Curriculum Development: The Cultures and Communities Certificate

A major achievement of the Cultures and Communities Program has been the establishment of a Cultures and Communities Undergraduate Certificate. In May of 2002 the UWM Academic Program and Curriculum Committee (APCC) approved a Cultures and Communities Certificate focus within the General Education Requirements curriculum of the university; in October 2003 Provost John Wanat gave final written authorization for implementation of the Certificate program. In August of 2003, CC hired a new Student Services Coordinator (Karen Thorne) to put the program into gear, specifically by advising students, coordinating course offerings, and representing the program at outreach and recruitment events.

The Cultures and Communities Certificate enables students to concentrate their General Education Requirements in the areas of cross-cultural literacy, global awareness, and community engagement. It is designed to provide a strong foundation for work in any of UWM's majors, schools, or colleges. From among APCC approved GER classes, students select at least 15 credit hours. These include the "Multicultural America" core course (now offered by the departments of English, History, and Anthropology) as well as classes selected according to the Cultures and Communities "Areas of Study Array" (see the complete list of requirements and courses on our website). Students who fulfill the requirements for the Certificate will receive recognition upon graduation. The proposal does not change the structure of the current GER, but rather encourages students to organize that work in an integrated fashion that reflects the values of the Milwaukee Idea.

In the Spring and Fall semesters of 2004, the CC core course “Multicultural America” will be offered in English and History and, for the first time, in Anthropology. Students will also have the opportunity to take relevant GER classes that have become affiliate classes in the CC curriculum. In the Spring 2003 semester, more than 60 courses from 24 UWM departments had been nominated as affiliate courses in the CC curriculum.

All courses within the Certificate come from APCC approved departmental offerings in the various schools and colleges. Through its Faculty Fellowship and Mini Grant programs, CC has been actively supporting innovative curriculum initiatives and pilot projects. At least eleven new courses—all carrying General Education accreditation—have been developed for the CC curriculum, including

1. the CC core course “Multicultural America” with multiple sections permanently added to the curriculums of English, History, and Anthropology
2. a multicultural version of Art 100 “Basic Art Experiences,” team-taught by Raoul Deal and the CC Teacher-in-Residence
3. “Global Religions,” a new Freshman Seminar taught by History Professor Anne Hansen
4. “Hmong American Life Stories,” taught with a Service Learning component by English professor Mary Louise Buley-Weissner
5. “Movement and Learning,” taught by Dance professor Marcia Parsons at local school sites
6. “Video in the Classroom,” the first GER-approved course for the Department of Film
7. “Museums for Educators,” a Freshman Seminar taught by Anthropology Professor William Washabaugh which connects UWM students with students at Riverside University High School and curators at the Milwaukee Public Museum
8. “Work and Society,” a globally-oriented course in Sociology taught by Professor Stephen McKay
9. “Ojibwe Literature and Culture,” offered for the first time by English Professor and Ojibwe poet Kimberly Blaeser
10. “Rituals and Culture,” an interdisciplinary arts course offered by Dance Professor Simone Ferro
11. “Oral Traditions,” a community-based Anthropology course set in Milwaukee’s historic Walnut Way community and taught by Professor Cheryl Ajirotutu.

- Impact on Teaching and Learning
  - More than 60 UWM credit baring courses from 24 departments have affiliated with the CC curriculum.
  - In the Spring 2003 semester, more than 4680 students had enrolled in CC affiliated courses.
  - Over 6500 students have completed one or more Cultures and Communities course.
  - Increased interdisciplinarity and faculty collaboration through team teaching.
  - Involved diverse Milwaukee communities in UWM curriculum development.
  - Increased the use of service learning and community engagement as pedagogical tools.
  - Increased student understanding of diversity and cross-cultural literacy.

- Community Engagement

  - Outcomes
    - Increased awareness of UWM in Milwaukee’s communities.
    - Increased the number of UWM courses with community partnerships.
    - Developed understanding of university/community partnerships.

  - Outputs
    - Awarded 35 Mini Grants and 47 co-sponsorship grants.
    - Developed 9 partnerships with community groups with connections to UWM courses.
School of Education Partnership

Outcomes

✓ Involved MPS master teachers in designing and teaching courses for future teachers
✓ Increased knowledge of urban education issues among K-12 teachers.
✓ Strengthened connection between future teachers and local communities.
✓ Increased the number of UWM courses with Service Learning community placements.

Outputs

✓ There were 515 degree-seeking undergraduates majoring in Education who had taken CC classes by the end of Spring '03.
✓ Made 51 Service Learning placements, including in MPS.

Major Sponsored Projects:

Major Sponsored Projects continue to be an important part of CC activities. Major Sponsored Projects is a funding category that has grown out of the Faculty Fellowships and Mini Grant programs and represents a long-term commitment to specific partnership projects. Major Sponsored Projects build on the previously successful partnership activity and offer additional opportunities for teaching, learning, and community collaboration in the future. Three projects have been selected as Cultures and Communities Major Sponsored projects since 2000:

Walnut Way Project

UWM’s Cultures and Communities Program, the Department of Anthropology and the Walnut Way community are entering the third year of collaboration. This collaboration will continue to benefit the Walnut Way community by providing resources that will assist efforts to address current community issues. It will help UWM undergraduate students by offering an opportunity to work in a real world situation. Students have been able to get hands-on experience collecting the oral history of people in the Walnut Way community. In future classes, Walnut Way residents who have been the subject of previous oral interviews will become resources and assist future classes in collecting oral histories. Using a collaborative inquiry approach, students worked in partnership with residents to generate compelling narratives about the neighborhood that were presented both in the community and on campus.

The Freshmen Seminar course “Oral Traditions” has been offered each Fall semester since 2002, and it will again be offered in Fall 2004. A cycle of two course offerings per year, one for freshman and the other for upper division and graduate level students, are proposed over a two-year period. Faculty from the Department of Mass Communications and the Department of Geology are planning to conduct classes in Walnut Way. Over time, these thematically linked curricular offerings will develop a systematic research agenda. Course offerings as a part of this project focus on research and documentation of components with an interdisciplinary approach and multiple methods of data collection and analysis.

Cultures and Communities will continue to offer courses in conjunction with the Walnut Way Conservation Corp. CC will continue its commitment to placing community-based research and civic content as central themes in curricular offerings. Equally important is CC’s commitment to increase the community participation in areas of curriculum development. Toward that end Sharon Adams, resident coordinator of Walnut Way, has become UWM’s first Community Scholar-in-Residence, funded by a HUD grant through the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research. In this position she will help organize a stronger community presence on campus.
A display at Milwaukee's General Mitchell Field airport featured the physical transformation of the Walnut Way neighborhood and the stories of the people who live there. The display was on exhibit for two months in the Spring of 2003. UWM and CC were well represented at the exhibit’s opening reception that attracted a wide range of individuals from the Milwaukee community.

**UWM-Riverside University High School Virtual Museums Collaboration**

The UWM-RUHS Virtual Museums Collaboration is a partnership of UWM with Riverside University High School (RUHS), the purpose of which is to enhance the education of undergraduates at UWM while simultaneously encouraging innovative technology-mediated pedagogy at RUHS. This continuing project of RUHS teachers focuses on the development of learning projects centered on virtual museums, a type of website that can support interdisciplinary project based learning while promoting the acquisition of computer skills.

A new UWM course, Anthropology 193: “Virtual Museums for Educators,” was offered as a result of this “UWM-RUHS Learning Partnership.” Developed by Professor William Washabaugh, it was offered in Spring 2001 and again in 2002. Professor Washabaugh will also offer student-mentor-development workshops, software-training seminars, and internships training at RUHS. A detailed description of this plan can be found through the “Major Projects” link on our website.

For the first time, UWM students will be brought into this project in a significant way through a service learning component of the new Multicultural America course in Anthropology. RUHS will be a service learning site for the 50 students enrolled in the class and who will work directly with RUHS students.

Anthropology graduate students have worked on the RUHS project for the last three years, three of them funded by CC; these graduate students help train the teachers at RUHS and supervise the work of the students involved in the project.

**Hmong American Studies Initiative**

The Hmong American Studies Initiative (HASI) aims to bring together UWM faculty, students, and staff with Hmong American community organizations to create a powerful university-community partnership for addressing Hmong issues, especially those related to education. In 2002-2003, a development plan for the initiative was assembled through partnership meetings with diverse community organizations in the Hmong community. Cultures and Communities will then help sponsor activities of the Initiative, and has budgeted support for a faculty coordinator and graduate project assistant. Further funding is pending for 2003-2004.

In 2003 HASI sponsored a large, well-attended forum at UWM focused on Hmong community issues. The panel included four representatives from diverse groups within the Hmong community. The event, held at the UWM Union, attracted not only a substantial audience from the Hmong community but also a diverse representation of UWM students, many from other ethnic groups. This is the kind of event HASI will continue to design.