PROPOSAL TO LIMIT CAS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS TO 100 WORDS

Proposed Revision
The Curriculum Committee proposes that course descriptions for first-year writing seminars continue to be longer than for regular courses and in sentence form, but no more than 100 words. Descriptions may still include enlightenment about the way they will be conducted, the works to be read, and other special features such as field trips, as long as such information falls within the new 100-word limit. Because all seminars involve discussion, writing, and use of the library, it is not necessary to mention these features.

Current Guideline for Course Descriptions for First-Year Writing Seminars

Space for describing First-Year Writing Seminars is not as limited as the space in the Undergraduate Catalog. Descriptions of these seminars do not appear in the Catalog, so they may—and—should—be slightly longer than descriptions of other courses. Because the audience is that of recent high school graduates, descriptions of First-Year Writing Seminars may include information on the way they will be conducted, the works to be read, and other interesting aspects such as field trips.

Rationale

Requiring more concision in descriptions of first-year writing seminars will encourage faculty to express their ideas about proposed courses in the same form and length as scholarly abstracts. Because compact descriptions require stronger conceptualization and more editing to emphasize the central ideas, the result will be more pleasing and stimulating to students. Additionally, shorter descriptions will be friendlier to everyone using the new electronic formats in which all courses increasingly appear in the University, including the College’s online-registration system, YES.

A three-year transition will reduce the burden of rewriting existing descriptions. In the first year, all new descriptions must comply with the new guideline to be scheduled. In year two, existing non-conforming descriptions should be recast. By year three, all descriptions would have to conform to the new standard.