

**From:** "Carol Christ" <cchrist@email.smith.edu>  
**To:** <rlindsey@smith.edu>  
**Date:** 10/16/2006 6:42:50 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Junior Year Proposals

>>> Margaret Bruzelius 10/15/2006 1:12 PM >>>  
Dear Carol

I know that you have asked for suggestions from the community about the curriculum. I am currently working on the entire report, but I wanted to send along some suggestions which seem to reflect trends in the committee's thinking.

1) Service Learning Opportunities

The committee has been very concerned with ways to increase opportunities for Juniors on campus to extend their experience in new directions. There has been a lot of discussion about ways to make service learning projects possible. (We know that the Sociology Department is proposing a plan for such courses; other departments may be as well.) We already have in the Catalogue "Internships for Credit" and "Independent Study" (p. 46 in this year's Catalogue). I have not yet suggested this to the committee (having just had this idea myself), but I feel sure that the committee would support an effort to revive these pre-existing structures as a way to enable service learning projects. I do not know of such internships and independent studies being approved since I arrived at Smith - I imagine that in the past they have largely been used by Smith Scholars. Perhaps a new subcommittee of faculty interested in such projects could be designated as a subcommittee of CAP (rather than SHIP, which is so concerned with Honors) and a system set up to encourage service learning as either Independent Projects or Internships for Credit. Since both of these options already exist in the Catalogue, we could use them as a way to organize service learning opportunities.

2) A "method" class as preparation for independent projects

The committee was very concerned about the effect of the numbers of students on JYA both on advising and on the curriculum. We will suggest the establishment of a 2-credit, s/u course aimed primarily at juniors and organized by division. Members of departments within each division would come in to speak about their own current projects. The work of the students enrolled in the course would be a paragraph-long project proposal and an annotated bibliography. This strikes us as a way in which we could encourage students to develop the basis for an independent project (answering a particular question, rather than simply delimiting a field) and prepare for such a project without actually committing herself to writing the paper, or committing faculty time to reading papers. The development of a question in this way is parallel to the sorts of writing one does for fellowships, grant proposals and numerous other projects and strikes us as a powerful tool to give our students.

3) Guidance for advisers and advisees

We favor the development of a rubric that could be developed to be distributed both to juniors and their faculty advisers. This would help to guide advising conversations and would be meant to encourage students to think not only of concerns within their majors (i.e. fulfilling distribution requirements), but about their entire college education, both curricular and extra-curricular. We are very concerned with thinking about ways in which junior year as a time in which students develop a narrative to use beyond Smith - an account that transcends the strictures of college (major, gpa, etc.) and becomes a story of themselves, where they want to be in the world and how their Smith experience (not just classes, but all of their Smith experience) has helped them to define that self. It strikes us that some guidance around fruitful advising not only for pre-major advisers but specifically for the junior year might be very helpful.

4) 5 College experiences specifically for Juniors

The committee has recurred again and again to the possibility of creating opportunities for juniors through the 5 college exchange. Could 5 college speakers be asked to have dinners or teas with juniors from all five campuses? Could more social events that attracted juniors from all the schools be envisaged? Could outdoor classes, whether for credit or non-credit, be expanded to include the five colleges as a way of fostering contact? From the students' point of view this is largely a way of expanding their social worlds without be condemned to a party scene (so it's about boys, but not parties).

As I say, the report should be coming soon, but I wanted to pass these suggestions on by the Oct 16 deadline.

Margaret

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