

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

**Minutes**  
240 SH  
March 23, 2023

*Attending:* Asha Bhandary, Cornelia Lang (chair), Melissa Bates, Jill Beckman, Roxanna Curto, Jennifer Eimers (staff), Erin Irish, Cinda Coggins Mosher, Christine Shea, Jan Wessel, Jenna Yang

*Absent:* Alan Huckleberry

*Guests:* Andrew Forbes, Jennifer Sterling, Jennifer Bertrand

1. Committee members reviewed and finalized the content description and learning outcomes for the “+1” part of the [3+1 GE World Language pathway](#) that will begin Summer 2024.

The pathway is titled **World Language and Cultural Exploration**.

**Course Content Description:**

Students explore topics and issues through the lens of a world language (other than English) and/or culture or multiple world languages and/or cultures. Courses help students expand their knowledge of language systems and structure and/or the role of language in social interactions, cultural environments, and identity formation. Suitable work may align with prior World Language experience or engage with a different language, and may include a study abroad or experiential learning course. A minimum of 3 s.h. is required.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- *Students build understanding of one or more world language(s) and/or culture(s).*
- *Students make connections among language, culture, and identity and/or increase their understanding of the structure of a language or languages other than English.*
- *Students develop and enhance intercultural competencies, helping them to engage with people and/or cultures whose dominant language is not English.*

The title, description, and content were unanimously approved.

2. Jennifer Sterling, Lecturer in the Department of American Studies, and Andrew Forbes, Associate Professor in the Department of Biology, lead an OTLT Center for Teaching Faculty Learning Community (FLC) called Assessing Assessment for Equity and Student Motivation. This FLC is trying to improve grading equity for students and to increase student motivation by moving it away from the sometimes singular focus on grades and

to the intrinsic motivation of learning. They presented a proposal to revise the CLAS [grading policies and webpage](#) in a way that expands the types of grading practices that are described on this website and better represents the wide variety of grading strategies that different instructors in CLAS use.

Although CLAS does not fully endorse norm-based grading, there was significant discussion about this practice in the committee. While some instructors do use a curve to raise students' grades, more often a curve puts students in competition with one another, which is not conducive to learning. Students get confused about what the curve actually means, and they are often at a loss to understand their grade in a course when it is used; this confusion has implications for students trying to determine whether or not to stay in a course or drop it before the collegiate course deadline. There is a sense in some departments that CLAS administration requires and endorses the practice of norm-based grading. On the other hand, the committee wondered whether there is some value in the curve for students who are applying to professional schools after graduation. Many programs are moving away from GPA as an indicator of success, however.

The committee also discussed alternative grading models, including what they are and which strategies work better in particular types of courses. Some instructors worry about trying and using alternative grading strategies and whether their efforts would be supported by their departments and/or the college. The FLC encourages CLAS to consider providing more information and support for experimenting with these different approaches to grading. Another approach to alternative grading is to use it for individual parts of a course, rather than the entire course. It should be noted that instructors still need to submit midterm and final grades, regardless of whether they are using alternative grading for some or all of their course.

Committee members also tied alternative grading practices to improved student mental health and lower stress for students about letter grades. UEPCC will continue discussing clarifications and revisions to the CLAS grading guidelines in the coming weeks.

### 3. Adjournment of meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Irish  
Associate Professor, Biology  
Secretary, UEPCC