To: D. J. Trela, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences and the CAS Executive Committee

From: Bob Bix, Chair
CAS Curriculum Committee

Date: October 27, 2006

Re: Course Duplication

In response to the October 10 2005 charge of the CAS Executive Committee and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the CAS Curriculum Committee conducted interviews with the chairs of the college's departments to gauge their views on the issue of curriculum duplication. There is the general impression that course duplication within CAS is not a problem. More concern was expressed regarding course and faculty duplication across unit lines rather than within CAS. A few responses indicated confusion over what constitutes course duplication and, by extension, faculty duplication. Clear definition of such issues will be important to developing a policy.

The CAS Curriculum Committee responds to the following specific areas of concern cited by the Executive Committee:

Course and program duplication

Informed by its conversations with department chairs, the CAS Curriculum Committee holds course duplication to exist where two or more courses are engaged in teaching not only similar content or subject matter but where the courses share essentially the same disciplinary perspective. Indeed, different courses on similar subjects but taught with the perspective and methodologies of different disciplines is considered to be valuable to a liberal arts curriculum. For example, it is pedagogically valuable for students to be able to take separate but complementary courses on Medieval European literature and Medieval European history. Courses offered by the same department on similar subjects and with the same disciplinary perspective but at different conceptual difficulty (i.e., introductory vs. advanced courses) are likewise of value and are not engaged in course duplication.
However, duplication of courses with essentially the same subject matter and disciplinary perspective should not be allowed under the pretence that the course is being offered to specifically address the needs of students in another discipline or program. For example, an education course on "English grammar for education majors" would clearly be engaging in course duplication in a disciplinary field whose curriculum is housed and controlled by the English department. Conversely, a course offered by the history department on "teaching methods for history majors" would be course duplication in a disciplinary field housed and controlled by the education department.

In our discussions, the issue of faculty duplication was raised as a factor that causes or abets duplication of courses and programs. The CAS Curriculum Committee holds faculty duplication to exist where two or more faculty members from different departments or academic units possess essentially the same qualifications in the same discipline and/or whose defined teaching responsibilities are in essentially the same area and discipline. For example, a proposed Economics hire for someone with a Ph.D in Economics and teaching responsibilities in the field of international economics would duplicate an established faculty member who had similar qualifications and teaching duties housed in the School of Business and Management.

Course and faculty duplication are not only wasteful of university resources but can cause tangible harm to departments, programs, and ultimately to the quality of a liberal arts education. The CAS Curriculum Committee thus suggests that course and faculty duplication should not be permitted by the university and that measures should be taken to prevent such duplication.

**Processes to investigate and resolve identified duplication within CAS**

In order to identify cases of possible duplication within CAS, Department Chairs should review each circulation of new courses and should be asked annually by the Dean's Office to review existing courses. A Chair who identifies such a case should inform the Curriculum Committee in writing. The Curriculum Committee shall investigate the case and present its findings and recommendations to the CAS Governing Faculty. The Governing Faculty shall decide whether duplication exists and, if so, which department or program should control the course. When the Faculty votes against a course, that course shall be removed from the catalog and no longer offered. As soon as the Curriculum Committee receives written notice of concern about a new course, that course shall not be offered without the support of the Governing Faculty.

Possible faculty duplication within CAS should be an issue considered by the Executive Committee when allocating new faculty lines.
Processes to investigate and resolve identified duplication between academic units

Although course duplication can be adequately addressed within CAS through the proposal above, we find grave current and impending problems of course duplication between academic units. There is currently no administrative structure that regularly and effectively resolves cases of course duplication between academic units.

The Faculty Code states that the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee "shall advise the Provost on programs having campus-wide implications that affect academic units. This includes coordination and allocation of resources among instructional units, assisting to establish the jurisdiction of instructional units over curriculum areas, ..."

We recommend that the CAS Executive Committee ask the AAAC, as a matter of urgency, to establish a continuing mechanism to receive concerns about course duplication from departments, programs, and academic units, to investigate such concerns, and to make recommendations to the Provost on how to address such concerns. The Executive Committee should assume leadership for marshaling concerns in CAS about inter-unit curriculum duplication and presenting those concerns emphatically to the AAAC.