

Humanities Program Discontinuance:  
Faculty Comments and Recommendations  
Academic Senate, July 2011

The full-time faculty who currently teach Humanities courses request Cabinet consider compression rather than discontinuance of the Humanities program.

Compression has been defined as “narrowing the scope of a program which provides a service but does not warrant offering the full range of courses for the AA/AS major, transfer, and/or certificate. Program compression is considered a scheduling decision that is made by the dean using a division’s usual processes regarding scheduling.”

The Criteria document suggests considering for compression “programs which provide service but do not warrant offering the full range of courses for the AA/AS/major, transfer, and/or certificate.”

I. Faculty Recommendation

--That the major and AA degree be discontinued, but that select HUM courses (114, 125, 140) continue to be offered.

--That full-time faculty from Philosophy, History and Film be able to teach these courses as part of their full-time load, on a rotating, staggered basis, to be determined in consultation with the respective deans.

II. Justification and Rationale

Over-arching Principle:

While layoffs may be unavoidable, maintain the commitment stated by the Board of Trustees of using layoffs of permanent employees as a last resort in addressing fiscal challenges.

- A. There would be no additional expense for the college to sustain these courses, according to this recommendation. Those full-time faculty who teach the HUM courses, in consultation with their respective deans, would each offer a HUM course one at a time, on a semester-to-semester rotation. This would result in CSM offering approximately one HUM course each semester. Since there are three HUM courses in question, taught by three different faculty, each course would be offered approximately every third semester.

Each time a HUM course were offered, there would be no adjunct replacement for the full-time faculty’s regular teaching load; the HUM course would, for that semester, be part of the full-time faculty’s teaching load.

- B. The full-time faculty from the three disciplines teaching these courses would agree to complete program review and SLOs in a timely manner. The full-time faculty who teach the HUM courses would rotate the responsibility of completing program review each year. The full-time faculty would also organize a rotation for entering and assessing SLOs.

Over-arching Principles:

Remain a comprehensive community college but be selectively comprehensive. That is,-maintain an appropriate proportion of Transfer, Career and Technical (CTE), and Basic Skills offerings to serve as many students as possible.

Revise the curriculum and student services college-wide in order to promote student success.

- C. These HUM courses are transferable courses. Though there are other courses available to students to fulfill the IGETC and transfer categories covered by them, these HUM courses are pedagogically unique and valuable because they are interdisciplinary courses. The subject focus and content synthesize topics from distinct disciplines, cutting across the curriculum, fostering critical thinking skills from a “learning community” perspective. Unlike most other academic disciplines at CSM, HUM courses specifically enhance students’ abilities to make connections between various subjects.

Additionally, because these HUM courses fulfill the same transfer requirements as do courses in each instructor’s “home” discipline, student need to fulfill transfer requirements would not be inhibited. On the contrary, students would enjoy more choice and variety in fulfilling transfer requirements.

- D. Our sister college Skyline offers courses in Humanities; so too does neighboring De Anza College (a robust program, with 8-10 courses offered each quarter), as well as College of Marin. A relevant and telling development at our other sister college, Canada, is their launching of a new interdisciplinary major designed for working students based on a broad, cross-disciplinary liberal arts curriculum—one very similar in subject and scope to Humanities.

Considering the fact that these HUM courses have always sustained high enrollment, a valid speculation is that, if these courses disappear from CSM, students will seek them elsewhere.

Our concluding statement is that, if the current faculty and deans can agree on a way to continue to offer these courses, in a scaled-back context, at no expense, they should continue to be offered. Doing so would be a benefit and service to students, one that falls squarely within the stated commitment of the college to support transfer and promote student success.

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