

Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts
Summary Argument & Petition to the Academic Senate
30 April, 2014

I. Background

A. Since 1964, SMC graduates of the Integral Curriculum have received the degree (separately conferred by the Board of Trustees), Bachelor of Arts in the [Integrated] Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts.

B. Through AY 2011–12 (hence, for the graduating classes of 2014 and 2015), the requirements for the degree include: 29 required Integral courses (8 Seminars, 8 Mathematics Tutorials, 8 Language Tutorials, 4 Laboratories, 1 Music Tutorial¹); the Senior Essay (recorded as a separate, graded 0.25 course); four January Term courses; 3 electives (one of which may be a second Music Tutorial).

C. From the promulgation of the Program’s Constitution (1964), and through 2012, the College offered the Integral Curriculum as an explicit, radical *alternative* to every form of “major–core/breadth/general education requirements/*etc.*–elective” undergraduate curriculum pursued at SMC over that period.²

(a) The 1964–2012 Curriculum is *integral* in the sense that the tutorial structure is ordered to promote the Seminar’s open, unqualified—metastrophic—conversational inquiries into the great books.³

(b) The Curriculum is a *radical alternative* to the core [breadth]–major–elective paradigm(s) of liberal arts education: that is, it is designedly, *ante*-disciplinary, alike incommensurable with ‘great ideas’ curricula and with ‘orchestrated’ disciplinary studies.⁴

D. Since January, 2009, on the basis of the degree described in B., above, the Integral Curriculum has been a nationally accredited member of the American Academy for Liberal Education (the Program’s first “Mid-Term Report” to the Academy was filed on 31 March, 2014⁵).

II. Core Curriculum Committee’s May 1st, 15th, 2013, Findings

A. As reported to the Director and Instruction Committee⁶ (hereafter, IC) in “CCC Meetings May 1st, 15th, 2013: Notes on the Integral Program Proposal,”⁷ the Core Curriculum Committee established **(1)** core equivalences for students transferring from the Program into conventional curricula of the College after one or more semesters of study in the Program, and **(2)** core equivalences for students who, having completed the Integral

¹ As a ‘great books’ curriculum, the Program is, fundamentally, an integrated reading list (attached).

² Cf. “Response,” (7), pp. 9–12.

³ Cf. “Response,” (11), pp. 14–20.

⁴ Cf. “Response,” (8)–(10), pp. 12–14.

⁵ The “Mid-Term Report” is on file with the Academic Senate.

⁶ The Integral Curriculum is governed by a Constitution under which an elected Instruction Committee governs academic policy, with a Director as its chair and executive; the Director also fulfills the duties of a Program Director, reporting to the Dean, School of Liberal Arts.

⁷ For a chronology of exchanges between the Integral Program and Core Curriculum Committee, cf. “Response,” pp. 2–5.

Curriculum, would be candidates for the degree Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts.⁸

(a) The IC does not request Senate review of the CCC's findings under **(1)**; that is (as the IC and tutors' note in the "Response"): "the Committee's findings [*sc.* concerning students leaving the Program for alternative studies at SMC] are, generally, well and generously judged *given that the students in question will be candidates for an SMC degree articulated according to the core-major-elective paradigm.*"⁹

B. The CCC's findings under **(2)** provide that, in addition to the 29 Integral courses and Senior Essay, candidates for the Integral B.A. must complete the Core requirements for Engaging the World: American Diversity (1 course), Community Engagement (1 course/experience), and Global Perspectives (1 course) outcomes; and must complete the Core requirements for the Pathways to Knowledge: Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding (2 courses) outcomes, *i.e.*, 5 courses/course equivalents. These provisions effectively disestablish, by *fiat*, the Integral Curriculum's standing, nationally accredited, degree, a degree whose requirements are not—and, since the Integral Program's inception, have not been—articulated according to the core-major-elective paradigm.

Hence, while the IC and the Program's tutors at large contest the cogency of (many of) the CCC's particular findings,¹⁰ the tutors' and the IC's reasons for this application to the Academic Senate go to **(α)** the coherence of the Integral Curriculum *in toto*, and to the integrity of the degree, Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts, to **(β)** the Program's appropriate academic autonomy, and to **(γ)** academic equity for students who elect and complete the Program.

III. Effects and Implications of the CCC's May 1st, 15th, 2013, Findings

The character of the Integral Curriculum as a standing, *ante-disciplinary* alternative to liberal education on the core-major-elective paradigm renders it incommensurable with the disciplinary architecture adopted by the Senate as proximate ends—that is, as Learning Outcomes—instrumental to the revised Core's Learning Goals.¹¹ The Curriculum can only be forced—by *fiat*, and at ruinous cost to its coherence—into nominal conformity with that architecture. To repeat: the CCC's findings amount to such a *fiat*.

A. Re: **(α)**: *The CCC's decisions effectively disestablish the degree (1964–2012), Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts* (awarded for completion of the requirements given in **I. B.**, above), and replace it, *de novo*, with a degree predicated upon (i) a substantial minority of existing Integral courses that the Committee deems—on criteria that discount the Program's Constitution (1964), aims, and methods—to meet Core Outcomes within the several Learning Goals,¹² on (ii) a majority of existing Integral courses that, in the CCC's

⁸ "CCC Meetings May 1st, 15th, 2013: Notes on the Integral Program Proposal" is attached as an indispensable reference.

⁹ "Response," (1), p 5.

¹⁰ Cf. "Response," (13)–(16), pp. 23–32.

¹¹ Cf. "Response," (8)–(11), pp. 12–20.

¹² Cf. "CCC Meetings May 1st, 15th, 2013: Notes on the Integral Program Proposal," thus: INTEG 011, 012, 113, 114 [Freshman and Sophomore Seminars] for Habits of Mind: Collegiate Seminar 001, 002, 103, 104; INTEG 031 [Freshman Mathematics Tutorial] for Pathways to Knowledge: Mathematical Understanding; INTEG 071–072 [Freshman Laboratory] for Pathways: Scientific Understanding; INTEG 074, 155, 156 [Music Tutorial, Junior Language Tutorial] for Pathways: Artistic Understanding; INTEG 113–114 for Pathways: Theological Understanding (Christian Foundations); "the first two years of the Program" (in view of "extensive reading of

view, are not germane to the Core Goals and Outcomes,¹³ and (iii) on the additional 5 disciplinary courses/equivalents detailed in **II. B.**, above.

At a stroke, the Program is thus transformed from “a special community [of learning] with its own curriculum, requirement, faculty and degree”¹⁴ into a 29.25-course “major.” Its degree is transformed into a pastiche of CCC-accredited courses, of purely “major” courses—all *ante*-disciplinary in conception and conduct—and of disciplinary Core courses to which students must resort catch as catch can.¹⁵ Therewith, to boot, the grounds of the Integral Curriculum’s national accreditation are thrown into question.

B. Re: **(β)**: *The CCC’s decisions undermine the academic integrity of the Integral Curriculum.* Accreditation of “courses/experiences” to the Core is subject to periodic review by the CCC; if, then, as the CCC’s decisions entail, this rule is to apply to the Integral Curriculum *in toto* (as it applies to disciplinary courses offered for inclusion in the Core), the Curriculum and the requirements for its degree will be subject to on-going revision by the CCC. In stark contrast, the revised Core leaves the major requirements for the degree in all other departments and programs to the academic judgment of their, respective, faculties. Uniquely, the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts are, on the CCC’s view, to be annexed in substantial part by that Committee, and the Program’s tutors and IC are to be deprived of the ordinary academic autonomy exercised by the faculty of the College’s more conventional majors and programs.

C. Re: **(α)** and **(β)**: *The CCC’s findings on “mis-alignment” of the Integral Curriculum with the Core go beyond subject matters to the Program’s very raison d’être.* By way of illustration: although the Committee found “substantial readings in the Senior Seminar and Junior Language courses that fall broadly within the goals of American Diversity,” the Committee declined to credit 4-year students of the Program with the AD outcome, since topics on the order of “power and privilege . . . do not necessarily occur [sc. in the milieu of seminar or tutorial inquiry].”¹⁶ The CCC’s dispositive reservation appears to be: unless the outcomes enunciated for the Core are thematized *prescriptively*, they cannot be *accounted* as realized. This criterion reads the *ante*-disciplinary character of great books education—conversational inquiry into primary texts, in the *texts’* terms, that is, an *unqualified* coming to terms with the texts—out of the Core Curriculum, and with it the characteristic practice of the Integral Program.¹⁷

D. Re: **(γ)**: *The CCC’s decisions create disparate burdens for Integral students.* Students who complete the 4-year Integral Curriculum are accorded three long-term electives: one in the

natural theology”) for Pathways: Theological Understanding (Theological Explorations); INTEG 011–118 [Integral Freshman–Senior Seminars] for Engaging the World: Common Good.

¹³ INTEG 032, 133–138 [Freshman Mathematics (2nd semester), Sophomore–Senior Mathematics Tutorials], INTEG 051–054, 157–158 [Freshman–Sophomore, Senior Language Tutorials], INTEG 178–179 [“Physics & Chemistry,” “Evolution, Heredity & Genetics” Laboratories] (or 16 of the Program’s 29 full courses).

¹⁴ Cf. the College’s website: <<<http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/node/4152>>>.

¹⁵ Cf., “Response,” (6), pp. 8–9.

¹⁶ Cf. “CCC Meetings May 1st, 15th, 2013: Notes on the Integral Program Proposal,” p. 4.

¹⁷ Moreover, the Committee’s reasoning appears flatly arbitrary: *e.g.*, the Committee found, without ado, that the Program meets the revised Core’s Common Good outcomes on the strength of students’ conversational inquiries into the *Oresteia*, *Antigone*, *Republic*, *Politics*, *et alia*; but there is no more (or less) a guarantee that “fulfillment in community,” “just social order” or “concrete social problems” [cf. Senate Action S-10/11-09: “Common Good Learning Outcomes,” 24 March, 2011] must guide conversational inquiry into the latter than there is a guarantee that “power and privilege” must guide conversational inquiry into *Huckleberry Finn* or *The Fire Next Time* (both read in the Senior Seminar).

(Spring term) Sophomore year, one in each long term of the Senior year. In order to meet the CCC's requirements within a 36-course program, these students *must* elect two "double-dip," "Social, Historical, Cultural – Global Perspectives" or "SHC – American Diversity" courses. (Additionally, a "Community Engagement" course/experience must be fit into a long term or a January Term.) In 2013–14, four such courses were offered in the Fall and seven in the Spring term, at times that did not conflict with Integral requirements (setting aside possible conflicts with work schedules, athletics, *etc.*). Of these eleven courses, seven were in the discipline of history (two in anthropology, two in sociology), all but three (HIST 138, Fall; 141, 142, Spring, all offered in alternate years) were in the lower division, and (excepting HIST 17–18) all were at the introductory level. Consequently:

(a) Merely by *electing* the Integral Curriculum, students are placed in a "do or die" graduation scenario, a state of affairs their colleagues in major disciplines could "achieve" only by egregiously mismanaging their programs of study; the CCC's decisions thus conjure up a powerful disincentive for students considering the Program;

(b) In the name of promoting a "solid foundation of *integrated* and *developmental* learning"¹⁸ the Program's seniors—in the last stages of a fully integrated, sequential curriculum, and without regard to their developed scholarly interests—are required to elect studies from a restricted list of (overwhelmingly) *introductory* courses;

(c) Integral students are precluded from seeking a minor (as a non-negligible number, especially those with ESP standing, do) or other, unqualifiedly elective, enrichment of their studies.

IV. Reflections on the Decisions of a Senate Committee

The CCC expressly understands its decisions—the *de novo* re-establishment of the Integral Curriculum, *in toto*, in relation to the Core; the re-drawing of the Integral degree—to be imperative in light of Senate Action S-10/11-09 and the consequent *Faculty Handbook* language at 1.7.4.13.¹⁹ In the CCC's view, then, the effects wrought on the Integral Curriculum—the deconstruction of the Program's degree [III. A.], abridgement of its academic autonomy [III., B.], discounting of its aims and methods [III., C.], and the disadvantages levied on a small group of Saint Mary's students—attach as unfortunate epiphenomena to the Committee's fulfillment of its Senate charge.

Neither in the record of the Senate's proceedings pertaining to revision of the Core Curriculum, nor in the record of the UEPC's proceedings, does there appear any consideration of the status of the Integral Curriculum or of the degree, Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts. Did the Academic Senate, then, or the UEPC, inadvertently or tacitly mandate re-establishment of the Integral Curriculum on the Core

¹⁸ *Undergraduate Catalog of Courses, 2013–2014*, p. 52 (emphases added).

¹⁹ Sauerberg to Cortright and the Instruction Committee, 2 April, 2014 (in relevant part): "More expansively, the CCC is attempting to act within the bounds set for us by the Academic Senate. It is our understanding that all undergraduate programs are within our authority, including the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts. If our colleagues in the Integral Program feel otherwise, or feel that our authority with respect to the Program should be limited in particular ways, we surely respect their desire to take those issues to the Senate. It was not clear to us what assistance we could provide (we happen to believe that the situation is clear) but are open to suggestions and in general wish to support our colleagues in their efforts on behalf of our students. . . . In the absence of a new, official action by the Senate, the CCC feels obligated to proceed according to the previous actions of the Senate that created the new Core for Saint Mary's undergraduates, without noting exception."

Curriculum Committee's authority and remaking of the Integral degree on the pattern of core-major-elective studies? To pose the question is to illustrate the absurdity of the notion: academic governance exists to ensure that significant changes to established curricula are intentional, that is, result from explicit, deliberative procedures which involve all stakeholders. Moreover, in the usual courses of academic life, the disestablishment of a standing curriculum's nationally accredited degree, and the abrogation of its faculty's ordinary academic autonomy, would follow not upon the routine workings of a standing academic committee, but only upon an explicit finding, after due process, of serious academic dysfunction.

Is the Integral Curriculum—in light of the expressed purposes of the College's revised Core Curriculum—dysfunctional? The tutors of the Integral program would submit to the Senate (as, in the accompanying "Response," the tutors submitted to the Core Curriculum Committee) the proposition that the Program is not dysfunctional, but *functions differently* to promote "a common experience of rigorous, integrated intellectual development," characterized by "genuine inquiry," and apt to enable students "to contribute meaningfully to community life."²⁰ Since Senate Action S-10/11-09, the Program has graduated some 50 Bachelors of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts. They have numbered, thus far, 5 Lasallian Volunteers (serving in Chicago, NY, Colombia) and volunteers for Teach for America (NY), Bon Secours and St. Stephen's Ministries (Baltimore, Minneapolis), a Maronite seminarian and a postulant to Brothers of the Christian Schools. A third of these students have completed or are pursuing, post-baccalaureate professional or academic studies: law students at Golden Gate (2), CUA, George Washington University, and American University; MS/MAs earned in Counseling (USC), Civil and Environmental Engineering (U. Washington), Leadership (SMC), Education (SMC); MATs in progress at UC Davis and SMC; MA/MSs in progress in philosophy (DSPT), humanities (University of Zurich, Dominican, Norfolk), two in theology (Boston College, MTS), public administration (UC), pre-Columbian archaeology (U. Arizona), Counseling (PAU); doctoral study in progress in mathematics (U. Iowa); three more are in post-baccalaureate studies, preparing for medicine.

The tutors submit that the Program's graduates—the conduct of their lives, their accomplishments—recommend that the Program's *ante-disciplinary* "otherness" should be respected. As it stands, the Program is a platform for achievement in disciplinary studies at the graduate and professional levels and an *armamentarium* for deliberate contribution to community life through the ascending spheres of common goods. As it appears to the tutors, the question for the Academic Senate is whether the College's vision of liberal education is still generous enough to entertain a radically alternative way to the common end.

V. Petition

The tutors and Instruction Committee of the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts respectfully request that the Academic Senate reaffirm the College's historical recognition of the Program as "a special community of learning with its own curriculum, requirements, faculty and degree" by adopting this

Resolution: (1) The Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts is exempted from the purview of the Core Curriculum Committee; (2) the requirements for the degree, Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts, are reaffirmed as given in

²⁰ *Undergraduate Catalog of Courses, 2013–2014*, pp. 51–52; cf. "Response," (12), pp. 20–23.

the *Undergraduate Catalog of Courses, 2013 - 2014*, p. 143, with the following amendments:²¹ “As a separate curriculum, the program offers a bachelor’s degree proper to it. The degree is granted for the successful completion of the eight seminars, the eight tutorials in mathematics, the eight in language, the four laboratories, a tutorial in music and the senior essay. Note that the College requires further the successful completion of four January courses and sufficient electives to bring the total to 36 courses. ~~Those completing the first two years of the program have fulfilled all requirements of the College in general education, except English and two January courses.~~ Students who withdraw from the program prior to its completion will have fulfilled a number of the College’s Core Curriculum requirements, according to a schedule of equivalences determined by the College’s Core Curriculum Committee.” (3) Any subsequent modification of the requirements for the degree, Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts, will be advanced through the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee, in accordance with the *Faculty Handbook*, 1.7.4.5.1.f.

Respectfully submitted,

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²¹ Addition underscored; deletion struck out.