the curriculum now.

This is an overview of the proposed design:



Beginning in September and continuing through October, committee members will meet with A&S departments and programs to continue the conversation. We ask all A&S faculty to think about how you see your work fitting into the proposed design.

In addition, committee members and/or the co-chairs have continued to provide regular updates to EPC, FAC, FAS, the Dean, and the Provost. Two additional presentations were:

- A presentation of the proposed curriculum to staff members in W&M Development.
- A half-day retreat with the librarians at Swem Library, where we posed the question: Where might the library's mission intersect with the proposed curriculum, and what are the implications for The Center envisioned to support the curriculum?

Several practical areas are also currently under consideration by the committee. Gene Tracy (Physics) has undertaken a review of existing courses and numbers of students and classroom seats in order to project the impact of adjustments indicated by the College Curriculum; John Griffin (Biology, Neuroscience) is developing proposals for the configuration of COLL 400; and Rowan Lockwood (Geology), faculty director of the Advising Program, is working with the committee on various scenarios for enhanced faculty advising.

Recommendations and adjustments resulting from these work efforts will be shared with the faculty as part of the continuing conversation.