

The Middlebury Campus



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Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

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Three curricula synthesized

By Brett Hulsey '82

At an environmental studies meeting Nov. 6, geography Assistant Professor Robert Churchill stated the tentative structure of an environmental studies program which synthesizes the curricula of the environmental and northern studies programs and the geography department.

An Environmental Studies Advisory Committee recommended the new program. Implementation is now contingent on Educational Council and its curriculum committee approval, followed by faculty vote.

According to Dean of Sciences and Environmental Studies Advisory Committee Chairman Russell Leng, once this program is approved, there will be a two-year transition period while the core courses are set up. "There will be some overlap with the present programs for the next few years, but we'll try to make things as easy as possible for this year's sophomores," he indicated.

He said the goal of the new program is to alleviate competition between the various programs. "We are trying to give students a strong background in one subject. The present system is too flexible. The director of the program will have a vested interest in its success, and this will make it much stronger," he added.

The program has a core course/main track structure. Five core courses will be offered, dealing with such topics as environmental perspective, ecology, vision of nature, statistics and techniques of environmental analysis.

After completing several core courses, majors will choose one of three areas to specialize in: ecology, geography or northern studies.

Howard Woodin, professor of biology, will coordinate the ecology segment; three geography professors, one of whom will serve as director of the entire program, will manage the geography track; and professors at the Center for Northern Studies in Wolcott, Vt. will teach that area of study at Wolcott as well as Newfoundland, Canada.

In addition, Churchill said that majors will have to satisfy concentration (minor) requirements, which the Advisory Committee has approved.

Perry Hanson, assistant professor of geography and committee member, commented on the new program: "So much of its success depends upon faculty and administrative support."

Several committee members offered their views on the program. John Emerson, assistant professor of mathematics, saw many advantages to the core course-main track system. "This will give the students a sense of comradeship, an *esprit de corps*, that the present system doesn't afford. The senior seminar will also provide a forum for students to synthesize the

knowledge they have gained in the first four years of their study," he asserted.

John Elder, assistant professor of English, said that these courses provide the best mixture of breadth and depth that the committee could formulate. "We are trying to involve all the divisions of the College to make this work. The success of the extended major programs like the Asian and American Studies, show that this approach

can work," he reasoned.

He said he sees a bright future for the program. "I think there is superb potential here; we can have the finest program in the country."

D.K. Smith, professor of economics, commented, "I was disappointed to see the environmental economics discontinued, but I guess that the economics minor will serve a similar purpose. I hope that economics is a substantial part of the study."

Tenure candidates, COR process reviewed

By Joe Cosgrove '83

The Committee on Reappointment (COR) is currently conducting a tenure review of the following faculty: Math professors John Emerson and Robert Martin, and Theatre professor Douglas Sprigg.

In a sampling of student opinion, the *Campus* received favorable reviews of all the candidates.

Mathematics professors Emerson and Martin were both characterized as "enthusiastic" and clear in their presentation of material.

Math major Lee McShane '82 cited Emerson's work with probability and statistics: "If he left, nobody would be able to teach it—he's more involved in the subject than anybody else." Other students emphasized Emerson's cancer research as beneficial to the College.

Another math major, Connie Hecklau '82, commented on the tenure candidates: "They're both great. I would never want to make a choice between them."

At present there are three tenured and four untenured professors in the math department. Some of those interviewed said they felt it would be unlikely for both to receive tenure because of the number of already tenured faculty in the department.

Theatre professor Douglas Sprigg also received rave reviews as an educator and as a department head.

Theatre major John Nelson '83 said the department "is well balanced this year, and he's a part of it...making it comfortable for us working in it."

Other students explained that he displayed a willingness to provide extra help and to show concern that his students learn the material.

Seniors theatre majors Mitchell Gross and Tyrone Wilson said they were especially impressed that he teaches "the material with his own personal experience." They stated that Sprigg's insights would be an asset to students considering a career in theatre.

In evaluating tenure candidates, the COR solicits opinions from the candidate's colleagues, from outside experts involved in the

same field of study and from alumni who have taken classes taught by the candidate. The Committee also seeks the advice of the Student Advisory Council and consults all student evaluation forms.

The COR, composed of three full professors elected by the faculty, makes its tenure decisions by Dec. 15. These recommendations are then submitted to College President Olin Robison who, in turn, makes his recommendations to the College Board of Trustees for the final status decision.

Robert Fern, COR member and professor of Religion, said he believed that "the work of the committee is the most important that goes on as far as the future of the College is concerned." Fern, Professor of Mathematics Bruce Peterson and Professor of Biology George Saul were elected by the faculty to serve on the committee.

"The heart of the committee's work," explained Fern, "is to make as fair a judgement as one humanly can concerning a candidate's work to date as teacher and as a continuing student, and to assess the potential...as long as the individual is associated with the institution."

When recommendation is unfavorable, he commented, "It's not what I call a fun assignment."

Vice-President for Academic Affairs Nicholas Clifford, who sits with the committee to supervise procedure, acknowledges the difficulties which accompany the COR evaluation process.

He said, "Everybody I know who has come up for tenure in the last few years has been excellent. The process of review makes it impossible to achieve tenure unless the candidate is very good."

He emphasized, however, that "what you're looking for is not whether the person is a good teacher at the moment, but whether he or she will be a good teacher 30 years from now."

Clifford stated that he accepts annual complaints from students about instances of tenure denial; he said he expects these grumblings to continue in the future. But, he concluded, "until somebody comes up with a more rational way of making these decisions, that's the way to do it."



Math professor John Emerson. Photo by Bruce Morehouse '81



Theatre professor Douglas Sprigg. Photo by Greg Murphy '82



Math professor Robert Martin. Photo by Bruce Morehouse '81

Arabic opinion sought

By David Odato '84

As the College Committee on the Feasibility of Arabic Studies continues to investigate the possibility of such a program at Middlebury, the *Campus* recently solicited opinions from various members of the College community.

Rowland Illick, a committee member and geography professor, said that such a program should be an integral part of the Middlebury curriculum. He claimed that the College needs "to select regions within the world that are significant in world affairs in all ways," and to present programs designed to study these regions.

Since he has spent many years abroad in countries where Arabic is spoken, Illick observed the

widespread use of the language throughout the world. "It is spoken in North Africa, the Middle East and throughout many parts of Asia," he commented, so there is a need for Arabic language study here.

Preston Niblack '81 echoed Illick's point, noting, "700 million people speak Arabic. The Mideast is important, not necessarily for political reasons, but because it has been neglected for so long." He is privately studying Arabic under Visiting Instructor of French Gabriel Asfar, along with Grace Costen '81, Mahnaz Rahbar '81 and Marton Radkai '81.

Rahbar reasoned that there must be a demand for Arabic because four College students are

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Editorials

Environmental studies: round two

We support the Environmental Studies Advisory Committee proposal for an academic program combining the environmental and northern studies programs, along with the geography department.

When College administrators deleted the geography major last spring as a curricular offering, we were wondering if a suitable replacement would be found; this synthesis appears to have merit.

First, there is still a traditional emphasis on a major area of specialization, through the concepts of tracks: ecology, geography or northern studies. The new curriculum also requires core courses, which are considered integral to environmental studies. Finally, the major is required to concentrate or minor in one of several areas as specified by the Advisory Committee.

We believe this conglomeration of natural and social sciences provides a unique opportunity in the general area of environmental studies.

In the hope that the College can effectively organize all the faculty resources, we urge members of the Curriculum committee, the Educational Council and the faculty, at their monthly meeting, to approve the program.

We will not be shortchanged through the consolidation of the three programs. We are willing to accept changes.

DAR

The Middlebury Campus

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Correspondence

Energy policy criticized

TO THE EDITOR:

It is quite inevitable that, at a college of 2000 young adults accustomed to a more or less comfortable and unrestricted lifestyle, some school decisions will meet with student disapproval. Certainly one cannot expect the school's decision-making body that seems to pride itself in announcing "potential" changes in policy after they've been fully implemented, or at least officially decided to continually appease the students in their quest for a pleasant and stimulating experience. But, when student life in its most essential nature is adversely affected by illogical and selfish school policy it becomes necessary to remind the administration that it is a student body it should be catering to.

I speak, of course, of the school's now infamous energy policy, which as of late has become more of a "no-energy" policy. I am not so foolish as to indict the school's Energy Council for attempting to conserve energy and, perhaps even more important to some members of the committee, save money. This is truly an admirable cause — even *Time* Magazine thinks so. However, if success in energy conservation can be attained only at the expense of student comfort and well-being, the policy must be re-evaluated.

A typical breakfast in Proctor dining hall finds a group of hungry, overworked students fingering their cold toast with their equally cold fingers. The beautiful coat racks hung outside the dining area are not being utilized to their full

potential — students will dare not abandon their down vests for fear of dropping unconscious from heat loss at the breakfast table and missing their 8:15 a.m. class. To do so may prove quite beneficial, though for the Warner Hemicycle and similar lecture halls are colder than the dining halls. Many a notebook has been stained with spilled tea — another shivering student failing in his or her attempt to remain warm.

Congratulations are in order, though, for the Middlebury community's victory in the Alternity contest. The College was instrumental in the campaign to save energy. One thing puzzles me, however — wasn't the meaning of the Alternity campaign distorted? Sure...we all want to save energy and money. I was under the impression, however, that the goal of *all* energy conservation policies is the reduction of *useless* energy consumption while at the same time efficiently providing a healthy and comfortable amount of heat. Gas-guzzling cars, seventy-five degree homes fully-lighted but empty rooms, opening windows in the midst of a Middlebury winter — these are all examples of unnecessary and avoidable wastes of our precious energy resources. Putting on a sweater in a chilly room is perhaps a generous and expected contribution to the energy-conservation campaign — having to eat or take notes with a down parka on should not be part of a Middlebury student's everyday life. It was great to win the Alternity contest, but was winning so essential? Are we pursuing an energy policy that is best for both the student life and college finances, or is this policy more directed at enhancing the public image of our institution?

I suggest, rather disappointedly, the latter. At any rate, the Wall Street Journal found our policies toward energy commendable. Are we to be proud?

This questionable policy can only lead to even greater student discomfort. As reported in the Oct. 23 issue of the *Campus*, the school Energy Council, among other various and absurd proposals, announced that all dorms except for Starr and Painter will be closed during Spring Break for purposes of conserving energy. This change, though not specifically mentioned in the article of Oct. 23, will necessitate moving into Starr and Painter all those students wishing to remain on campus for the vacation period. The rationale behind this proposal (or is it a final decision?) is not elaborated upon. Many students go to Florida for the break — certainly a large number go home. But, what about those of us who cannot afford to do either due to financial or academic restrictions? How about all those thesis writers? Baseball and Lacrosse players? Are they to simply pack their bags, bring along their books and favorite records and invade another's room for a week? Indeed, what about the residents of Starr and Painter? Most would be willing to allow a friend to stay in the room, but this may not often be possible.

The 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution holds that no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without the due process of law" while the 5th amendment states that "Private property (not) be taken for public use, without just compensation." I grant the fact that these are restric-

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Peter Campbell Music explored

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." *W. Congreve*, 1697.

"Hey, crank some tunes. Do it up! What a solo, this guy is amazing. Let's get wasted!" *Joe College*, 1980.

Congreve's conception of musical charms seems sadly limited today. But it wasn't his fault that the corner record store refused to stock new wave and avant-garde jazz. Today, music can do a lot more than soothe the savage breast — it can do pretty much anything to the savage breast. Intrigued by music's mood-setting capacities, I sought to look into the situation at Middlebury College in some detail.

My plan was to wander through dorms and observe what I could. This tactic would serve me well; it would provide me with a way insight into life and human nature.

Armed with a pad of paper, I peeked into a large double occupancy suite. The *Grateful Dead* were meandering their way through a tune in their usual roundabout way. Two fellows sat in chairs, silent. Finally one broke the quiet: "Hey, let's listen to some *Doors*." A cascade of giggles ensued.

Further down the hall there was more music. I feigned drunkenness and directed a slurred question to the inhabitant of this room. The response was gibberish to me; my attentions were focused on the room itself. *Bruce Springsteen*

howled of cars and visions. The carelessly dropped bookbag told me all I needed to know — this was a psyche song: so essential to that emotional transition period between library and the Alibi. The Joe College 1980 previously quoted gem referred to a psyche song.

Through the stairwell I heard funk. Baaaaad funk, *Bootsy* and the space-bass funk. I hopped by the door, checking out what be goin' down inside. Four people stood together, moving and groovin'. Three of the four fingered invisible bass guitars with surprising competence.

I moved on. The lounge was being rocked by the sound of the *B-52s*. I knew what to expect — the "let yourself go" sort of thing. Sure enough, 40 people inside bounced up and down crazily as if at the whim of an epileptic puppeteer.

I had exhausted the locale; it was time to amble to more fertile ground. I chose an upperclass women's floor. Mellow music. The first door ajar confirmed by thoughts. *James Taylor* was making a sweet moment sweeter for a couple who held hands and gazed longingly at each other, thinking to themselves: "If you do not understand my silence, you will not understand my words."

However, Cupid had not blessed all. Female torch singers commiserated with three girls further along about unrequited love. "Tell it like it is, Janis Ian" they wailed.

Pathos. Tears blinded me as I stumbled from the hall.

Upstairs, the female counterpart of the psyche song reigned supreme. Three girls danced and sang happily to the *Poussette-Dart Band* while quaffing Lite beer.

I went upstairs again, to reach a male floor. I heard something I had been expecting — tasty jazz. Three were in the room, and the owner of the stereo was playing particularly tasty selections, and pointing out particularly tasty licks for his audience's enjoyment. "Some really fine stuff," I heard him say as he scratched his scraggly beard. "When's his time slot on RMC?" I growled cynically.

Although it was a Friday night, I did find someone enjoying classical music. The strings were making profound statements life and art; the listener was making equally profound statements about life and Hamlet.

I needed another image. One more image to round out my observations. One more image to avoid the wrath of the newspaper layout editor. A monolithic stereo system provided one: avant-garde free form impressionistic jazz. Specifically, the bongo version of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

My inquiry was at an end. I traipsed back to my room, marvelling at the variety of the musical tastes and moods of a student body. "Yes, there's no place like college!" I exulted, slapping a Springsteen disk on the turntable.