Cluster Proposal

Date of Proposal: _____   Department Submitting: _____

Proposed by: _____   Email Address: _____

(The person proposing the course will be contacted after the Curriculum Committee reviews the proposal)

Proposed Cluster Title: _____

(Maximum 60 characters. Title should be specifically descriptive: this is what students will first encounter when seeking a cluster.)

Cluster Convener: _____

(Please choose one instructor who is participating in the cluster to convene it. Courses in clusters may need to be coordinated and tended to upon occasion. The Convener will be point person for this cluster and may be contacted if questions about the cluster are raised.)

Guidelines for Clusters

At least 6 of the 8-9 units that students must complete in each of the 4 designated distribution areas must be drawn from an approved course cluster. A completed major or minor will fulfill a cluster requirement; in certain cases, major and minor programs may fulfill cluster requirements in two areas. (See "proposal for assignment of a major or minor to a distribution area.)

This requirement is a mechanism for securing greater **coherence** in the courses students take outside the major and for enabling students to make greater use of upper-level courses in meeting their distribution requirements. In addition, the **system** of clusters promises to provide students curricular guidance: clusters should indicate what the faculty regard as especially important intellectually pathways linking courses and subject areas within and across fields.

Note: It is recommended that clusters contain at least three related courses, so that students may plan to fulfill the required minimum of 8-9 units in a designated distribution area through linked courses. Providing additional options of linked courses also will allow students more flexibility and mitigates problems that may be posed by schedule conflicts or classes closed because of enrollment limits. For these reasons, the Curriculum Committee encourages cluster designers to include more courses than the two required to satisfy the minimal requirement, whenever possible.

Criteria

It is less important that clusters conform to a set of structural patterns than that they meet certain qualitative standards. The most important of these is that clusters should have **undeniably greater value than the sum of their parts:** the "added value" requirement.

To meet this basic requirement of added value, courses in a cluster should have:

1. obvious or easily explicable ***mutual relevance***;

2. ***coordinated content***: instructors of clustered courses should know what the content and methods of other courses in the cluster area are; and

3. ***core significance****:* clusters should emphasize topics, texts, subject matters, bodies of scholarship, and forms of practice that faculty regard as especially important components of a liberal arts curriculum.

In addition, we strongly recommend that:
▪   clusters be designed around courses that are offered on a regular basis;
▪   clusters include a small-group learning component, wherever possible;
▪   faculty construct clusters that bridge disciplines, wherever possible;
▪   faculty consider requiring, where pedagogically appropriate, that the courses in certain clusters be taken simultaneously or in contiguous semesters.

Cluster Proposal
Courses that comprise this cluster:

Note: The simplest clusters will require that any 3 (or 2) courses be taken from a list of courses; in such cases, please list those courses as "Group 1". In some clusters, a student will be expected to take a certain number of courses from each of two groups of courses; in those cases, the discrete lists from which courses are to be selected should be listed as Groups 1 and 2. If the cluster structure is more complex than can be described in two Groups, please attach a supplemental form to describe additional Groups.

Number of courses required from Group 1: ☐

	Dept	Course number	Title	Area designation	Frequency/Last offered
Group 1:					

(last offered could be the current or future semester)

Number of courses required from Group 2: ☐

	Dept	Course number	Title	Area designation	Frequency/Last offered
Group 2:					

(last offered could be the current or future semester)

Rationale

Clusters should be comprised of courses of mutual relevance, coordinated content and core significance. The sections below provide space to explain how these courses meet the cluster criteria and provide a coherent plan of study for non-majors in fulfilling their area distribution requirement.

Explain the rationale for this cluster -- how these courses have mutual relevance and core significance. (The rationale that you provide will be published as part of the cluster description, for use by students and advisors. Include key words.)

Cluster Coordination

Explain how the content of the courses in this cluster will be coordinated.

Core Significance

Explain the core significance of this cluster. At the most fundamental level, what do you want non-majors to take away from this cluster?

Indicate the distribution area or areas to which this cluster may be assigned:

Languages and the Arts ☐   Natural Sciences and Math ☐   Social Sciences ☐

Textual and Historical Studies ☐

Additional notes: Use this area to describe other recommended parameters for this cluster, such as prerequisites, the recommended sequence in which courses should be taken, or other information that will be helpful. (The information provided here will be published, for use by students and advisors.)

A syllabus for each course is required. Return the form to the Curriculum Coordinator in the College Office, Box 1117.

Date approved by Curriculum Committee: Approved for 5-year period beginning: