

Subject Re: C3 in the New Core

From David R Koukal <koukaldr@udmercy.edu>

Date Thursday, September 10, 2015 1:35 pm

To "Noah S. Resnick" <resnicns@udmercy.edu>

Cc koukaldr@udmercy.edu, Todd Hibbard <hibbarja@udmercy.edu>, James B Tubbs <tubbsjb@udmercy.edu>, Simon Joseph Hendry <hendrysi@udmercy.edu>, Elizabeth A Oljar <oljarea@udmercy.edu>, "Hu, Hsiao-Lin" <hhu@udmercy.edu>, Jocelyn Bennett-Garraway <begarrjm@udmercy.edu>, Matthew John Mio <miomj@udmercy.edu>, Stephanie B Conant <conantsb@udmercy.edu>

Dear Noah,

I'm trying to write in as restrained a tone as possible right now, for four reasons.

First, because of my sense that you've always been a sympathetic ear to our cause.

Second, because I have no full knowledge of what has gone on within the EC and the CCRC over the past few months.

Third, because I realize that Julia's unexpected resignation has put the whole EC in an awkward situation.

Fourth, because I'm trying as best I can to hold on to the possibility that this crisis might still be resolved in the short term, despite receiving your email.

Having said all this, please consider the following fourteen facts. I realize that some current members of the executive were not in place for the whole of this process and so may be unaware of some of these facts.

1. The origins of the current crisis is twofold: (a) insufficient consideration of our mission and identity as a Catholic/Jesuit/Mercy university and (b) a long refusal to take into account the relationship between learning outcomes and credit hours.
2. For years Beth Oljar and myself advocated on philosophical grounds the importance of (1a) and warned of the dangers of disregarding (1b). We were ignored.
3. As a result, we have a core curriculum that has grown too large and which is now poised to further diminish our students' already meager exposure to philosophy and the study of religion, both hallmarks of Catholic education.
4. Complicating this matter is the claim that the final report of the CTF set a one-to-one relationship between courses and learning outcomes. This is simply not true, and any reading of the document will bear this out.
5. When the CCRC was formed the one person on campus with the most experience in core revision was not included (myself), despite reassurances by one member of the executive that my experience would be essential to the committee's work. I believe that my inclusion might well have averted the crisis we now find ourselves in.
6. One major dimension of this crisis is the fact that the CCRC ignored the CCIC's recommendation to maintain the current levels of exposure to science, philosophy, and the study of religion, which was a recommendation properly proposed, debated, voted on, and contained in a final report accepted by the majority of the MFA.
7. Despite the fact that both PHL and RELS registered their concerns about the status of the shared elective during the first phase of reconciliation, neither department was contacted by the CCRC to discuss these concerns.
8. When the MFA president announced the elimination of the shared elective in

December 2014, both PHL and RELS registered their objections within 24 hours. Neither department ever received a response to our concerns.

9. When the PHL department delivered a second reconciliation report in writing and asked for a meeting with the CCRC, it was told that the CCRC had completed its work and been dissolved.

10. Despite our repeated attempts to communicate our concerns, between December 2014 and April 2015 there was a complete breakdown of constructive communication between our departments and the MFAEC—four months that could have been used to creatively resolve this crisis.

11. In April 2015 the MFAEC signaled its willingness to engage in constructive dialogue to resolve outstanding reconciliation issues, which indicated that the CCRC had been dissolved prematurely by the MFAEC.

12. During the summer of 2015 our departments had a series of meetings with the MFAEC and engineering to address the issue of the shared elective. On August 24, 2015 an agreement was reached that the PHL/RELS shared elective would be restored for all UDM undergraduates.

13. Exactly one week later, on August 31, we received word from the MFA president that nursing would be unable to honor this agreement, despite MFAEC assurances that they would be able to do so.

14. Now, ten days later, we are told by the MFAEC that “a number of [programs] are unable to work the added C3 into their curriculums,” seventeen days after we were assured by the MFAEC that ALL programs would be able to do so.

If anyone can locate any factual errors among these fourteen points, please point them out.

If no factual errors can be found, then any reasonable reader would look at this list and see a series of unforced procedural errors, missteps, and bad decisions on the part of the MFAEC. PHL and RELS has played by the rules throughout, to no avail. We have not created this crisis.

Which leaves us with a host of hard questions: Why should we have to pay the price for the mistakes of others? Will the MFAEC ever allow itself to be held accountable? Why should the viability of our departments be allowed to continue to dangle in the wind even one more day, after at least nine months of slip-ups and apparently fruitless negotiation? Why should we allow this issue to be kicked down the road yet one more time, when all this has ever brought us is prolonged anxiety and more frustration, piled one on top of the other? Especially—especially!—when throughout this entire process professional programs have always been able to unilaterally call a full-stop halt to any revision they perceived would harm their programs? Why are we denied the same right?

A full restoration of the shared elective (i.e., C3) is the only acceptable solution for philosophy. The only way this can be accomplished is through the elimination of the statistics requirement or a set of F outcomes. In November 2014 I was being constantly assured by a member of the executive that something like this was surely in the offing. For reasons unknown, this changed by the start of December, and here we stand today. I suggest the EC revisit these options.

I don't think I have to tell you that the MFA has suffered a very black eye over this affair. You'll only deepen the bruise by prolonging the agony. I suggest you use the seven days you have to bring this crisis to an end so we can all put this horrible process behind us.

Sincerely,
Dave Koukal

----- Original Message -----

From: "Noah S. Resnick" <resnicns@udmercy.edu>

Date: Thursday, September 10, 2015 10:04 am

Subject: C3 in the New Core

To: David R Koukal <koukaldr@udmercy.edu>, Todd Hibbard <hibbardja@udmercy.edu>, James B Tubbs <tubbsjb@udmercy.edu>, Simon Joseph Hendry <hendrysi@udmercy.edu>, Elizabeth A Oljar <oljarea@udmercy.edu>, "Hu, Hsiao-Lin" <hhu@udmercy.edu>

Cc: Jocelyn Bennett-Garraway <begarrjm@udmercy.edu>, Matthew John Mio <mjomj@udmercy.edu>, Stephanie B Conant <conantsb@udmercy.edu>

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<tr><td style="word-wrap: break-word; -webkit-nbsp-mode: space; -webkit-line-break: after-white-space; color: rgb(0, 0, 0); font-size: 14px;"><p><div>Good morning,</div><div>

</div><div><div style="font-size: medium;">Thank you again for your continued efforts
to work with the Exec on a solution to the issue of depth for Religion and Philosophy in the
new core. We all felt that the last meeting was very productive, and that the
C3 strategy was a well-balanced way forward.</div><div style="font-size: medium;">

</div><div style="font-size: medium;">The Exec has worked directly with a number of
degree programs that have tighter overall credit counts, in an attempt to reconcile their
programs with this latest proposal. Unfortunately, a number of them are
unable to work the added C3 into their curriculums in a way that satisfies the intent of the
proposal.</div><div style="font-size: medium;">
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medium;">We are confident that there is a workable way of accomplishing our goals – and
we will discuss the possibilities for finding this way at our next MFA meeting on the 17th,
but this will not include the C3 strategy at this time.</div><div style="font-size: medium;">

</div><div style="font-size: medium;">Regards,</div><div style="font-size: medium;">

</div><div style="font-size: medium;">Noah Resnick</div><div style="font-size:
medium;">Interim President, MFA Executive Committee</div></div><div style="font-size:
medium;"><div><span style="color: rgb(33, 33, 33); font-family: Calibri, Verdana,
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Associate Professor
<span style="color: rgb(33, 33, 33); font-family:
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Arial; font-size: 15px; background-color: rgb(255, 255, 255);">urban-detail.com
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Ite inflamate omnia

- St. Ignatius of Loyola