

UNCA
Academic Policies Committee

Report on ARTS 310 and Arts Lab Courses

On October 28, 1999, The Academic Policies Committee met with "Arts and Ideas" faculty to discuss ARTS 310 and the various courses which satisfy the ARTS lab requirement.

From the report and the discussion, APC draws four conclusions.

1. *The evolution of Arts 310 has produced a course which is not necessarily consistent with the original charge.*

Senate Document 3684 charges the Arts faculty to create a

...four-hour interdisciplinary course with a studio entitled "Art as a Way of Knowing." This is not an art appreciation course or an introduction to any of the particular arts, but stresses the human significance of art, its social role, its foundation in aesthetics, and its importance as a way of interpreting reality.

The same document justifies this goal with the following rationale.

Artistic creation and aesthetic experience represent a distinct way of knowing which draws upon intuition, feeling, sensation, and thought. This course may incorporate elements of art history and appreciation; psychology; study of materials, media, and form; experiments and participation; analysis of popular forms; and attendance at performances, exhibits, etc.

Evidence from both the report and the comments made by faculty who met with APC suggest the rationale provides a clearer foundation for the course than does the actual charge. The comments indicate that while 310 faculty have a clear focus for their efforts, their orientation shifts from semester to semester and it is not always clear what direction the course is headed. One possible explanation is the lack of familiarity of the 310 faculty with the charge and rationale.

2. *The laboratory/studio component of the course needs considerable reworking*

The lab courses are a central component of the arts requirement in that they provide a “hands-on” experience which both the report and faculty deem important. It is clear, however, that the labs are poorly integrated with the 310 course. This gives the impression the labs are insignificant appendages which is not the intent of either Senate Document 3684 or the 310 faculty.

3. *The implementation of the Requirement is seriously hindered by resource limitations.*

The course and laboratories suffer from two serious resource difficulties.

- a. Since, the Tuesday performances are essential to the course, the program strives to bring as many high quality performers from outside the local community as possible. The rising cost of such performances and declines in the program’s funding make this increasingly difficult.
- b. The lab courses rely heavily on adjuncts for staffing adding to the coordination problem. The calculation of contact hours makes the courses unattractive for full-time faculty.

4. *APC Recommends the following adjustments to the general education courses offered by the Arts program*

The Report indicates 310 faculty are organizing study groups and committees to address coordination concerns. These groups should also address the issues listed below.

- a. The program should make an effort to formally clarify and articulate its purpose and contribution to the university’s mission. The report and hearings indicate the 310 course has focus, but that purpose has not been clearly articulated although the report makes a major step in that direction.
- b. A more clearly defined formal set of objectives will allow the program to directly address the assessment issue. The program should develop ways for faculty to determine if they are achieving the results the program expects.
- c. A better list of objectives will permit the program to make a concerted effort to coordinate 310 with the labs. A structured and cohesive plan for integrating the labs with the 310 course needs to be devised.
- d. The program must examine its role in general education in the context of

other requirements. It should clarify how it complements other aspects of general education and coordinates and integrates with the different components.

- e. The program should make a concerted effort to expand its resource base. Funding for the program is declining and adjuncts are increasingly being used instead of full-time faculty. The program must develop three proposals for the administration. The first should be an equitable plan for calculating contact hours, the second should suggest ways the administration can increase full-time faculty participation, and the third will detail the programs funding needs. These proposals and the administration's response are to be presented to the Faculty Senate by March 1, 2001.
- f. Grades in both the 310 course and the labs are considerably higher than the university norm. The program should solve this problem either by adopting alternative grading mechanisms or raising standards.