

May Experience Subcommittee Meeting  
May 15, 2006  
Minutes

Members present: Gabbert, Bressler, Cass (recorder), Armstrong, Haney, Batson, Daniels, Calvin, Malvern, Aarnes, Lacey

Observers present: Brad Barron, Laura Thompson

1. Course renumbering and May Experience courses.

A committee member asked how May Experience courses would fit into the course renumbering scheme. Dean Barron stated that May Experience offerings will be departmental offerings and will be numbered appropriately within departmental curricula. May Experience courses will not have their own nomenclature/prefix, but first year seminars will (FYS, FYW).

It was then noted that May Experience courses are to be “different” than regular semester offerings, which might make it difficult to assign a single prefix. Dean Barron remarked that prefixes are ways of advertising courses to students and that if no one departmental prefix would be satisfactory for an interdisciplinary course, a May Experience prefix could be invented. A follow-up question addressed the present IDS prefix. Dean Barron stated that the usage of the present IDS prefix would diminish greatly in the new curriculum and gave examples to that effect.

A committee member asked about the possibility of some identifying May Experience marker in the course number, such as the system used with present Asian African courses. Dean Barron stated that requirements should be independent of course numbers and/or prefixes and that mixing requirements, prefixes, and course numbers can get messy.

It was asked how advisors and students would be able to identify May Experience courses on schedules and other publications. Dean Barron suggested that perhaps the 80-90 decades of each century (100, 200, 300, 400, 500) could be saved for special topics and May Experience courses. Likewise, a committee member noted that without special identification of May Experience courses, it could make looking at major forms difficult. Dean Barron assured the committee that requirements satisfied by particular courses would be made very clear in published schedules and in the course catalog. That is to say, any time a course title is advertised to students, the requirements it satisfies will also be listed.

It was noted that just as present special topics (95) courses are often repeated, some May Experience offerings might be repeated, thus warranting their own course number. Dean Barron agreed that there will be many ways to identify a May Experience course, and that the present database system is capable of adding many identifying fields to a listed course. It was stated that most May Experience courses will be temporary offerings, but

some repeated offerings (e.g. travel study) might warrant permanent inclusion in the course catalog. This prompted a question as to whether these courses would have their own special departmental listings or if May Experience courses should be mixed in with other courses based upon thematic or disciplinary similarities. Dean Barron stated that these May Experience courses should be listed with similar courses but will be accompanied by some sort of notation that would delineate the course as a May Experience only offering. A committee member agreed that courses should be grouped with topically-similar courses. Dean Barron reminded the committee that, initially, all May Experience courses will be so-called “temporary” courses. In the long term, however, there will be some more permanent May Experience offerings. He also reminded the committee that there would be a great deal of turnover in May Experience courses, and that some courses might not be repeated. It was noted that many of the study away opportunities might be listed as more permanent courses while in-house courses might be more transitory.

A committee member asked Dean Barron about deadlines for proposing May Experience courses. Dean Barron responded that he envisioned that most May Experience courses would be publicized by Thanksgiving, allowing students plenty of time to express interest in courses. It was suggested that some ten to fifteen student slots remain open to allow for any interest on the part of a student who might want to take a May Experience course based upon a theme or research topic explored in a spring term class, in which case the Thanksgiving deadline would not be appropriate. Dean Barron responded that, practically, final decisions regarding May Experience courses, based upon numbers of enrolled students, should be made around spring break. He also stated that he anticipated no May Experience course to be canceled for financial reasons (as is sometimes the case with summer session courses), but he did expect that a May Experience course might be canceled if there is limited student interest. He suggested that instructors will come up with minimum enrollments and maximum capacities for pedagogically-sound experiences.

## 2. Recommendation to ITF steering committee regarding May Experience.

Before considering the document outlining the committee’s recommendations to ITF, the committee briefly discussed some issues that would affect the flexibility of May Experience offerings, namely the deadlines involved with proposing a May Experience course. It was communicated from members of the ITF and the administration that while there would be some flexibility available for “last minute” planning of May Experience courses in February or March, it is in the best interest of all parties to have May Experience courses publicly listed by November.

The committee also discussed some specific departmental May Experience plans, especially those involving scientific summer research and getting May Experience credit for pre-research experience courses. There was much discussion about the nature of these research experiences with regards to the requirements they might satisfy. Although May courses cannot be required, the committee agreed that the May term might offer special

opportunities for many departments. A similar issue was also discussed with regards to music ensembles, in which student participants are not awarded credit during the academic year. There was some discussion about May Experience offerings that would mirror typical music ensembles but would also incorporate some other instructional element that would warrant the awarding of course credit.

The committee concluded its meeting with a discussion of the specific recommendations to the ITF steering committee regarding May Experience courses satisfying “elective” major credit. The approved document will be passed on to the ITF steering committee at its meeting on May 22.