



**Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee (SCRC) Report to Faculty Senate  
May 2017**

This report summarizes the work of the SCRC during the 2016-2017 academic year.

1. The Committee was established by Faculty Senate Vote on 7 April 2014, with representation from each undergraduate academic unit (CAS, CALS, CEMS, CNHS, BSAD, CESS, RSENR). The charge of this committee is to:
  - A. Develop and oversee a phased-in implementation plan for the sustainability requirement.
  - B. Propose changes to the sustainability requirement, as necessary, to the Faculty Senate.
  - C. Solicit, review, and approve proposals for three pathways to fulfill the sustainability requirement (SU-designated course, SU-designated curricula, SU-designated faculty- and student-driven experiential activities).
2. Monthly meetings were held each semester to address the functions of the SCRC.

Fall 2016 Meeting Schedule

- September 20
- October 18
- November 15
- December 20

Spring 2017 Meeting Schedule

- January 17
- February 21
- March 21
- April 18
- May 16

3. In addition to full committee meetings outlined above, the co-chairs met with the General Education "leaders" including the Cathy Paris (Faculty Senate President), Brian Reed (Associate Provost), Alec Ewald (DCRC chair), Libby Miles (FWIL Director), and Joan Rosebush (QR chair) to develop a structure and strategy for the University General Education Curriculum as it continues to evolve.
4. The Committee served its purpose by calling for proposals for courses and curricula meeting the Sustainability Learning Outcomes (SLO) and supporting faculty in their development by providing one-on-one support, encouraging participation in the Sustainability Faculty Fellows Program, and assisting with revision of proposals for improvement and subsequent approval.

5. The Committee served its purpose of reviewing and approving proposed SLO courses and curricula.
  - a. SU Courses Approved: 19 Courses
  - b. Curricula Approved: 0
  - c. Several transfer courses approved for individual students
  - d. The goal of having courses in all units has been partially met

BSAD	1
CALS	22
CAS	36
CEMS	11
CESS	2
CNHS	1
COM	1
RSEN	26

6. The following items are works in progress, reflecting both accomplishments for the year and work to be continued in the next academic year.

1. Collaboration with the other General Education Committees to continue work on assessment; Development and maintenance of the Faculty Senate webpage informing both faculty and students about the requirement and the process for submitting course proposals. The co-chairs have been working with the General Education leaders to develop a single university webportal for General Education, with the hope that this would be completed this summer (2017).
2. The SCRC will have continued collaboration with the Sustainability Faculty Fellows program to insure that faculty development around sustainability education is available to all faculty requesting such support. This is critical in being able to meet the 2018 full implementation of the Sustainability Requirement for approximately 10,000 undergraduates.
3. The SCRC continues to coordinate its work with the Sustainability General Education Assessment Committee to develop a process and structure for ongoing evaluation of student outcomes. The pilot program during the 2016-2017 academic year will be expanded next year to provide more data to the SCRC.
4. The SCRC continues to work with the Registrar's Office to coordinate SU designations and follow-up with individual student issues related to meeting the SU requirement. This will be an increasingly more important function as more students needing to meet the requirement approach graduation.
5. The Experiential pathway continues to be developed. Information for the student proposal process is now on the SCRC website (under the Faculty Senate), with the hope that this information will soon be on the General Education website.

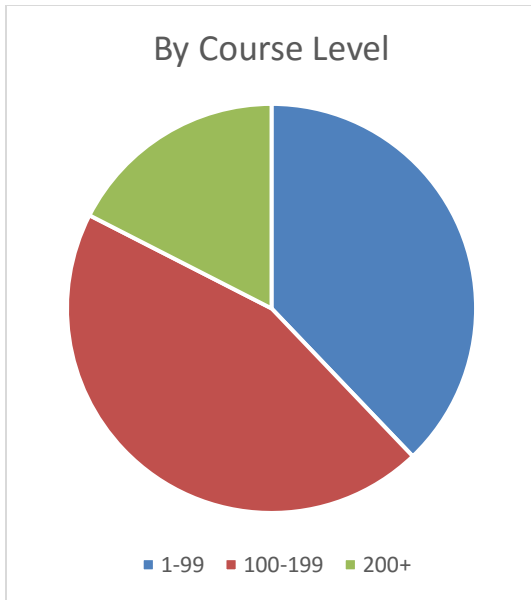


Fig 1: SU courses approved by course level as of Fall 2016



Fig 2: Word cloud of degree programs with SU courses (largest font = most SU courses)

Report submitted by Laura Hill (co-Chair) and Deane Wang (co-Chair), SCRC

On Behalf of the 2016-2017 Committee Members:

- CESS - Alan Tinkler
- CEMS – Ting Tan
- RSENR - Kris Stepenuck
- RSENR - Deane Wang (non-voting co-chair)
- CAS - Julia Perdrial
- CAS - Mary Louise Kete
- CALS - Laura Hill (co-chair)
- BSAD - Marilyn Lucas
- CNHS - Eyal Amiel
- Senate CAC - Ann Hazelrigg

Faculty Senate office administrative support - Tiera Porter and Laurie Eddy

**Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee chairs guide**  
**Developed by Laura Hill and Deane Wang, SCRC co-chairs 2014-2017**  
**May 16, 2017**

This guide is meant to provide a historical context of the SCRC and assistance to incoming SCRC chairs.

The Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee (SCRC) was established by Faculty Senate Vote on 7 April 2014, with representation from each undergraduate academic unit (CAS, CALS, CEMS, CNHS, BSAD, CESS, RSENR, and COM – as of AY 16-17) to prepare for the Fall 2015 university-wide sustainability requirement.

The charge of this committee is to:

- Develop and oversee the sustainability requirement
- Solicit, review, and approve proposals for three pathways to fulfill the sustainability requirement (SU-designated course, SU-designated curricula, SU-designated faculty- and student-driven experiential activities)
- Propose changes to the sustainability requirement, as necessary, to the Faculty Senate

The chair has various roles to guide the various functions of the SCRC, which are outlined below.

**I. The chair's role with the Faculty Senate office**

The chair's role for the monthly meetings is to work with the Faculty Senate office to develop an agenda and organize meeting materials. The Faculty Senate office will send official emails to committee members and disseminate information to all UVM faculty on the committee's behalf. A designee from the Faculty Senate office attends the meetings and keeps minutes.

The chair's role annually is to maintain communication with the Faculty Senate office about scheduling meeting times, terms of committee members, and organizing elections for new members. It is important to have these conversations in early Spring semester (ca. February).

**II. The chair's role with university faculty**

It is important to disseminate information about the sustainability requirement to faculty. We have done this through presenting to the Faculty Senate on a regular basis, as we provide updates on the requirement on a semi-annual or annual basis.

In addition, in order to maintain the portfolio of sustainability courses, we solicit faculty via email during the Fall semester to submit proposals following the guidelines outlined on the SCRC faculty resources [website](#).

SU courses are subject to a periodic 5-year review cycle. The first review cycle will take place in 2021.

**III. The chair's role in monthly SCRC committee meetings:**

The SCRC meets monthly and the meeting schedule is posted on the SCRC [website](#). During the meeting, the chair's role is to guide discussion while moving through the agenda items while keeping time. The work of committee during the meetings is to do the following:

- Collaborate with the Sustainability General Education Assessment committee to determine recommended actions informed by assessment data of the sustainability requirement.
- Collaborate with the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning (ex-officio committee member) on operational and administrative policies linked to the sustainability requirement.



- Review courses, curricula, and experiential proposals submitted via CourseLeaf for sustainability (SU) designation. If a proposal is not likely to be accepted, the committee does not vote, but the chair solicits specific feedback from committee members regarding the faculty member's proposal related to the 4 sustainability learning outcomes.
- Review re-applications and course reflections submitted under the 5-year revitalization cycle.

After the meeting, the chair has the important role of approving and rolling back courses in CourseLeaf and communicating via email in a timely manner with faculty that submitted proposals for review.

#### **IV. The chair's role in CourseLeaf**

CourseLeaf is the central administrative database for UVM courses. All SU proposals must be submitted as a Course Action Form in CourseLeaf to be reviewed by the committee. A proposal may be rolled back or approved depending on the committee's vote.

Navigate to myUVMPortal → Resources → CourseLeaf: The New Course Action form

#### ***Rollback or approve a course in CourseLeaf:***

Access → To Approve a Course Change Form that's in Process, go here:

[https://catalog-](https://catalog-next.uvm.edu/courseleaf/approve)

[next.uvm.edu/courseleaf/approve](https://catalog-next.uvm.edu/courseleaf/approve)

Log in with UVM credentials

Drop-down menu, select "Your role: SLO comm chair" to populate course list  
Click on a course and scroll down for more information

Choose either to "Rollback" or "Approve" the course proposal:

#### ***SU rollbacks:***

If the committee did not support the proposal as is, choose "rollback" in CourseLeaf and include in the comments box feedback to the instructor.

#### ***SU approvals:***

IMPORTANT: If approved, include the effective semester (e.g., effective Fall 2017) in the comments box.

#### **V. The chair's role in communicating with faculty that submitted proposals**

It is important to follow up with the faculty member that submitted a SU proposal via email using the following generic text, if desired.

#### **Generic email text for rolled back courses:**

*Dear XXX,*

*Thank you for your recent sustainability course proposal for CXXX 0XX. The Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee (SCRC) reviewed your proposal and agreed that the topic is one that could meet the sustainability learning outcomes (SLOs) and gain SU approval. However, the current information provided is insufficient in fully meeting the sustainability learning outcomes.*

*We are willing to give advice on proposal revisions, so please reach out to XXX (i.e., SCRC chair or unit committee member) if you would like to schedule a meeting. We hope to see a revised proposal in the future.*

*Sincerely,  
XXX and XXX  
SCRC co-chairs*

Generic email text for approved courses:

*Dear XXX,*

*Congratulations! The Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee (SCRC) has voted to designate GXXX OXX as a sustainability (SU) course.*

*(OPTIONAL) Initial assessment studies show that it is more impactful to the students if faculty include the sustainability connections in the syllabus. Therefore, the committee recommends that you include more explicit sustainability content in your syllabus (e.g., sustainability learning outcomes, how specific activities relate to sustainability, etc.) to help reinforce sustainability as a core theme.*

*(OPTIONAL) The committee was impressed by the quality of the proposal and would like to make it available as an example on the Faculty Senate's SCRC website, with your permission.*

*Sustainability proposals have a periodic review cycle of 5 years, so your course has been approved from 2017-2023. A year prior to the review, we will communicate with you to solicit a revised proposal.*

*Thank you for your contribution to UVM's sustainability curriculum!*

*Best wishes,*

*XXX and XXX  
SCRC co-chairs*

NOTE: Co-chairs should verify that SU designations have been appropriately noted by the Registrar's Office

## **VI. The chair's role in communicating with administrative offices**

As of Spring 2017, the Provost's Office is considering a proposal to absorb the major administrative roles of the General Education committees, including processing and tracking transfer requests and working closely in course tracking with the Registrar's Office. To date, these administrative roles have been the SCRC chair's responsibility.



## Members Guide to the Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee

This serves as an informal guide to the responsibilities and activities of the SCRC and the faculty's role in carrying out the charge of the committee.

### CHARGE OF THE SCRC

Sustainability is the pursuit of ecological, social, and economic vitality with the understanding that the needs of the present must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This subcommittee has the role of maintaining and monitoring the portfolio of academic courses and experiences needed to achieve the Sustainability Learning Outcomes as approved by the UVM Faculty Senate. It serves as a sub-committee of the General Education Committee of the Faculty Senate. The committee has a representative of the Senate Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) as an ex-officio member to maintain coordination with that body.

### ACTIVITIES OF THE SCRC

Generally meeting on a monthly basis, the work of the committee consists of administration and management of the requirement as needed, working in close collaboration with the Associate Provost's Office and the Registrar's Office. There are generally two categories of work: 1) continued development of the curriculum and its implementation (including review of assessment data and recommending strategies for continuous improvement), and 2) approval of pathways (courses, curricula, experiences) to meet the requirement. The former does not require any special preparation other than a general familiarity of the goals and practices of general education at the University of Vermont. Two sections below address work on the approval process.

### USING COURSELEAF

CourseLeaf is the current course management software for course approvals at the University of Vermont. It maintains the history of course actions as well as facilitates the hierarchical approval process. SCRC members only need to know how to use it to access course proposals. Current members can assist you in working with this software.

CourseLeaf is best accessed through the MyUVM portal under the "Resources" tab. Once in the Resources area, the CourseLeaf link is the first link on the left under "Your Courses." Once in CourseLeaf CIM, a convenient way to access course proposals is to go under "ACCESS" and click on the link for course approvals:

"To Approve a Course Change Form that's in Process, go here:  
<https://catalog-next.uvm.edu/courseleaf/approve>"

AT the center of the Screen, choose the "YOUR ROLE" dropdown menu and go to:  
"SLO COMM CHAIR"

This will then list all courses up for review/approval. Selecting a course will bring up the proposal (SCROLL DOWN). Once you are done, you can select a different course to review.

## REVIEWING PROPOSALS

The review of proposals emphasizes the clarity of the descriptions in describing how a learning outcome will be met. At the "Introduced" level, learning outcomes need to be clearly documented, but students need not be assessed. Exposure to readings, video and other media can introduce students to a concept. The depth to which this exposure actually conveys the concepts/knowledge to students as a population is always variable, but in this case, the instructor does not need specific feedback from student work. Informal class discussion about the introduced topics can suffice.

At the "Reinforced" level, students are expected to both be introduced to material, and also engaged with it through some kind of activity. This could be a reflection, paper, homework response, test, etc. This requires students to process the content and also provides the instructor with some evidence of how students as a group are engaging with and learning the material.

Courses are not expected to bring students to the "Mastery" level, but if that is the instructor's objective, the committee would like to know that as it manages this requirement into the future. The possibility of an "SU2" that demonstrates a higher level of "certification" of sustainability competence has been considered by the SCRC.

The committee discusses each proposal prior to approval and usually takes a seconded motion to approve if the course has merit for this requirement. Courses not meeting the requirement or needing additional work are "rolled back" in CourseLeaf. Instructors are contacted by the co-chairs to explore proposal modifications.

## MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION WITHIN YOUR ACADEMIC UNIT

The SCRC is a fully-represented committee of the undergraduate degree granting units at the University of Vermont. One of the goals of this representative model is that SCRC members will convey the evolving goals of this requirement to their colleagues and also advocate for adding courses from their unit to the portfolio of courses at the University of Vermont. Sustainability as an institutional priority can only be expressed to all students if the faculty at large support this institutional educational goal. Periodically reporting on the requirement at faculty meetings can help maintain the vitality of this curricular goal.