

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **CONCERNING FULTON CURRICULUM REFORM**

1. Why is the Fulton School reforming its curriculum, its curriculum delivery system, and its teaching load?

The Fulton School is becoming a 4-credit course model school, with reformed curricula in every program, and a 3/3 (as opposed to 4/4) teaching load (see question #4 below for more details) so that the School might provide *all* Salisbury University students taking Fulton courses—via majors, minors, Gen Ed and electives—with an *enhanced, deeper, more focused, more engaged, and more rigorous learning experience* than we have been able to offer via the more traditional 3-credit course model and with our faculty teaching four such courses per semester.

As the School's March 2007 proposal states, “[w]e also believe that adoption of the 4-credit model and the changes in both student and faculty focus [will] *invigorate the liberal arts* at SU and *revolutionize* how both students *and* faculty work—and *work together*—in the Fulton School setting.”

2. What is the benefit for students?

In a nutshell, and as stated above, the benefit for students will be an *enhanced, deeper, more focused, more engaged, and more rigorous learning experience*—that's what we are aiming for in each and every Fulton course and program with this reform. Students will take fewer Fulton courses across the board (see the question on Gen Ed/majors/minors below), *but* they will earn more credit for each one *and* have more opportunity to focus and engage themselves in each course. Virtually all Fulton courses will be *enhanced* and in many cases completely redesigned in a variety of ways that will allow students not only to experience *more course content* but, in many cases, to work with that content in *different* ways, frequently via *independent* out-of-class work. Also, Fulton faculty will teach fewer courses/sections per semester and have fewer overall students and will therefore be able to give the students they have more attention, via everything from more feedback on assignments to individual mentoring on research, writing and other work.

3. How and why will students be taking fewer Fulton courses?

To accommodate the 4-credit course model, the English/History/Humanities/Social Sciences groups of SU's Gen Ed program have been collectively reduced from ten 3-credit courses, or 30 credits, to seven 4-credit courses, or 28 credits (or 26 or 27 credits, for students who might choose one or two non-Fulton, 3-credit Economics or Human Geography courses). The typical Fulton major will go from 12 courses (36 credits) to 10 courses (40 credits), while most Fulton minors will go from 6 courses (18 credits) to 5 courses (20 credits). Students will need to take fewer individual Fulton courses to earn the same number of credits (say, three 4-credit courses instead of four 3-credit courses to earn 12 credits), and in some cases (majors/minors), they will take *fewer* courses and

actually earn *more* overall credits. Bottom line, though, students—via majors, minors, Gen Ed—will take fewer Fulton courses; this should allow them to focus more on each one.

4. What is the benefit for faculty?

This reform is first and foremost about the benefit it brings to our students, but, clearly, an integral part of delivering the aforementioned benefit to our students is reconfiguring faculty teaching load. Instead of teaching four 3-credit courses/sections per semester, Fulton faculty will teach three 4-credit course/sections. Fulton faculty will teach both fewer courses/sections and fewer students per semester, and in most cases, though they will still teach 12 credits per semester, they will do so via 9 hours of in-class time (since it is anticipated that most faculty will enhance their classes from 3 credits to 4 via an option other than extra seat time). All of this will allow Fulton faculty to *focus* more on the courses/sections they teach and the students therein. This improved focus should help in everything from the development of new course content and innovations in pedagogy to the aforementioned additional attention to and mentoring of students.

5. So this isn't a reduction in teaching load?

It is a *reconfiguration* of teaching load, one that, particularly once faculty adjust to it, should benefit both students (the main target of the reform) and faculty alike, and in so doing further enhance the Fulton and SU academic communities.

6. So this reform will require some adjustment?

No doubt, and for both students and faculty. Students will not only need to adjust to courses that require more of them in general, but most courses will require much more independent work and learning on their part, and many courses will ask them to engage the content of the course in new and different ways, both in class and out. Faculty may initially find that the reconfiguration of teaching load requires more work per course than they anticipated, but the reduction of one course/section per semester, and the reduction in the number of students with whom they work, should absorb most of the extra work, even in the initial transition period. In the short-term, this will indeed be an adjustment for both current students and faculty, but in the long-term, this reform has the goal of revolutionizing, and in the positive, as the March 2007 proposal states, “how both students *and* faculty work—*and work together*—in the Fulton School setting.”

7. When does the Fulton Curriculum Reform begin?

It begins in fall 2007 with the launch of three “pilot” programs: Art, Philosophy and Political Science. The rest of Fulton is currently targeted to follow in fall 2008.

8. When will the non-“pilot” Fulton departments and programs submit their reform paperwork?

As currently planned, this will happen in fall 2007, following the timetable listed under “Documents” on this Web site.

9. What do I need to do, as a Fulton faculty member?

In a nutshell, you need to participate in your department’s redesign of its curriculum/curricula, and you need to figure out how you will *enhance* the courses you regularly teach, as well as, perhaps, other courses, as determined by your department.

10. What does *enhancing* my courses mean?

In the most basic sense, it means moving your courses from their current status and value (work- and credit-wise) as 3-credit courses to 4-credit courses, but you are encouraged to go beyond that and take this opportunity to revisit your courses and more fully redesign them (more on this below).

11. What are my options regarding *enhancing* my courses?

You must choose one or more of the options listed in the *Fulton Curriculum Reform Course Enhancement Menu*, which appears below and elsewhere on the Fulton Curriculum Reform Web site:

One-credit Course Enhancements:

1. **Increased course content and/or collateral readings** (*e.g.*, more primary, secondary and/or supplemental readings).
2. **Undergraduate Research and Information Literacy** (*e.g.*, assignments that fulfill department programmatic approaches to undergraduate research and information literacy, systematically building students’ research and writing skills throughout their majors).
3. **Technology** (*e.g.*, instructor-developed content, commercially developed course packs, digital audio—podcasting—video demonstrations, chat rooms, course blogs, individual WebCT tutoring, teleconferences with students at other campuses or international groups, field research, student-authored independent research).
4. **Higher Level Critical Thinking Exercises** (*e.g.*, assignments that specifically develop analysis, synthesis and evaluation, as opposed to lower-level critical thinking exercises that target knowledge, comprehension and application).
5. **Service Learning/Civic Engagement** (*e.g.*, assignments which place students in leadership positions to conceive of and implement programs that they know will benefit others; assignments which will involve students in developing good civic dispositions, as suggested in the 2006 *Middle States Report*).
6. **International Education/Cultural Enrichment** (*e.g.*, spring break study/experience abroad, museum visits, cultural experiences within our geographical area).

7. **Additional hour(s) in class, lab or studio.**

The Menu cannot be read, however, nor can you consider which option(s) to choose, without also considering the State of Maryland COMAR regulations that determine how much student work/time is required in order to equal one additional credit hour for your course. Those student work/time requirements, as they correspond to each Enhancement Menu Option, are listed below. Keep in mind that the “Requirements” column speaks of the student work/time required for one credit, so *this work/time must be above and beyond what you would currently require in the 3-credit version of your course*. In all but the last two categories listed below (additional class, lab or studio time), the “additional hours” are out-of-class hours (notice that Technology lists no particular timeframe; Technology is most often employed as a vehicle for execution of one of the other enhancement options).

Enhancement	COMAR Regulation	Requirements
Increased course content and/or collateral readings	(.16.C.1.c.)	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.
Undergraduate Research and Information Literacy	(.16.C.1.c. and/or d.)	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning and/or supervised instruction and documented learning through appropriate technology mediums.
Technology	(.16.C.1.d.)	Supervised instruction and documented learning through appropriate technology mediums.
Higher Level Critical Thinking Exercises (analysis, synthesis and evaluation)	(.16.C.1.c. and/or d.)	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning and/or supervised instruction and documented learning through appropriate technology mediums.
Service Learning/Civic Engagement	(.16.C.1.c.)	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.
International Education/Cultural Enrichment	(.16.C.1.c.)	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.
Additional hour(s) in class	(.16.C.1.a.)	Additional 15 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.
Additional hour(s) in lab or studio	(.16.C.1.b.)	Additional 30 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.

12. What does “supervised, documented learning” mean in the COMAR grid?

In the most basic sense, it means that you must make the assignment(s), you must monitor progress, as appropriate, and you must evaluate the student’s work (for example, via journals, papers, presentations, exams, etc.), *and* the work related to the enhancement(s) in question must be part of the course grade configuration, either via a separate grading category (or categories) or as a portion of multiple grading categories, or

both (whichever is most appropriate for the course). In general, the enhancement package of your course should represent 25% of the course grade.

13. Let's say I choose Option #1: Increased Course Content and/or Collateral Readings. As I look at the 45-hour per semester requirement, how do I determine how many hours it will take my students to do the assignments I would make in this category?

You have to use your best professional judgment. How long should it take for a student to do the assignments you would make in this category? Consider, very thoughtfully, the nature and difficulty of each of the assignments you would make, and, again, use your best professional judgment. Some students may take longer, and others may take less time, just as some students may do the assignment very well, and some may do it very poorly, in part based on the time they put into it, but how long *should* it take? That's the question you have to ask yourself, based on your years of experience. There is also a Web site that addresses this, in general terms. That site should be posted here very shortly, if you would like to refer to it.

14. Let's say I choose three of the options that require the additional 45 hours of work/time. Even though I have chosen three such options, I'm really only aiming at a total of 45 hours, right, not 135 total hours?

Right, if you choose three options that require 45 additional hours, you only need to fashion and divide the assignments in such way that you meet the 45 additional hours requirement. You might attach 15 additional hours to each option, or you, obviously, might distribute less evenly; whatever works best pedagogically and still gets your total to 45 additional hours.

15. Is it possible that options might overlap, and if they do, how does the work/time count?

It's very possible that options will overlap. It's possible, for example, that additional work assigned in a course might fit into *both* Option #1: Increased Course Content and/or Collateral Readings and Option #2: Undergraduate Research and Information Literacy, but the work/time involved (in this case toward the 45 additional hours total) would only count once.

16. What if I choose two options that have different "additional hours" requirements, such as Option #1: Increased Course Content and/or Collateral Readings and Option #7: Additional class, lab or studio time?

This will be pretty rare, as additional class time will usually (but not always) mean 15 hours (an extra hour per week), and that will take care of the entire 4th-credit piece of the pie for that course, and the same goes for additional lab/studio time (requiring 30 such hours), in most cases. It is possible, however, to have a mix of, say, the two options mentioned in the question, if the additional class/lab/studio time is less than the full-

semester required total, and in such cases, appropriate math considerations would come into play. If, say, a course had only seven additional class hours during the semester (essentially one extra hour every other week), it would only meet 47% of the COMAR requirement for that option (Option #7) and would need to get the other 53% from Option #1 (based on the scenario in the question), which it would do via 24 additional hours of Option #1-related work/time. This, again, would probably be a rare case, but it's certainly workable.

17. Let's say I do a field trip of some kind that falls into the category of Option #6: International Education/Cultural Enrichment. How would that count in the COMAR requirements?

In the first place, we must return to the premise that all of this work/time and activities we are talking about here, if they are to count toward the 4th-credit, no matter how much they may otherwise enhance your course, must be *above and beyond the work/time involved in a/the 3-credit version of the same course* (this doesn't mean that you can't incorporate such things into your course, in the spirit of the overall reform, even if they don't count toward the 4th-credit, but the question is related to the 4th credit piece). That said, with respect to field trips, say, to x museum in Washington, DC, for example, only the time spent in the museum and other time in which instruction/learning is involved (someone asked about holding class in the van on the way to the museum) would count. In other words, the time involved in the trip itself would not count (unless the instructor were, in fact, holding class in the van, and only that time of the trip would count). Lunch would not count, either, and so on. Time in the museum might count as lab time does (two hours equals one hour of class), depending, perhaps, on the actual level of instruction involved. Holding class in the van would almost certainly count as the equivalent of class time. Field trips, though, including trips abroad, while very much encouraged in the reformed curriculum and enhanced courses, are often bit of a mix regarding what times counts toward which COMAR regulations and how. Faculty considering this option are encouraged to contact their department chairs for help in determining how to figure the time and credit factors.

18. Do I need to do anything to enhance my course(s) beyond adding x enhancement piece(s)?

Technically, no, but you are strongly encouraged to incorporate the enhancement piece(s) and work associated with it/them into your course as fully as possible so that the enhancement isn't simply a "side-car" component to your formerly 3-credit course (though in some cases that may indeed be the best fit; it depends on the course). Also, the Fulton reform presents an opportunity to rethink our courses, whether we have been teaching them for two years or 32 years, so there's nothing that says that reform of our courses must begin and end simply with the enhancement piece(s). This reform presents, really, a once-in-a-professional-lifetime opportunity, and all faculty are encouraged to approach their courses with this spirit of reform, even revolution, in mind.

19. If I have chosen my enhancement option(s) and have worked everything out regarding my assignments and the COMAR regulations, what do I do now?

You need to begin to prepare your reformed syllabus packet for submission to the appropriate curriculum committees. (If the course in question is scheduled to be offered in fall 2008, your packet will go forward to the aforementioned committees along with your department's overall reform package; if the course is scheduled to be offered during a later semester, then it will go forward later, on a schedule determined by the School in order to meeting the curriculum committees' deadlines. In either case, you will be working through your department on this.) Your packet, as of August 10, 2007, must contain the following items:

- 1) a Reformed Syllabus Cover Sheet—this UCC-developed and UCC-required cover sheet is available in an easy-to-use “form-fill” WORD file under the “Documents” section of this Web site.
- 2) A “before” syllabus from your previous offering of the course in question as a 3-credit course.
- 3) An “after” syllabus in which all changes and enhancements are **bolded**.
- 4) All reformed, or “after,” syllabi must also contain a universal Fulton statement concerning the Reform and the fact the course bearing this statement fits into said reform. This statement will be available to all Fulton faculty by late August, at the latest.

20. What if reform of my course goes well beyond the enhancement piece? Do the rules of engagement change?

It depends on what you mean by “well beyond the enhancement piece.” If reform of your course does not merit changing the course's title and/or its catalog description, then you can follow the steps and procedure described above. If your reform so significantly changes your course that its current/past title and description no longer apply, then you must follow the usual curriculum change paperwork to make changes to the course, or submit it as a completely new course.

21. What if I don't have a “before” syllabus because the enhanced course I am proposing has never existed as a 3-credit course at SU (or at least it doesn't now)?

In this case you simply propose the course, via the usual paperwork, as a “New Course.” You still, though, have to make the case for it being worth 4 credits, and in doing so you might explain how this course differs from a more traditional 3-credit version of the same course. Use of the Menu Options and the COMAR regulations would likely be helpful, if not necessary. And you would still need to include the universal Fulton statement concerning the Reform mentioned above in #19.

22. Why are we having two day-long Fulton Curriculum Reform workshops on August 17 and 20?

The workshops are designed to get all of Fulton off to a running start as the School, each department, and Fulton faculty head, together, into a fall semester full of reform discussions, decisions, paperwork and submission deadlines. The workshops are specifically designed to introduce all Fulton faculty to the various Enhancement Options. On-campus experts and resource people for each option will be there to talk about how various ways the options might be worked into a course, as well as to talk about the logistics of doing so. Members of the Fulton Curriculum Reform Summer Group will also be at the workshops to show and discuss examples of how they propose to incorporate x enhancement(s) into one or more of their courses. There will also be a panel of representatives from both FCC and UCC to discuss syllabus and other paperwork issues. Naturally, there will be a session on the Menu and COMAR, as well as multiple Q & A sessions, all capped off by significant “department time,” as requested by Chairs, so that each department might get a head-start on the Tuesday, August 21, curriculum reform-related department meetings.

23. Why are we also having day-long department meetings on August 21, following the August 17/20 curriculum reform workshops?

August 21 has been set aside, and meeting rooms have been reserved, so that all Fulton departments may meet and continue (from last year) to discuss and work out their plans for reforming their various programs’ curricula as they head toward the aforementioned submission deadlines (those listed on the aforementioned timetable). All of this, both the workshops and the department meetings are scheduled in August and designed to give both Fulton departments and faculty a chance to get a jump on the work—and the paperwork—of reform before the semester begins, as the deadlines will come very quickly.