

Report of the Core Curriculum C4 Assessment Subcommittee

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Report Prepared by Norman King

Subcommittee Members

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Assessment Plan

In the Spring of 2001, the C4 Assessment Subcommittee presented a preliminary plan for its study (see Core Curriculum Assessment Report by Paul Raymond, Director of Core Curriculum Assessment, dated April 18, 2001). Analyses were conducted by the Subcommittee primarily in the Spring 2001 and Fall 2001 Semesters. The objectives, key questions to be addressed, and techniques of analysis evolved as challenges and realities of gathering, processing, and evaluating the data were met. This report addresses the following objectives and answers, to one degree or another, certain key questions, using the procedures listed below. These lists (objectives, key questions, and procedures) are somewhat revised from those included with the preliminary Subcommittee report.

Objectives For C4 Assessment

1. Survey Category C4's status: its goals and objectives, and the courses and methods currently used to fulfill them.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the current program in meeting Category C4's objectives.
3. Make recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Category C4.

Key Questions

1. Are there a sufficient number of sections of Category C4 courses?
2. Are there appropriate enrollment caps in Category C4 courses?
3. Do C4 faculty have a sense of unity of purpose and procedure in delivering C4 courses?
4. Are there sufficient resources for faculty to properly teach C4 courses (e.g., visual exhibits, travel funds, software, Internet)?
5. Are students given the sufficient opportunity to meet the goals of C4: (1) understand and contemplate the major ideas presented in the great works of philosophy, literature, and fine and performing arts of Western Europe and the Americas, (2) recognize and respond to the strengths and shortcomings of the western tradition, (3) and appreciate the diverse voices that have shaped the western tradition?
6. To what extent are Category C4 courses providing the opportunity for students to develop critical thinking and information processing skills?
7. What are the student outcomes from Category C4 courses?

Assessment Procedure

1. Student responses to the Category C4 portion of the Core Curriculum will be surveyed on University Assessment Day, using a survey form devised by the Subcommittee.

2. In depth, face-to-face interviews will be carried out with all faculty (including adjuncts) teaching Category C4 courses. Interviews will be conducted by members of the C4 Subcommittee using a standard question set.
3. In depth, face-to-face interviews will be conducted with the Director of the Humanities Program, and chairs of departments that contribute to Category C4 courses.
4. Enrollment and scheduling data will be obtained and analyzed.

Recommendations by the C4 Subcommittee

1. **The Subcommittee recommends that faculty workshops be continued with renewed vigor.**

Workshops were cited by several faculty as very useful for increasing the sense of collegiality and community among Humanities faculty, as well as for broadening background and knowledge of individual faculty members. Funding for workshops should be increased, and adjuncts who teach multiple sections of Humanities courses should be included in them.

2. **The Subcommittee recommends that the Humanities faculty be surveyed to determine technical support needs.**

Faculty reported having to use outdated and faded slides, playing videos on monitors with undersized screens, lacking satisfactory access to computer projection equipment, and literally begging for “charitable” donation of time and expertise by people who can set up Web pages for courses. Once technical support needs are determined, sources/funding should be sought for fulfilling them.

3. **The Subcommittee recommends that the Humanities faculty take stock of the ways in which gender and other issues of diversity and under-representation are handled in the Humanities sequence.**

While Western Culture is clearly the product of all of its societal components, our literature comes from relatively few of those components. The statement of purpose for Category C4 refers to “diverse voices” that have helped shape Western Culture, when in fact it has been disproportionately shaped by white males. Perhaps the “taking stock” referred to above should include a reevaluation of the purpose statement for Category C4, since women’s voices, for example, are not nearly as powerful as their overall influence has been.

4. **The Subcommittee recommends that the Humanities faculty open a dialog with International Programs and Services to determine how Humanities/Foreign Languages might work with them to help increase international awareness among students at USI.**

The C4 student assessment survey shows a notable lack of appreciation for the international diversity on campus, which may reflect a similarly provincial outlook on the world.

5. **The Subcommittee recommends that Humanities course prerequisites continue to be vigorously enforced.**

Data supplied by the Office of Institutional Research show that a significant percentage of students enrolled in Humanities courses lack one or both of the prerequisites. The SIS system should continue to block registration of students who lack one or both prerequisites, with exceptions authorized only by the Director of Humanities.

6. The Subcommittee recommends that the Foreign Languages Department address issues related to native speakers and other students who test into advanced foreign language classes.

One Subcommittee member had concerns about the lack of stated policies with respect to native speakers and advanced students who receive credit for foreign language classes that carry C4 Core Curriculum credit. Although there seems to be no faculty support for granting C4 credit to such students based on placement test results, this policy should be spelled out so it is clear to students also. (Similar clarification with respect to category C5 and the BA degree would be desirable.)

Faculty Surveys

Introduction

Each member of the Subcommittee was assigned seven or eight faculty members to interview. Following is the standard list of questions asked of each interviewee:

1. The goal for C4 is to promote “an understanding of the major thought and creative work of western culture.” What is your understanding of this goal?
2. Are you satisfied with the category’s objectives as presently defined or would you like to see the category change in some way?
3. What contributions do you see this category making to the larger goals of the University Core Curriculum?
4. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the C4 category? What do you think are its greatest weaknesses?
5. What specific goals and objectives do you have for the humanities/language course(s) you teach in this category or the way in which you teach them?
6. Do you want to change or plan to change anything about the course(s) you teach in this category or the way in which you teach them?
7. Is the class size appropriate and are the resources and support available to you adequate to teach these courses? What improvements could be made?
8. Do you have any other issues or concerns that the questions we’ve asked haven’t addressed that you would like to add?

The responses are confidential, in that the identities of respondents has not been, and will not be, divulged. Some of the interviews were face-to-face, with the Subcommittee member recording responses. In this case, the written summaries were returned to interviewees for their approval. Other

interviews were conducted by e-mail, for mutual convenience of interviewer and interviewee. The Subcommittee decided against requiring a standard reporting format due to individual styles of both the interviewers and interviewees, and the following reports reflect these differences.

Report on Faculty Interviews by Marjorie Jones.

I. The Interview Process.

I interviewed six full-time faculty and one adjunct. I also interviewed two department chairs to assess the impact that staffing Humanities courses had on their departments, and the Head of the University Core Curriculum. In all cases, I interviewed faculty in their offices after supplying the questions in advance. Respondents later reviewed my typed notes for accuracy. Faculty were pleased they had this chance to supply input. I came away convinced that the faculty have been innovative in tackling their Humanities teaching assignments, and that they put their hearts and souls into the effort.

II. Generalizations based on the interviews (not directly tied to the same-numbered survey questions):

A. Department Chairs and Head of UCC

1. Faculty love to teach the Humanities courses. This teaching allows faculty to fraternize with professors in other departments, with resulting cross-fertilization of disciplines.
2. The chance to teach Humanities courses is a plus when recruiting new faculty.
3. The Humanities courses do not impact on the majors and the teaching of upper division major's courses as much as LIBA courses do, which is also a major interdisciplinary responsibility of each department. But both have impact on the faculty, creating divided loyalties and focusing teaching on a sophomore level, rather than on more advanced, upper-division courses. Servicing the Humanities courses is not a strain for the Philosophy Department, but rather an opportunity since they have only 13 majors. It is more of a problem for the English Department since there are very few adjuncts qualified to teach Humanities courses; therefore the English Department cannibalizes its faculty to teach them. Further, many of those faculty who teach primarily composition courses envy those who teach mostly literature and Humanities courses. A few faculty said they like to teach composition, but most do so because they must.
4. One person pointed out that as we expand our student population, there is more and more pressure on the majors. Without a corresponding increase in tenure-track faculty, departments will have to hire more adjuncts to teach the Humanities courses, since teaching courses required for majors takes precedence. Unfortunately that is getting harder to do because the salary paid adjuncts is pitiful. If adjuncts get a better offer they leave, sometimes in the middle of a term.
5. The required Humanities courses have impacted positively on upper division English majors who are better prepared and whose background for study is more homogeneous, if they took their Core Curriculum courses here at USI.

B. Faculty:

1. Uniformly the faculty love to teach these courses because it allows them to get beyond their narrow specialty and become a "generalist." They get an opportunity to learn new things each semester, to learn new content and even pedagogy from faculty in other disciplines, to make

connections between all aspects of culture, and to explore interdisciplinary interests. Several mentioned that the enthusiasm and excitement they felt each time they added something or changed something or found a new way to teach the subject was conveyed to the students who then also got caught up in the excitement as well.

2. The Humanities faculty also loved the fact that they meet with each other once a month, have yearly retreats where they get to hear presentations by their colleagues, paid for, at least in part, by the University, and sponsor occasional trips to important cultural events in other cities. All expressed their pleasure at the opportunity for collegiality with faculty in multiple disciplines and for informal faculty development in the context of these meetings, trips, and retreats.
3. While a couple said that they had initial reservations about the focus only on Western Traditions/Culture and a third person has developed a concern that women and minorities are slighted, all believe that students come to USI so completely ignorant of our own Western Traditions—literature, history, art, etc.—that they need courses to make up for the deficit. Two mentioned that they do believe there is a “canon” of knowledge that every educated person should know and that our students don’t know any of it when they arrive fresh from high school. Several mentioned that students were woefully ignorant of history and one stated that they didn’t even have a sense of history. None have ever been to see some of the connections. [It makes one wonder what on Earth is going on in high schools?]
4. Most stated that students should not take these courses in their freshman year, but rather their sophomore year is about right. However, three stated that students should have had English 201 before being allowed to take these courses. All stated that students had difficulty writing an organized essay, writing coherently, and staying focused. Students did not understand how to analyze or think critically. One faculty member has come to believe that learning course content isn’t as important as students learning to take a professional attitude towards school. He explicitly talks about school as work in his syllabus and the responsibility students have to develop an appropriate work ethic.
5. Two faculty members mentioned that they have had to modify the writing requirements in their courses away from research papers to responses to readings or other assignments because plagiarism has become such a problem. It is now possible to buy papers on any topic off the internet. These papers aren’t plagiarizing sources, but rather they are professional quality papers. Unfortunately, the students didn’t write them. Checking these out is time-consuming and in many cases plagiarism is impossible to prove.
6. All but one of the faculty thought that 25 should be the maximum number of students in a class. The current 35 makes it difficult to have effective student discussions. The paper grading load is enormous with 35, and several have had to scale back the number of written assignments they make. The only dissenter is a person who taught in high schools, and stated that the chore of grading was much greater there than at the university level.
7. Several mentioned that the Director of the Humanities program ... has no budget for supplies, slides, maps, etc. While that wasn’t a major problem for anyone, it does mean that most faculty have paid for slides, videos, CD’s, and other supplies out of their own pockets. In particular, for those who use a lot of art and architecture slides in their classes this is a major expense funded by the professor for the most part. [It also means that when the professor retires he may take these with him unless he is generous and donates them to the University.]
8. All believe that the strength of the category is also its weakness! That is, the breadth of treatment allows one to make connections between all aspects of culture. Each course covers close to 1000 years of history which allows one to see the historical connectedness of events. But this breadth and time depth is also a weakness in that it is almost too much to cover in a two semester sequence without making the coverage superficial. One thought that it would be

better to require a sequence—211 before 212 so that the teacher could refer back to the previous course content and assume all students would know that content. Another person stated that he wasn't sure that students retained very much from these courses. Finally, one person mentioned the fact that art majors must take HUM221 and HUM222. Other students also take these, making it difficult for art majors to take these courses in a timely fashion. The University would need more art faculty to teach.

Report on Faculty Interviews by Norman King

The responses to each question are in random order (i.e., the response listed first for question 1 is not from the same faculty member whose response is listed first for question 2, and so forth). Each interviewee reviewed my record of his/her responses for accuracy.

1. The goal for C4 is to promote “an understanding of the major thought and creative work of western culture.” What is your understanding of this goal?

The category should promote cultural literacy and aesthetic appreciation. Students should become well rounded, and this requirement helps accomplish that.

This is a life enhancement program. Liberal arts education should be at the core of education. It gives students things they would not have otherwise.

We should strive to instill a sense of self-knowledge and historical development of Western culture. I stress the three great roots of Western culture, the Greek (drama, philosophy), Roman (law), and Judeo-Christian (religion) influences. The spirit of interdisciplinary study should permeate the category. In my Humanities 231, for example, in addition to philosophy I bring in some drama, Roman law, and the literature of the Old and New Testament, etc.

We should look at movements and trends in Western Culture and how these found expression in music, art, literature, etc. We should note that some things people found of value changed with time, while others did not. This realization may suggest some sort of conclusion possibly relevant to spiritual and(or) material values over time. We should try to impart a sense of history. Just like getting to know one's self involves looking at all one's experiences, likewise getting to know our culture involves studying its history.

The way this category is explained is clear enough, but the phrase “Western culture” is less so. Understanding what it means requires study of the literature.

This course should be interdisciplinary, addressing major ideas in art, literature, and philosophy. The Western tradition should also include the Middle East and northern Africa. Everything discussed should be placed in proper geographic, as well as historic, context.

2. Are you satisfied with the category's objectives as presently defined or would you like to see the category change in some way?

The objectives are very general, but it may not be feasible to make them more specific. I think the goals statement is directed more toward a faculty audience than students, or at least is not written so that students are likely to fully understand it.

Maybe it should be left as it is to avoid ripples elsewhere in the system.

I am satisfied with the objectives. We ARE Westerners, after all. We must always be properly tolerant, but there is much to be proud of in the intellectual and artistic traditions of the West. We should know the documents at the foundation of this (our Western) culture.

I would like to see the category be defined more broadly in terms of the cultures studied. Perhaps this can be done in connection with Category C5, but somewhere in the curriculum we should be sure that students are also exposed to Eastern cultures. Currently, there is no such requirement. I also question using foreign language courses to fulfill the Category C4 requirement. Foreign language courses might not bring in the sense of history I think is important.

The description published for Category C4 is good as it stands.

I am satisfied with the current statement, but it might be even better to emphasize that students should experience the arts first-hand. We should insist on taking them to theaters, museums, and galleries for live performances and exhibitions.

3. What contributions do you see this category making to the larger goals of the University Core Curriculum?

I believe people are freer when they have options, or that they can make wiser use of their freedom when they know what options are available. Studying the historical development of Western culture helps accomplish these goals.

This category expands the horizons of students. Introducing students to creative works helps give them choices for ways to spend time other than the more popular things of their day-to-day world.

The Humanities courses ought to ensure that every student who gets a degree from USI knows certain things, things that make up the common knowledge of all educated people. The 20-page (minimum; my students write about 40 pages, and they get better at it as the semester unfolds) writing component for courses in this category contributes to improving critical thinking and analytical, writing, and research skills.

To be truly educated, we need a broad core, including the arts and humanities. These are the really enhancing aspects of education.

We teach the courses in this category with the intent of addressing both information processing and critical thinking, in addition to the more specific goals of the category. The interpretation of material read, and literature searches involve information processing. Critical thinking is involved in the formulation of the critical essay I require in my class, in the debate (at least one) that every student must participate in, and in the work we do analyzing classic philosophical arguments.

I think it is immeasurably important to know about Western Culture and its history. Such study considers the various ways people find it natural to look at things, especially beyond the local, familiar ways, thereby expanding the student's horizons.

4. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the C4 category? What do you think are its greatest weaknesses?

The greatest strengths are those of expanding the student's horizons and giving them choices for entertainment. I see no great weaknesses.

Strengths: Students are impressed by what the Western tradition includes, and are delighted to find out how these things fit into their daily lives (e.g., church designs, legal agreements, and recurring ideas in literature, art, and movies). Weaknesses: Too much variation is allowed from one course to another, thus seemingly defeating the purpose of establishing a real “Core.” Also, evaluation of syllabi and faculty performance is not very rigorous.

I think the diversity of things we look at in Humanities courses are part of the category’s strength. These things are linked in a package that helps give students a common experience that we can all discuss in spite of our different interests. As far as the faculty are concerned, we have group activities including workshops and discussions, and we share syllabi, to form a learning community among ourselves. For me, this is a strength of this category. As for weaknesses, I question whether foreign language is really a substitute for the study of the humanities *per se*, and *vice versa*. I think these should have been separate categories, although I understand why this was done.

Strengths: The Humanities faculty work together as if they are an academic department. These people really care about the program and are excited about it. It is a giving group, with discussions and sharing of ideas; we are planning to begin team teaching some courses. We have quality control--applicants to the program must give a lecture to demonstrate how he/she relates his/her specialty in the context of Humanities education. Weaknesses: Although I originally thought there might be some problems, I have decided that it is a strong program with no significant deficiencies.

Strengths: It helps us understand who we are and where we came from. Weaknesses: The emphasis on Western culture is not broad enough; there should be some study of Eastern culture also (somewhere in the Core).

Variety is the greatest strength of this category--there are a lot of choices of subject matter. The greatest weakness may be that some instructors may be teaching partly outside of their field, and so become like dilettantes--not really qualified to teach the material competently. On the other hand, some people may fear just that problem, and so be tempted to rein in the scope of their course, ignoring some areas that should be covered in such a survey course. Also, cross-listing the course I teach as an upper level course for majors leads to the problem of having a course that is somewhat watered down for the majors. Yet this has to occur so as not to “lose” the C4 students in concepts that are difficult for students just learning the subject matter.

5. What specific goals and objectives do you have for the humanities/language course(s) you teach in this category or the way in which you teach them?

I want the students to rethink their personal assumptions; to think critically about the texts, art, etc. we analyze; to interact with other students (in the small discussion groups we form in my classes); to put ideas in writing; to relate ancient concepts and ideas and attitudes to modern experiences (e.g., how would Aristotle react to a modern movie?).

I am trying to keep a proper balance. Anything that is changed (such as expanded or decreased) requires a compensating change elsewhere in the course or program. My overall objectives are like those of the category: imparting a sense of self-knowledge, moral improvement, community, history, liberation, and wisdom, all contributing to the further goal of good citizenship.

I want students leaving my course feeling comfortable with the arts. For example, they should be able to go to a museum or concert hall with anticipation and excitement about the coming

performance or the exhibit. They should have some proficiency with the arts, so they can make connections between the arts and the more mundane things they see in their world, for example in movies and commercials. I want to use technology in all the ways it can help relate this material.

My goals are the same as for the category in general, as summarized on my syllabi. For example, to provide a basic historical context for the Western tradition; to foster accurate thinking, speaking, and writing; to develop analytical and critical reading skills; and to use specific works to generalize about various aspects of human existence (e.g., good, evil, suffering, love, justice, honor).

I strive to accomplish what the goal statement says. I also try to promote effective self-expression, and to enhance the abilities of students to read and understand complex texts and analyze ideas in them.

Overall, I emphasize that we have roots going back to Europe. In the foreign language courses, I focus on the cultural differences and similarities, for example, on how days are split differently in parts of Europe and North America. In the humanities courses I discuss specific historical influences, such as the clash between Islam and Christianity in Spain. I discuss the role of Islam in transmitting many ideas from the ancient world to Europe, and the role of Spanish culture in shaping European feudal systems after the Middle Ages. This is part of the "different voices" aspect of the Humanities category.

6. Do you want to change or plan to change anything about the course(s) you teach in this category or the way in which you teach them?

I want to be even more emphatic about the role of Spain in the spread of Western culture.

I would like to include more art, for example, but I would run out of time (see comment for item no. 5). I think it would be good for us to assemble a single text that would serve as a basis for all of the humanities courses. It would present the material that is common to all Humanities courses (we use standard published texts now). I would also like to make more meaningful use of the Internet. For example, items that I make many copies of for handouts could be made available on the Internet for student to download themselves, if they wish.

I change one or more texts occasionally, and I change the writing assignments every semester to prevent students from "borrowing" material from previous students in Humanities courses. I am asking students to get more course materials from my website for the course.

I think my most important goal is to find ways for students to have first-hand experiences with the arts, to have them go to museums, showings, the theater, etc.

I strive to accomplish what the goal statement says. I also try to promote effective self-expression, and to enhance the abilities of students to read and understand complex texts and analyze ideas in them.

I want to add a broader mix of the media we consider, for example to bring in more art, theater, and music, with less of an emphasis on textual materials.

7. Is the class size appropriate and are the resources and support available to you adequate to teach these courses? What improvements could be made?

The class should be smaller, perhaps limited to 25. This would lead to more effective

evaluation of the 20 pages (minimum) students write. We are working on this now, but I want to see a continued expansion of the library of art, texts, theater, and music that we can use in the classroom to illustrate concepts in the Humanities courses, in particular more slides and CD's, for example. We also must have the media devices available at any time in the classrooms.

The class size is OK; typically, it drops to 28 or so shortly after the midterm. Some of the slides available are very old and faded, but they are important and must be shown--we should get new ones. There are no funds available for student workers to do the legwork here--to locate slides and compile slide programs--and there should be. There should also be funds to pay people to work on educational websites; currently, the web "gurus" work on my stuff when they have time, as a favor to me, and this is inadequate because they have so much work to do anyway.

Enrollments should definitely not be increased. These courses require a lot of writing, and it is a strain already to properly evaluate this material. I also like to get my students actively involved in the course--to think and write, more so than to speak. A limit of 25 would be better to do this well.

The current cap of 35 students (of which 5 or a few more are majors) may be too high to allow effective discussions in class. I would prefer a cap of 30 students, with up to 8 majors in each class. Otherwise, resources and support seem adequate.

Class size is OK. We need more technology to do a more sophisticated job. We should have an art gallery on campus, and there should be musical performances (including instrumental music) on campus.

Class size is adequate. There is much material to utilize in this course on the Internet. Now it is more a question of the logistical support required to deliver the material. For example, in a single recent class I used four different media--CD, video, slides, and audio. The technological advances that have made such materials available may actually have increased my workload (sorting through them and making them available for classroom use), rather than making my job easier.

8. Do you have any other issues or concerns that the questions we've asked haven't addressed that you would like to add?

Not for this category.

No.

No.

No.

No.

No.

Report on Faculty Interviews by Guillermo Latorre

At a meeting on September 20, 2000, I was assigned to interview eight faculty members. In view of uncertain continuity at USI or part-time involvement, I decided that it would not be appropriate to interview two of the persons assigned. Responses from a third person are yet to be received. The responses of the remaining five are given below. Some of the responses were written, others oral. In the interests of confidentiality, numbers have been used instead of names.

1. The goal for C-4 is to promote “an understanding of the major thought and creative work of Western Culture.” What is your understanding of this goal?

RESPONDENT 1: I am expected to familiarize students with representative work of art, literature, etc. from the western world.

RESPONDENT 2: I think we are supposed to introduce key texts from the western tradition to students.

RESPONDENT 3: teaching a western language as I do, I include works of literature and art from that culture. I also promote an understanding of the culture from which its thought and art spring.

RESPONDENT 4: An understanding an appreciation of different cultures and how they express themselves in literature.

RESPONDENT 5: The questions are hard to answer. Current courses offer glimpses into literature, art, and music but not into anything major. Future versions will be directed towards major work.

2. Are you satisfied with the category’s objectives as presently defined or would you like to see the category changed in some way?

RESPONDENT 1: I am quite satisfied with the objectives.

RESPONDENT 2: I am satisfied with the objectives as they stand.

RESPONDENT 3: Yes, the category seems adequately defined.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes.

RESPONDENT 5: This respondent feels strongly that most students in Evansville find other, “non”- American cultures very hard to understand. Students can benefit from knowledge of non-American cultures. Both C-4 and C-5 have to include this “look through different spectacles.”

3. What contributions do you see this category making to the larger goals of the University Core Curriculum?

RESPONDENT 1: It seems to me that our classes are, indeed, the core of the core. We contribute to all other goals, especially writing, speaking, critical thinking, and an appreciation of the arts.

RESPONDENT 2: No response to this question.

RESPONDENT 3: One of the goals of the core curriculum is to help students know themselves better, a goal which is addressed very well by having them study cultures other than their own, for it is often in the study of the “other” that they may take their own measure.

RESPONDENT 4: Give students an opportunity to think, analyze, synthesize different and contrasting cultural aspects.

RESPONDENT 5: C-4 involves critical thinking, and also informed choices, which contributes

to good citizenship.

4. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the C4 category. What to you think are its greatest weaknesses?

RESPONDENT 1: The emphasis on the Western Tradition is a strength because it gives the courses a focus, but sometimes I feel as QUESTION 5: What though this narrow focus may also entail a weakness. Other than that, the courses offer much diversity, and a great deal of freedom for both instructors and students.

RESPONDENT 2: No response to this question.

RESPONDENT 3: One of the greatest strengths is the afore-mentioned study of cultures, thought, and art outside those of the students. No weaknesses reported.

RESPONDENT 4: Strength: Makes students think about other solutions to problems, other view points about problems. No weaknesses reported.

RESPONDENT 5: C-4 has a time frame within which objective must be met, but students can choose between philosophy, languages, literature and history. Another strength: presentations by HUM faculty. No weaknesses reported.

5. What specific goals and objectives do you have for the humanities/foreign language courses that you teach?

RESPONDENT 1: Many students come here only to get the degree and make more money. I see our HUM classes as a possibility to enrich their lives and to let them see education as something more than a necessary step towards a well-paying job. While it's not possible to please every single student, I want the HUM experience to be pleasurable and memorable.

RESPONDENT 2: No response to this question.

RESPONDENT 3: To help students understand another culture through its language and creative works and to help them gain an appreciation of both.

RESPONDENT 4: Broadening the perspectives, the thinking of students to appreciate and to be tolerant of other cultures.

RESPONDENT 5: Specific goals: students look through another pair of glasses, but they get to know the reasons why.

6. Do you want to change or plan to change anything about the course(s) you teach in this category or the way you teach them?

RESPONDENT 1: I have changed my teaching style a great deal over the years, and the HUM classes have been a great testing ground for new ideas. I've become much more aware of student learning and am less interested in the "coverage" of certain topics.

RESPONDENT 2: No response to this question.

RESPONDENT 3: I would like to introduce more creative works, especially from literature, and to teach more language from these works and perhaps a little less from, for example, everyday conversational models. I would also like to continue to develop the use of CD-ROM programs for teaching literature and art works.

RESPONDENT 4: No response to this question.

RESPONDENT 5: No changes contemplated, but interested in finding more resources. Probably integrate more film.

7. In class size appropriate and are the resources and support available to you adequate to teach these courses? What improvements could be made?

RESPONDENT 1: I know that we've been lucky to keep class size at 35, but whenever I've had smaller classes, discussion and activities have worked far better. That's why I'd advocate a class size of 25. In the LA building, resources are generally quite good, especially if we could get all the PC's in the classrooms to work as planned.

RESPONDENT 2: If the classes were smaller, we would be able to make each student more accountable to talk about individual works. In a class of 35, some students are able to hide quite easily, being passive and completing minimal work.

RESPONDENT 3: Yes, class size is appropriate since foreign language classes are limited to 30 students and are sometimes smaller than that. Resources are adequate, especially with the help of the new foreign language lab.

RESPONDENT 4: class size is appropriate.

RESPONDENT 5: Class size is appropriate.

8. Do you have any other issues or concerns that these questions have not addressed that you would like to add?

RESPONDENT 1: It's too bad students choose between HUM and a foreign language. I think they should really have both experiences.

RESPONDENT 2: No.

RESPONDENT 3: No, not at this time.

RESPONDENT 4: No.

RESPONDENT 5: It would be nice to have more resources, especially for the language lab.

Report on Faculty Interviews by Phyllis Toy

1. The goal for C4 is to promote "an understanding of the major thought and creative work of western culture." What is your understanding of this goal?

It is important to give students the skills with which they can test their own ideas and beliefs against those of other cultures and times.

It is more accurate to consider "western culture" in the plural. We are dealing with cross currents of cultures.

The classes serve as remedial history classes because many students come to us with NO historical framework, much less do they know how our culture's "major thought" contributes to ways contemporary peoples and governments act, how these ideas influence our present culture.

2. Are you satisfied with the category's objectives as presently defined or would you like to see the category change in some way?

They are broad enough to give individual instructors latitude in teaching.

While I think comparison with a different culture would broaden their opinions, I admit there is no time to formally incorporate the study of another culture.

Some instructors attempt to address this issue by including short discussions of the Native American cultures decimated by overseas expansion; the 18th Century's fascination with the Orient.

3. What contributions do you see this category making to the larger goals of the University Core Curriculum?

C-4 addresses the two major core goals, critical thinking and information processing skills.

The great works of western culture concern issues of justice and ethics which help form just people and prepare them for interaction with the global community.

Helps students see themselves as a part of the continuum of the human race.

4. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the C4 category? What do you think are its greatest weaknesses?

Strengths:

Critical thinking and increased tolerance of others' views.

Classic Jeffersonian idea: Democracy can not thrive with an ignorant populace.

The emphasis on intellectual history and general agreement on basic knowledge students should have the exposure students get to their cultural heritage

Weaknesses:

Emphasis on only Western culture

The amount of information that must be covered in such a brief time.

Too large a menu

Students can take courses out of sequence

5. What specific goals and objectives do you have for the humanities/language course(s) you teach in this category or the way in which you teach them?

All those specified in the C-4 Humanities and core goals.

To open minds, to combat ignorance of geography and history.

To prepare students to live wisely.

6. Do you want to change or plan to change anything about the course(s) you teach in this category or the way in which you teach them?

I am always engaged in changing the way I present items in class.

I plan to incorporate more Internet elements in my teaching.

7. Is the class size appropriate and are the resources and support available to you adequate to teach these courses? What improvements could be made?

It would help to lower cap (25) but it won't happen; 20-25 is a more appropriate class size.

Class size is a bit large for amount of writing we require; smaller classes would foster more discussion.

Larger budget devoted to equipment; increased technological support; increased video holdings.

Classroom LA 1004 is not conducive to teaching humanities.

8. Do you have any other issues or concerns that the questions we've asked haven't addressed that you would like to add?

Resentment students have regarding the requirement of taking C-4 or Foreign Language.

More care should be taken in granting transfer credit.

Careful monitoring of distance education sections.

**Census of Course Offerings, Enrollments, and Student Profiles
(Raw Data Supplied By USI Office of Institutional Research)**

Introduction

Data about the number and class standings of students in Humanities and C4 Foreign Language classes were gathered, along with the number of class sections offered and enrollment figures for each, for the Fall 1996 to Spring 2001 Semesters, and summer sessions from 1997 to 2001. These data are summarized in eight sets of graphs (graphs and data are included in the Appendix, following the text of the next section, titled "Student Assessment Responses").

The graphs reveal information about C4 course offerings and the population of students enrolled in the courses. Several trends are apparent. Each data set is discussed below. For each of these sets, figures for Fall and Spring semesters combined are shown in a single plot (Graph A), and then Fall semester data (Graph B) and Spring semester data (Graph C) are plotted separately in order to make long-term trends more obvious. Numerical data are tabulated on the page preceding the graphs.

Discussion of Graphs

1. Distribution of students by class standing (FR, SO, JR, SR) in Humanities (hum.) and C4 Foreign Language (f.l.) classes, listed by percentage of students in all sections.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

Graph 1-A shows that enrollment numbers in C4 courses are generally greatest for freshmen and sophomores; there are fewer juniors, and seniors make up the smallest group. It also shows that enrollment composition by class standing fluctuates between Fall and Spring semesters. The degree of fluctuation is greatest for freshmen, then for sophomores, juniors and seniors (least). Freshmen are the largest group in Fall semesters, but sophomores are the largest group in Spring semesters.

Graph 1-B shows that during Fall semesters freshmen are the largest group in Foreign Language classes, but sophomores are generally the largest group in Humanities classes.

Graph 1-C shows that during Spring semesters sophomores are generally the largest group in both Foreign Language and Humanities classes. In some Spring semesters, juniors have outnumbered freshmen in one or both subject areas.

The strong pattern of Fall to Spring fluctuation, with contrasting trends for freshmen and sophomores, *may* be attributed to a large number of freshmen increasing their class standing upon receiving credit for courses taken during the Fall (*i.e.*, they were third semester freshmen in the Fall, but became sophomores for the Spring). Part of the large number of freshmen in Humanities classes in Fall semesters may also be due to greater difficulty that freshmen, many of whom are new students and therefore the last to register, have during Fall semesters in finding other classes with openings.

2. Proportion, by percentage, of students choosing Foreign Language to fulfill category C4 in each school (BE–Business and Economics, EH–Education and Human Services, LA–Liberal Arts, NH–Nursing and Health Professions, SE–Science and Engineering Technology, UD–University Division) and combined (all) for the University.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

Graph 2-A clearly shows that students in Science and Engineering Technology (SE) have a greater tendency to select Foreign language to fulfill their C4 requirement than students in any other school. Students in Nursing and Health Professions (NH) have the least tendency. A distinct fluctuation

from Fall to Spring semesters is apparent in all schools except SE, with a higher proportion of students choosing Foreign Language in the Fall than in the Spring.

Graphs 2-B and 2-C show that generally the proportion of students choosing Foreign Language has declined over the last five years (although the absolute number has remained essentially stable). The trend is less obvious in Spring semesters. The trend for Liberal Arts seems to show a decrease at first, followed by an increase in the last two years of the survey.

3. Total number of students enrolled in Humanities and C4 Foreign Language classes.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

All three graphs show that enrollments in Humanities classes have increased from year to year, whereas enrollments in the Foreign Language classes have remained stable.

4. Number of students by class standing in Humanities and C4 Foreign Language classes.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

Graph 4-A shows the striking trend of complimentary enrollment numbers for freshmen and sophomores for Fall and Spring semesters: sophomore enrollments increase from Fall to Spring as freshmen enrollments decrease. The Fall to Spring trend for juniors seems to be a subdued reflection of that for sophomores. This effect is not present in the data for seniors.

5. Number of class sections offered for Humanities and C4 Foreign Language classes.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

Graph 5-A shows that the number of sections offered in Humanities classes has generally increased from year to year, while the number of sections of Foreign Language classes has remained stable. The increase in Humanities sections parallels the trend of increasing enrollments at USI. More students means more demand for Humanities. It should also mean more demand for Foreign Language courses, yet the number of C4 Foreign Language sections has remained stable, as have enrollment totals in C4 Foreign Language classes. It may be that if there were more sections of Foreign Language classes from which to choose, enrollments would be increasing there.

Comparison and Graphs 5-B and 5-C show that departures from the overall Humanities trend visible in Graph 5-A are due to variations in number of sections offered in Spring semesters; Fall semester offerings have remained stable.

6. Percentage of enrollment capacity for sections of Humanities and C4 Foreign Language classes.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

Graph 6-A shows that Humanities classes consistently fill to between 91.3% and 95.8% of capacity. Foreign Language classes show more variability, ranging from 61.7% to 83.7% of capacity.

Graph 6-B and 6-C show that Foreign Language classes are more variable in Spring than in Fall

semesters. The percentage of enrollment capacity in Humanities classes varies little from Fall to Spring.

The percent of enrollment capacity in Humanities classes may be near the maximum that can be expected, with the roughly 4-8% vacancy rate probably due to students withdrawing after the semester has begun (so these “spots” are essentially not available to be refilled since the semester is well underway). When the number of available sections gradually increased from 30 to 40 between Spring 1998 and Fall 1999 (a four semester span), all sections remained between 94 and 95% filled to capacity in each of those semesters. In the Spring of 2000, five additional sections were added at once, bringing the total to 45. In that semester, the percent of capacity dropped to 91.3. In the Fall of 2000, one less section (44) was offered, and the percent of capacity rebounded to 93.8%. These data suggest that the demand for Humanities should be continually tested by the availability of classes. If 50 sections were offered, they might well fill to 91% or more capacity also. In other words, current demand is *perhaps* not being met.

The situation in Foreign Language classes is not as clear. With a much smaller selection of classes for each foreign language, many students may not be able to fit the classes into their schedules. This alone might account for these classes filling “only” to 61.7-83.7% of capacity. There is no clear trend in percent of capacity with variation in number of sections offered. However, the number of sections offered has only varied by one—it has been either 9 and 10 sections in every semester covered by this survey.

7. Percentage of freshmen enrolled in Humanities courses who have completed the two prerequisite courses.
 - A. Fall and Spring semesters
 - B. Fall semesters only
 - C. Spring semesters only

Graph 7-A shows a trend toward more of the freshmen enrolled in Humanities courses having completed both prerequisite courses (English 101 and Speech 101 or 107), and therefore fewer who have completed one or none. The percentage is higher in the Fall semesters than Spring semesters. This Fall-Spring alternation seems to belie the previous suggestion (see discussion for Graph 1) that a higher proportion of Freshmen enrollees in Fall semesters than Spring semesters is due in part to the late-registering new freshmen’s desperation to find any course that will fit their schedules, and thus enrolling in courses for which they are not fully prepared. The data here show a higher percentage of freshmen enrollees in *Spring* semesters are under prepared.

The graph lines for the percentage of freshmen who have completed one or neither of the prerequisite courses show declining trends. Both of these indicate a higher percentage of under-prepared students in the Spring semesters. This is consistent with the curve for students who have completed both courses. All three curves indicate better preparation of students in Fall semesters, and steadily improving trends.

These data seem to support the notion (also see discussion for Graph 1) that many Fall semester freshmen are actually second-year freshmen enrolled in their third semester. They become sophomores by the Spring semester, so the remaining group of freshmen in Humanities courses includes a larger proportion who are first-year freshmen, and therefore a larger number who are not adequately prepared to be in those courses.

8. Number of Humanities class sections offered in summer sessions, 1997-2001, and percentage of enrollment capacity each year. For each year, data are for all three summer sessions are combined. The total number of summer sections has varied from 8 to 12 per year, with 3 Humanities sections offered in most sessions.

Not surprisingly, percent of capacity is generally greater when fewer sections are offered, and *vice versa*. Raw enrollment totals/sections offered were: 242/9 (1997), 225/9 (1998), 271/8 (1999), 311/12 (2000), and 276/9 (2001).

Student Assessment Responses

Background

A questionnaire was prepared for junior participants in the student assessment sessions held in the Fall Semester 2001. The actual questionnaire precedes the results reported in the Appendix.

Data were tabulated on the background of the 494 student participants (derived from responses to questions 1 and 2 on the questionnaire). For example, the number of students who completed the C4 requirement with two Humanities courses was determined, and responses to questions for that group were compiled independently. This was done for all possible combinations of course work that contributes to fulfilling Category C4 (see p. 1-2 [hand written page numbers] in the Appendix). This is labeled "C4 Type," and "AREA of Cat C4 Completion" in the survey results.

Questions 11 and 12 sought information about the impact on students of the C4 experience at USI. These questions are listed below.

11. If circumstances allow, which of the cultural events listed would you attend? (Select all that apply)
 - a. an art show
 - b. a museum exhibit
 - c. a play
 - d. a concert
 - e. an independent film
 - f. a poetry reading
 - g. a lecture by a famous author or artist
 - h. other (please name)

12. As a result of taking the UCC-C4 course(s) are you more likely than before to: (Select all that apply)
 - a. want to travel to a foreign country
 - b. make friends with someone from a foreign country
 - c. eat at a foreign restaurant
 - d. see a foreign film
 - e. none of the above

Responses to these questions were tabulated for each "C4 Type" of respondent. Results are tabulated on p. 66-72 (hand written page numbers) in the Appendix.

Findings

Responses to questions 11 and 12 may be the most important for assessing the value of the C4 category at USI. Students who had not started their Humanities sequence had little interest in pursuing cultural experiences. However, a significant portion of students who completed half of their C4 requirement had gained an interest in further experiencing Western Culture in all of its diversity. Students who had completed the requirement, whether by Foreign Language or Humanities courses, showed the greatest interest.

Appendix

[Hard copies of the 52 page Appendix that includes the student questionnaire, charts, and graphs are available upon request]