

UCC Category D-Synthesis Courses Faculty Survey Results, Fall 2001

One component in the assessment of Synthesis Offerings was to survey faculty members who were teaching courses that satisfy category D requirements. Committee members decided to use a six-item questionnaire (see Appendix F) to elicit views from faculty members teaching these courses during the fall 2001 semester. This procedure provided a more uniform format for presentation of inquiries and analysis of comments.

Fifteen faculty representing ten different synthesis courses replied with comments ranging from all yes (or don't know) to a six-page exposition on the merits of their course. Overall comments were quite positive and convey a strong message of belief that their courses are meeting the goals set forth for category D courses. The following is a brief synopsis of faculty comments as they relate to each item of the survey:

1. Do you believe your course is meeting the goals established for Core Synthesis category D?

- A resounding “Yes” was elicited from all respondents
- A number felt their course provided an excellent “capstone experience” for their majors
- Multiple sections in one School are providing for positive faculty interactions

2. What are the strengths of your department's Synthesis offering(s)?

- Diversity in course offerings was cited by Liberal Arts faculty
- Provides students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned
- Affords students opportunities to work closely with faculty
- Allows faculty the chance to identify prospective graduate students
- Many faculty welcomed a format in which contemporary issues could be discussed, analyzed along with an exploration for possible solutions

3. *What are the weaknesses of your department's Synthesis offering(s)?*

- A majority of faculty expressed a keen lack of time for adequate preparation
- A number of faculty were concerned about an inadequate amount of class sessions for adequate treatment of the issues/topics available
- Better qualified faculty may be taken from their discipline's offerings to teach synthesis offerings
- A few cited inadequate facilities and technology equipment for effective/efficient course delivery
- Not all faculty teaching synthesis courses are full time
- Several faculty indicated that they do not know what the "goals" are

4. *Does your department have plans to alter its Synthesis offering(s)? If so, in what way?*

- A resounding "No"
- Several faculty indicated that this survey had prompted them to reexamine their initial course proposal seeking synthesis approval

5. *Do you believe the current course offering provides students majoring in your discipline valuable/valid experiences?*

- Another resounding "Yes"

6. *Are there specific needs, which, if met, would make your course better? What are they? Do they require additional funds? How much?*

- The most frequently mentioned need was for more time. Preparation time, reading time, class time, and time to evaluate students' work more thoroughly
- Several cited a need for field experiences, guest lecturers/speakers