

**University of Washington**  
**Faculty Council on Academic Standards**

November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017

1:30pm – 3:00pm

Gerberding 142

**Meeting Synopsis:**

1. Call to order
  2. Review of the minutes from October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017
  3. Chair's report
  4. SCAP report
  5. Review language for C courses
  6. Student medical excuse notes – Chris Laws and Mark Jenkins
  7. Good of the order
  8. Adjourn
- 

**1) Call to order**

Stroup called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**2) Review of the minutes from October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

The minutes from October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017 were approved as written.

**3) Chair's report**

*SEC review of Class B on Interdisciplinary Concentrations*

Stroup explained FCAS Class B legislation on Interdisciplinary Concentration was reviewed again (first reviewed spring quarter 2017) by the Senate Executive Committee in their most recent meeting, and was approved and forwarded to the Faculty Senate to be considered in that body's November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

*Direct Freshman Admission in CSE*

Stroup explained Computer Science & Engineering (CSE) plans to begin the Direct Freshman Admission (DFA) enrollment model with 65% of the entering class admitted through that pathway. The proposal will soon go to the FCAS Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs (SCAP) for review.

*Dispute between schools*

Stroup explained the newly-created Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB) taskforce charged to adjudicate academic program-related disputes between units (a task FCAS is not equipped to take on) will soon discuss a dispute between several schools relating to course overlap.

*Definitions for other UW course requirements*

Stroup mentioned that given FCAS' work on a draft policy for the offering of courses that satisfy the Composition "C" Course requirement, the body should also consider creating similar FCAS policies for other graduation requirements at the UW (e.g. Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts, additional Areas of Knowledge). She noted she would like to complete this work during the 2017-2018 academic year.

*New admissions model in College of Arts and Sciences*

The College of Arts and Sciences is considering a new admissions model to be implemented fall quarter, 2020. The change is meant to improve enrollment management. The College hopes to submit their proposal to SCAP in January, 2018. Stroup noted she would update FCAS as she learns more.

**4) SCAP report**

***Non-Routine Business***

#1 – American Indian Studies

The request is for revised admission and program requirements for the Bachelor of Art degree in American Indian Studies, as well as the Minor in American Indian Studies.

#2 – Computer Science and Engineering

The request is for a new Interdisciplinary Minor in Neural Computation and Engineering.

#3 – Mathematics

The request is for revised program requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics

#4 – Mathematics

The request is for suspension of admission in the Comprehensive Option within the Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics.

#5 – Asian Languages and Literature

The request is for a new Bachelor of Arts degree in Asian Languages and Cultures.

#6 – Asian Languages and Literature

The request is for a new Minor in Asian Languages and Cultures.

Shores explained each proposal was previously considered by FCAS, and have now returned from tri-campus review for final FCAS approval.

A vote was taken; the proposals were approved by majority vote of council members.

**5) Review language for C courses**

The council reviewed draft language for the draft FCAS Policy on Composition (C) Courses (Exhibit 1). There was some discussion of the proposed language in the Policy, and consideration of potential wordsmithing. Members were reminded the council decided to create a policy on the offering of Composition Courses following a proposal going to the UW Curriculum Committee to offer a C Course by a unit outside of the College of Arts and Sciences. Members felt C Courses should be able to be offered by units outside of Arts and Sciences, but that a policy should be developed to ensure academic standards are upheld across the university.

There was some draft wordsmithing of the Policy (Exhibit 1). It was decided the revised document would be sent around for comments before being voted on electronically.

## **6) Student medical excuse notes – Chris Laws and Mark Jenkins**

Chris Laws (Chair, Faculty Council on Student Affairs) and Mark Jenkins (Director, Health Sciences Administration) were present to discuss the use of medical excuse notes at the UW. Two handouts were shown as part of the presentation (Exhibit 2) (Exhibit 3). Laws explained the Faculty Council on Student Affairs (FCSA) is strongly in favor in developing a UW “medical excuse note policy” in consultation with Jenkins. He noted the item has come to FCAS because instructors are making requests of students in classroom environments, which makes it an academic standards issue.

Jenkins explained routinely requiring medical excuse notes for course absence/make-up has the potential to cause harm. He noted it creates an access issue in the UW Hall Health Center, as the facility is currently unable to serve the volume of students seeking appointments, and many students come to Hall Health to obtain medical notes that they can show to their professors to justify an absence. A financial burden is also placed on students looking to obtain this documentation, and the practice is also a health issue, as students who need documentation may embellish their symptoms at the time of seeing a physician in order to obtain a note (which may lead to the conducting of unnecessary tests that carry risk). Lastly, it was noted requiring students to document their illness is also a violation of their personal privacy.

There was some discussion. A member noted the problem she sees with an excuse note policy that forbids instructors to accept notes is the question of how to provide instructors with support, guidance, and structure in assessing student need for accommodation. Another member mentioned the “Incomplete” grade designation and the associated process; he suggested instructors depend on existing institutional policies. Laws noted he very much likes the University of Oregon policy on documenting student illness; he agreed faculty must be supported (Exhibit 3). A member noted faculty ultimately should not try to judge if a student is operating with integrity. It was noted many instructors include the need for medical documentation (for an absence) in their syllabi.

A member noted the university could have a policy that states UW is a “no medical note” university, which could be disseminated and made available to students, making it so that faculty may no longer request a medical note. He recommended resolving the access issue swiftly by this method as a first step.

It was noted development of a policy makes sense, as faculty are already taking a position on the issue in the absence of a policy. It was clarified Hall Health also has a mental health unit, which also sees many

students seeking excuse notes. Jenkins noted this conversation does not apply to more serious, severe conditions, like an extended stay in the hospital following a trauma.

It was noted the intention is that faculty no longer request, require, or review medical excuse notes. A motion was made that language be developed either for an FCAS Policy, or another form of policy, to this effect. The motion passed.

Stroup noted she would evaluate how best to cement such a policy. There was an idea for a small group of members to be formed to address the issue that would include a student member.

**7) Good of the order**

Nothing was stated.

**8) Adjourn**

Stroup adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

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*Minutes by Joey Burgess, jmbg@uw.edu, council support analyst*

**Present:** **Faculty:** Phil Brock, Dan Ratner, D. Shores, Sarah Stroup (chair), Daniel Enquobahrie, Champak Chatterjee, Lynn Dietrich, John Sahr, Zhi Lin  
**Ex-officio reps:** Jennifer Payne, Conor Casey, Navid Azodi, Robin Neal, Meera Roy  
**President's designee:** Phil Ballinger  
**Guests:** Janice DeCosmo, Robert Corbett, Helen Garrett, Emily Leggio, Tina Miller, Mark Jenkins, Chris Laws

**Absent:** **Faculty:** Ann Huppert, Radhika Govindrajan, Mike Lockwood  
**Ex-officio reps:** N/A

**Exhibits**

Exhibit 1 – C Course Memo edited\_fcasrevised\_111717.doc

Exhibit 2 – excuse notes\_2017.pdf

Exhibit 3 – Medical Excuse Note Policies – Handout.pdf

## UW Curriculum Committee Standards Policy Pertaining to Certifying a Course that satisfies "C" credit

While both W and C courses include writing in English, a distinguishing feature of "C" courses is their treatment of writing as the core focus and subject of the course. As such, the "C" designation isn't simply about volume of writing: "C" courses cannot be determined only by requiring a certain amount of writing (page number, word count, number of drafts); these alone do not define a "C" course. By treating writing as the core focus and subject, we mean the following:

\* Developing writing/rhetorical capacities, skills, techniques, dispositions, and habits of mind/practice must be the core subject matter and aim of a "C" class. In a "C" course, the central content and intellectual weight of the course needs to be on composition/rhetorical knowledge, skills, and capacities.

\* In "C" courses, student writing itself should be a primary text of the class, as should peer-to-peer engagement over it. Thus, the instructional techniques in the course will usually include workshopping, peer feedback, student conferences with the instructor on written work, and/or similar techniques.

\* "C" courses should teach transferable habits and dispositions that will help students write and communicate in various future contexts within and beyond the university. Such transferable skills/dispositions might include rhetorical awareness, revision strategies, working with feedback, research, genre and metacognitive awareness, etc. A "C" course should explicitly engage in providing students with a vocabulary for discussing and occasions for practicing these habits of mind.

~~**RMC:** From what I know, the following is not something either the UWCC nor FCAS can police, but is probably desirable. Perhaps it should be included as a "best practice"?) "Because such attention to writing as core focus and subject of a "C" requires metacognition about writing on the part of the instructor, we strongly recommend departments that propose "C" courses should must demonstrate in their course applications how instructors are or will be trained in writing composition pedagogy. (via workshops, consulting with CTL or other writing specialists on campus, etc.).~~

~~Without such training, even a well-conceived "C" course would better be described as a "W" course."~~

## Medical Excuse Notes.

Routinely requiring students to obtain medical excuse notes is a process that provides little or no value and has unintended, adverse consequences — for the student, the University, and Hall Health. The providers at Hall Health want to help students with their health needs. However, students who are at Hall Health purely to obtain a document regarding illness have been pressured into entering into a provider-patient relationship, without a true medical need. The problems that stem from this are listed below.

**Access** — Hall Health is often (over) filled to capacity. Students who don't really want to be a patient are diminishing access for those who do have a medical need to seek care, and wish to be seen.

**Resources** — Health care resources are expensive. Overconsumption to generate excuse notes is wasteful.

**Financial** — Students who are uninsured/underinsured are at a financial disadvantage when seeking medical care. Policies that require a student to seek care for an administrative reason place a financial burden on these students.

**Safety** — Students who see a provider to get a note have a specific objective: get the note. There is pressure to make sure that the symptoms are described in such a way that the provider will generate a note. Exaggeration of symptoms leads to testing or procedures that have risk, and patients may be harmed as a result. The risk/benefit ratio in these cases is extreme.

**Education** — The academic relationship between faculty and students belongs in the class room. Faculty are in the best position to judge academic performance by students. As students develop and prepare for their careers later in life, they should experience an environment that reflects the realities that will be experienced after graduation. Additionally, at Hall Health we want to promote responsible self-care for minor ailments and health concerns. We feel that this is an important educational component that encourages self-reliance and resilience.

**Unrealistic expectation of provider-patient relationship** — Lacking omniscience, a provider must rely on the patient's description of the symptoms. Sometimes this is after the illness has already resolved. Providers are trained to be advocates for their patients and so a note will be generated almost 100% of the time. Thus, requiring a student to obtain a medical excuse note has no value.

A restricted medical excuse note policy promotes access, encourages appropriate use of limited resources, promotes patient safety, does not place an unfair financial burden on students, and is in alignment with a holistic educational experience. Of note is that restricting routine medical excuse notes does not have any bearing on documentation needed for disability, hardship, or other significant circumstances.

### Examples:

Emory

[http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hs/services/excuse\\_notes.html](http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hs/services/excuse_notes.html)

Emory students are responsible for notifying professors or instructors of absences caused by illness or injury. EUSHCS providers do not write medical excuses for missed classes or examinations. Of course, EUSHCS healthcare providers can supply the necessary documentation for extended illnesses or injuries, including those necessitating medical withdrawal from classes.

Revised 5/6/2014

Rice University

<http://health.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=98>

[Excuse Note Policy](#)

[Our Policy](#)

Student Health utilizes a "No Note" policy. **We do not issue medical excuse notes for academic deficiencies.** In the event of illness or injury that is expected to result in significant academic disruption, the student is advised to contact his or her professor(s) as soon as possible to notify them of the anticipated delinquency. Whether the disruption is a missed test, a late assignment, or absence from class, early notification of the professor is very important.

[Why we do this](#)

This well-received and successful policy was adopted in 1998 for several reasons:

- First and foremost is the highly regarded Honor System at Rice. Feigning illness is a form of cheating. An ill student is the only one to be able to determine if they are too ill to fulfill expected academic responsibilities. The student must honestly decide whether or not they can do their work and take responsibility for this.
- Furthermore, the academic relationship between the student and professor must remain in the classroom. The professor is in the best position to know the student and to judge the student's academic performance. The physicians at Student Health are not able to function as independent--and omniscient--arbitrators regarding whether a student feels too ill to do their work.
- An additional consideration is appropriate utilization of limited healthcare resources. A student should not be required to seek medical care solely for the purposes of obtaining an excuse note.

[Exceptions](#)

We recognize that unusual or extenuating circumstances do occur so there are exceptions to our "No Note" policy. If a professor requests a medical excuse note in writing (e-mail or campus mail) and the student has given permission, then a physician at Student Health will generate an appropriate reply. We ask that professors **only** do this for unusual circumstances.

In cases of medical conditions causing severe academic disruption (e.g., withdrawal from school, taking incompletes, or dropping classes) appropriate documentation will be furnished to the Committee on Examinations and Standings if requested by the student. In all cases strict patient confidentiality will be followed.

USC

<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/about/frequently-asked-questions/>

**Will I be able to get an excuse note for class?**

Written excuses regarding the legitimacy of injury or illness-related absence from class or examinations are not issued by the Engemann Student Health Center. Instructors may, with a student's written consent, contact the student's clinician for consultation regarding the absence. For the instructor to call, the student must fill out the **Authorization for Disclosure of Medical Information** and turn the form into the Student Health Information Management after the appointment.



The University Health Center does not routinely provide excuses for students who miss class due to illness or injury. Students who need to miss class due to illness/injury are encouraged by Academic Advising and by the University Health Center to notify their faculty that they are ill or injured and unable to attend (and follow the directions provided by the faculty member on the course syllabus.) It is the purview of the faculty to determine when or if a student will be excused from class.

This policy is consistent with our commitment to maintain confidentiality, encourage more appropriate use of health care resources, and support meaningful dialogue between teacher and student. Students are responsible for promptly notifying instructors about absences caused by illness or injury, preferably prior to the class time rather than after the class time.

We encourage faculty members to have the appropriate conversation with the student that allows the student to represent the situation to the faculty member. These are conversations that students will need to have with their bosses or supervisors in the future. The University encourages these conversations between faculty and students as a step toward adult independence in such matters -- the conversation that identifies how the student can fulfill their academic responsibilities and continue their academic efforts and achievements, while working around their illness.

Advice from Academic Advising and Sample Letter to faculty:

<http://www.uoregon.edu/~aass/documents/ManagingYourHealthSituation.pdf>

Students with serious illness or significant disability can request that medical staff place a letter detailing the condition in their medical record for access by Academic Advising. Students who wish to request a withdrawal from a class or from the University need to follow the rules set forth by the University. For those who are in the midst of a serious or lengthy absence and cannot act on their own behalf, please contact the Office of Academic Advising (541-346-3211).

It is important for students to learn self-management of colds, flus, other minor illnesses and minor injuries. Most of these simple illnesses or injuries do not require medical attention. Legitimate reasons to stay home with viral illness include decreasing viral exposures to others in the university community and recuperation. Coping skills that are developed as an undergraduate will help students in graduate school and in the world of work. Health Center staff have no special knowledge, equipment or intuition which tells us how long the student needs to be out, or what impact the illness makes on the student. Illness varies greatly among individuals. Conversations between students and faculty should identify how the student can work around the illness to best continue their academic efforts and achievements.

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER • Appointments & After Hours Nurse: 541-346-2770

Web: <http://healthcenter.uoregon.edu>

An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to cultural diversity Documenting Student Illness/JMS/5-10-10

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University of Oregon

<https://healthcenter.uoregon.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=psI7GmvQsI0%3d&tabid=41&mid=399>

Rice University

<http://health.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=98>

Washington University (St. Louis)

[https://shs.wustl.edu/Documents/Attendance\\_Verification\\_Form\\_rev\\_1006.pdf](https://shs.wustl.edu/Documents/Attendance_Verification_Form_rev_1006.pdf)

University of Iowa

<http://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/health-answers/illness/class-excuse-policy/>

Sonoma State University

<https://www.sonoma.edu/shc/consumer-information/medical-excuse-notes.html>

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And, of course, one has to admire the cottage industry....

<http://www.bestfakedoctorsnotes.net>

For the last four years, we've collected dozens of real medical excuse notes from across the United States, Canada and Europe. We've studied them thoroughly, and we've painstakingly modeled a series of notes based closely upon them.

As a result, we've been called 'the best doctor's excuse provider *anywhere* on the internet'.

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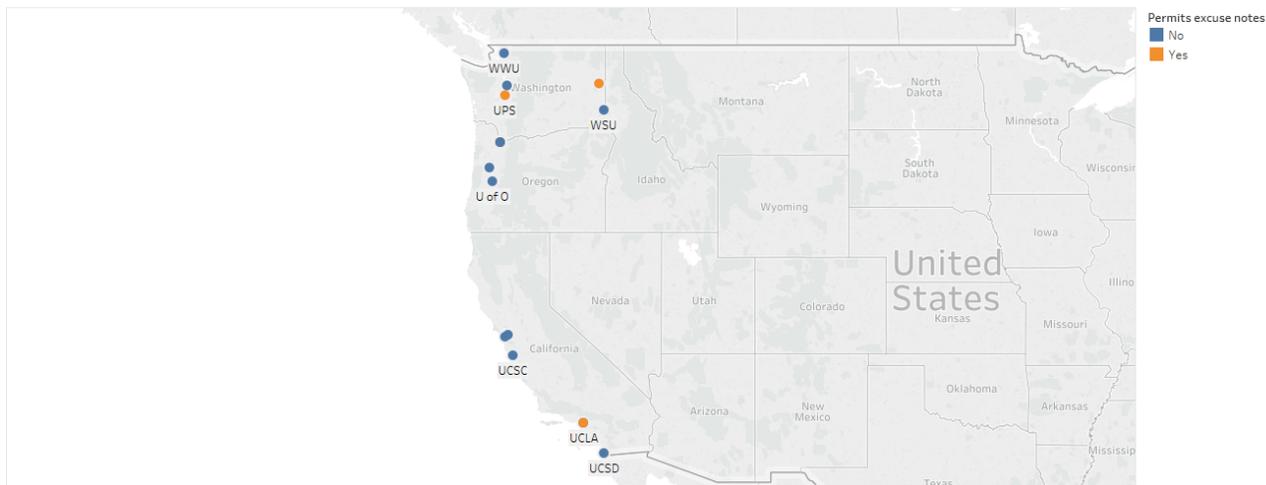
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**Medical Excuse Note Policies**

Medical Excuse Note Policies, Selected West Coast Colleges & Universities, 2017



Name of School	State	Allows Excuse Notes?
University of California - Berkeley	CA	No
University of California - Los Angeles	CA	Yes
University of California - San Diego	CA	No
University of California - San Francisco	CA	No
University of California - Santa Cruz	CA	No
University of Southern California	CA	No
Lewis & Clark	OR	No
Oregon State University	OR	No
Portland State University	OR	Yes
University of Oregon	OR	No
University of Portland	OR	No
Eastern Washington University	WA	Yes
Seattle University	WA	No
University of Puget Sound	WA	Yes
Washington State University	WA	No
Western Washington University	WA	No

## Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs (SCAP) Report

1:30-3:00 p.m.

November 3, 2017, Gerberding 026

### **Non-Routine Business:**

**American Indian Studies ([AIS-20170210](#))** Revised Admission and Program Requirements for the Bachelor of Art degree in American Indian Studies, as well as the Minor in American Indian Studies.

Background: The Department is restructuring their admission as well as their program requirements, see attached.

Action taken 03/10/2017: SCAP requested the list of electives for both the BA and the minor, and found that the full 15 elective credits for the minor need to be upper division courses. Additionally, there were some catalog language edits.

Update 05/17/2017: Department has provided revised catalog copy and a list of electives (p.7-9).

Action taken 06/02/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Action taken 06/09/2017: Approved by FCAS.

Update 10/24/2017: Posted to Tri-Campus, 1 comment received (p. 23).

Action taken 11/03/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

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**Computer Science and Engineering ([CSE-20170105](#))** Interdisciplinary Minor in Neural Computation and Engineering

Background: An open admission interdisciplinary minor is being proposed by Computer Science Engineering, Bioengineering, and Neurobiology. The minor would be composed of 30 credits, of which BIOEN 461 would be the integrative capstone course.

Action taken 04/07/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Update 04/14/2017: Minor requirements revised.

Action taken 04/21/2017: Was not discussed.

Action taken 05/05/2017: Was not discussed.

Action taken 05/19/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS, pending requested approvals of all departments with courses on list of electives, and the removal of a general studies course from the list of electives.

Update 05/30/2017: Department has met SCAPs requests.

Action taken 06/09/2017: Approved by FCAS.

Update 10/24/2017: Posted to Tri-Campus, 1 comment received (p. 11).

Action taken 11/03/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

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**Mathematics** ([MATH-20170101A](#)) Revised Program Requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics

Background: The Department is proposing to consolidate the standard BS and the Comprehensive Option so they only offer a single Bachelor of Science degree with no options.

Action taken 04/07/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 05/05/2017: SCAP requested catalog copy changes and justification for the minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA.

Update 05/11/2017: Department revised catalog copy and responded regarding GPA (p. 6-9).

Action taken 05/19/2017: Approved, but will not forward to FCAS until [MATH-20170301A](#) is approved.

Action taken 06/02/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Action taken 06/09/2017: Approved by FCAS.

Update 10/24/2017: Posted to Tri-Campus, 2 comments received (p. 10-11).

Action taken 11/03/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

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**Mathematics** ([MATH-20170301A](#)) Suspension of admission in the Comprehensive Option within the Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics.

Background: The Department is notifying suspension of the Comprehensive Option they currently offer as part of their initiative to offer a single Bachelor of Science degree with no options from now on. RCEP instructions have been shared with the Department.

Action taken 04/07/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 05/05/2017: SCAP requested the department inform them their timeline for completing RCEP, and would like the department to include additional information in the 1503 (student enrollment and how they plan to handle the transition).

Update 05/11/2017: Department responded, see attached (p.4-6)

Action taken 05/19/2017: SCAP requested an RCEP timeline that aligns with [MATH-20170101A](#)

Update 05/22/2017: Department responded, see attached (p.4)

Action taken 06/02/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Action taken 06/09/2017: Approved by FCAS.

Update 10/24/2017: Posted to Tri-Campus, 1 comment received (p. 9).

Action taken 11/03/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

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**Asian Languages and Literature** ([ASIAN-20170118A](#)) Bachelor of Arts degree in Asian Languages and Cultures

Background: The Department is proposing a minimum requirement BA in Asian Languages and Cultures. The BA would be made up of 60 credits.

Action taken 04/07/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 04/21/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 05/05/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Action taken 05/19/2017: FCAS/SCAP requested the department explain why they are proposing as a minimum requirement major instead of an open major.

Update 05/23/2017: Department responded, see attached (p.5), and catalog revisions (p. 7).

Action taken 06/02/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Action taken 06/09/2017: Approved by FCAS.

Update 10/24/2017: Posted to Tri-Campus, 3 comments received (p.37-39).

Action taken 11/03/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

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**Asian Languages and Literature** ([ASIAN-20170118B](#)) Minor in Asian Languages and Cultures

Background: The Department is proposing an open admission, 30 credit Minor in Asian Languages and Cultures.

Action taken 04/07/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 04/21/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 05/05/2017: SCAP requested the minor require a minimum of 10 credits in non-language classes.

Update 05/10/2017: Department revised catalog copy. (p. 5).

Action taken 05/19/2017: Some discussion ensued, no official comments at this time.

Action taken 06/02/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Action taken 06/09/2017: Approved by FCAS.

Update 10/24/2017: Posted to Tri-Campus, 2 comments received (p.21).

Action taken 11/03/2017: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

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