

Arts & Humanities

2006-2007 Major Initiative Updates

Major Initiatives

- 1) Create courses and programs that meet the needs of students preparing for careers and citizenship in the 21st Century.

Summary:

As a department, we undertook a number of projects designed to enhance our academic and extra curricular offerings in order to better prepare students for their chosen academic fields and for their role as citizens. Within the curriculum we have added several classes, including *Islam*, *Philosophy of Human Nature*, *Glass I & II*, *Western Music History*, and *Audio Recording*. In addition, the *Philosophy of Education* course has been completely revamped and *Film History* has been divided into two courses, *US Film History* and *World Film History*. All of these classes strengthen the depth of our academic offerings in Arts and Humanities and better prepare students for transfer to four year institutions. In addition, a service learning component has been integrated into a number of our Communications courses, which we believe creates better learners and citizens.

Arts and Humanities faculty have also taken on additional responsibility as club/organization advisors. We believe it is important for students to have educational opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. As such faculty from our department are now faculty advisors for the Philosophy Club, Phi Theta Kappa, and Spanish Club (under development). In addition, a number of our faculty have served as faculty advisors for Honors Projects and are actively involved on the Honors Committee developing Honors Courses. Another highlight of our efforts is the annual Latin America Series, a month long series of events on Latin Culture. Because we believe valuable learning takes place outside the classroom and that exposure to the arts and humanities outside the classroom enriches the classroom experience, we've made strides in encouraging students to attend public events such as the college's fine and performing arts events, humanities speakers, the Cedar Rapids Art Museum, and others both by distributing information about local opportunities and by basing regular or extra-credit class assignments on attendance.

The Arts and Humanities department is committed to the notion that teaching students about the intersections of academics is a vital part of helping prepare students for the complexities of academia and global citizenship. As a result collaboration among the disciplines has been a focus. Some examples of our collaborative projects include an activity hour lecture and a post-show talk back connecting the spring production of *Burial at Thebes* with an Endowed Faculty Chair's work on politics, a commissioned musical score to accompany the performances of *Burial Thebes*, which was performed live, visits to *Encounters in Humanities* courses by art, music, and theater faculty, bake sales by Phi Theta

Kappa during play intermissions with proceed being donated both to charity and the Kirkwood Fine an Performing Arts Fund, and offering travel abroad opportunities to students that include both foreign language and *Encounters in Humanities* activities for dual credit in the same trip.

Finally, the majority of our capital investments within the department over the last two years have been for improved equipment for the fine and performing arts. It is crucial to give these students experience with quality equipment. As a result, the department has invested in items like new equipment in support of a digital photography lab, new lights and a new sound system for Ballantyne Auditorium, new grinding and firing equipment for glass and ceramics, and new instruments for instrumental music. We believe these investments enhance the students training within his/her discipline.

- 2) Recruit and mentor quality faculty to advance teaching and learning in all instructional formats.

Summary:

Recruiting and mentoring quality faculty is a key factor in the success of the Arts and Humanities department. As a result we have increased our efforts to build strong relationships with surrounding four-year institutions to develop a network for locating and recruiting well-qualified adjuncts. We've worked to improve the mentoring of adjunct faculty through such efforts as naming a Communications Coordinator to facilitate collaboration and continued communication, asking new adjunct faculty to participate in orientation training through KCELT, and setting up some informal mentoring between full-time and part-time faculty.

We've had three full-time new-hires in the past two years. To increase the effectiveness of the interviews we have started holding first round phone interviews to gain initial contact with a larger pool of applicants. We've incorporated questions based on the Quality Faculty Plan into the interviews, and we included a teaching demonstration in our final round of interviews.

One of the strengths of several of our recent hires is joint appointments with other areas of the college, including the Marion Center, Resource Center, and KTS. We believe these joint-appointments facilitate communication between both the sites and the full and part-time faculty.

- 3) Improve information sharing and outcomes assessment by creating communication networks and data collection protocols.

Summary:

In order to further improve our assessment procedures and decision making, we established and have implemented standardized assessment tools to measure learning outcomes in our Communications, Philosophy, and Foreign Language courses. We have

established protocols that ensure both full and part-time faculty participate in using these tools each semester. Wherever possible, the tools are based on the standards set by the national disciplinary organization.

In addition to the above efforts, we have also begun a new study on contact hours in foreign language. Data will be collected from other regional and national institutions about the formula used for the contact hour to credit hour ratio. This will be compared to other pedagogical information available on second language acquisition. This information will help us better assess the strength of our Foreign Language classes and ensure we are providing students with the best preparation available.