

Faculty Senate Resolution #14-50

Approved by the Faculty Senate: April 15, 2014

Held for further study by the Chancellor: May 21, 2014 ([with comment](#))

RECOMMENDATIONS on COAD 1000

1. The Committee notes the following concerns that need to be addressed by both administrators and faculty:

- a. Appropriateness of giving academic credit for non-academic content
- b. Lack of oversight of a for-credit course by an academic unit (when the course was created, an academic unit had oversight)
- c. Learning and other “life” needs of new students (“first year experience needs”).
- d. Evidence for or against the effectiveness of COAD 1000 vs. other approaches to addressing first year experience needs.

2. The Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate support the implementation of Section VI., “Primary Conclusions and Recommended Steps Forward,” of the “[Final Report of the University 1000 Committee](#)”, specifically, the report’s recommendations not yet implemented (highlighted below).

“VI. Primary Conclusions and Recommended Steps Forward

What is known (from the literature in the field and from the experience of other universities) is that engaging students from the beginning of their academic careers is essential to their success and that engagement with faculty is most crucial. A first-year seminar program that ensures such active engagement, coupled with a robust assessment program designed to determine the effectiveness of that program, is essential for the future of our university.

Although this committee did not reach an agreement as to the specific model that would be best for East Carolina University and our students, we did agree – without dissent – that a high-quality first-year seminar is an important component of a strong first-year program, an important key to enhancing student success, and important to some performance metrics. The committee also agreed that, because the curriculum is the purview of the faculty, the final decision about how to implement a required first-year seminar must be handed over to the normal faculty governance channels, namely to the academic units, the Faculty Senate, and the various curriculum and academic standards committees on campus.

The committee hopes that this report will be used as jumping off point for a campus-wide discussion concerning enhancing student success via first-year programs. Further, the members of the committee would welcome the opportunity to continue to participate in this important discussion and decision-making processes.

The primary conclusions of this effort are intended to offer a path forward for utilizing the first-year seminar to improve key performance metrics while at the same time focusing on academic quality and introducing students to the life of the mind.

The committee recommends that ECU take the following *next steps* toward an integrated first-year program:

1. *Pilot several academic/hybrid seminars, along with the currently offered COAD 1000 course (with minor modifications as highlighted in this report), during the fall 2012 semester .Under any future scenario, it will be necessary to continue teaching multiple types of seminars as we transition into the final first-year seminar model or models.*

2. *Ensure that all first-year seminars have the following underlying objectives:*
 - *to help students become oriented to the intellectual life,*
 - *to assist students with life skills,*
 - *to engage students in university and academic life, and*
 - *to provide opportunities for active academic engagement from the first course at the university.*
3. *Immediately begin a robust, longitudinal study of the effectiveness of first-year seminars at ECU. All sections of both the pilot academic/hybrid seminar and COAD 1000 should be assessed in a manner similar to other courses on campus, and a controlled longitudinal study of the seminar program (based on well-defined outcomes/objectives) should be undertaken. Participation in the Pirate CREWS project would facilitate development of high quality assessment and evaluation instruments and appropriate use of the resulting data.*
4. *Begin in the fall 2012 semester, the process of review of the models proposed herein and of the curriculum implications of requiring a first-year seminar of all incoming students. The UNIV 1000 committee offers this report as a starting point for that review and welcomes the opportunity to continue to participate in the important campus-wide discussion and decision-making. Because these are curricular proposals, this process must proceed through the existing curriculum review and implementation procedures as overseen by the Faculty Senate. A challenging first-year seminar that achieves the objectives outlined above would benefit all students; however, many degree programs leave students with no free electives that would allow for the additional requirement of a multi-credit first-year course. Creative solutions to this problem could involve a reassessment of program requirements, the use of existing course designations, and other issues that are within the purview of the faculty.*
5. *Before mandating that all students take a first-year seminar, a campus-wide decision must be made whether to offer a single or multiple seminar models."*

3. The Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate support ECU taking the following *next steps* toward an integrated first-year program, specifically:

1. ***Immediately begin a robust, longitudinal study of the effectiveness of first-year seminars at ECU.*** All sections of both the pilot academic/hybrid seminar and COAD 1000 should be assessed in a manner similar to other courses on campus, and a controlled longitudinal study of the seminar program (based on well-defined outcomes/objectives) should be undertaken. Participation in the Pirate CREWS project would facilitate development of high quality assessment and evaluation instruments and appropriate use of the resulting data.
2. ***Begin in the FALL 2014 semester, the process of review of the models proposed herein and of the curriculum implications of requiring a first-year seminar of all incoming students.*** The UNIV 1000 committee offers this report as a starting point for that review and welcomes the opportunity to continue to participate in the important campus-wide discussion and decision-making. Because these are curricular proposals, this process must proceed through the existing curriculum review and implementation procedures as overseen by the Faculty Senate. A challenging first-year seminar that achieves the objectives outlined above would benefit all students; however, many degree programs leave students with no free electives that would allow for the additional requirement of a multi-credit first-year course. Creative solutions to this problem could involve a reassessment of program requirements, the use of existing course designations,

and other issues that are within the purview of the faculty.

- 3. Before mandating that all students take a first-year seminar, a campus-wide decision must be made whether to offer a single or multiple seminar models.“***

4. The Committee recommends the formation of a subcommittee within the Foundations Curriculum and Instructional Effectiveness Committee to oversee the implementation of the *next steps* toward an integrated first-year program.

5. During the 2014/15 academic year, ECU will pilot 10 sections of the academic model and that units that serve the university in this way be held harmless for the loss of student credit hours due to teaching these low-enrollment courses. In addition, a rigorous study will be undertaken that measures the effect of these academic courses and the COAD 1000 sections. Relevant measures could include: freshmen-to-sophomore retention, GPA, percentage of students who declare a major, and perhaps others.