Proposal to Suspend Integrators

We support a proposal from the Common Core Curriculum Committee to suspend the junior/senior integrator course requirement.

While integrator courses are generally viewed as a very good idea in principle, they are also very costly to develop and administer. The University and the Schools have not done enough to cover the costs to the faculty and the departments involved. As a result, very few integrators have been developed as yet; way too few to serve all the students required to take them. Currently, almost all courses taken to satisfy the requirement are not integrators, but rather are existing courses that are construed as being “integrator substitutes.” In our view these courses do not come close to creating the cross-disciplinary experience that we are seeking to provide to our students.

We propose to suspend the integrator requirement until Fall 2006. We propose that the requirement be removed from our forthcoming bulletin that covers the period 2004-2006.

Our initial idea was to suspend the integrator for a shorter period. However, our sister committee in the School of Science elected to suspend for the entire period covering the next bulletin. They argued that a successful policy would need strong support from the School's dean. Like us, they are searching for a new dean. They felt the new dean would need some time to evaluate the policy and consider the tradeoffs before she/he could make support decisions. In addition, they argued that allowing the requirement to stay in the bulletin, while suspending the requirement for some shorter period, would create too much confusion. We decided to propose a suspension for the longer period because we found their arguments to be compelling and because, given their decision, it would be unlikely that any integrators would be developed over a shorter horizon.