5.1 - SDC Prefix Course Instructional Responsibilities

Background
To facilitate integration, beginning in fall 2013 with SDC 250 and SDC 444, the school began to adopt integrated courses with an "SDC" prefix, indicating that two or more of the disciplines in the school would be mixed together (possibly between any combination of architecture, interior design, construction management, and landscape architecture). Integrated courses are critical to help students understand and embrace the types of collaboration that are essential for successful projects in practice. Integrated course delivery will be guided by the values of the SDC disciplines, weaving lessons culled from each and ideally leading to a situation where the whole is bigger than its parts.

Faculty members chosen to teach an SDC course will naturally bring their own disciplinary background to the course. However, they are expected to learn the "tools of the trade" from other disciplines, and to work with faculty to facilitate integration.

Establishing student learning outcomes
For new courses, it is best that the student learning outcomes (SLOs) are established by an integrated team, followed by a determination of teaching methods and course content that best support the disciplines represented.

Regular assessment of student learning outcomes is employed in the SDC to determine if the goals of the course are being met. The assessment can be completed in many ways. Commonly, the faculty group responsible for the course delivery each semester meets to determine strengths and gaps. Feedback about the course is also obtained from the disciplines that are served by course. The assessment results are compiled in a report that is given to the SDC Curriculum Coordination Committee (CCC) and the director. The report may include recommendations for changes in the SDC course curriculum or a specific SDC course. More information is included in the SDC Prefix Course Coordination Guidelines (section 5.2 of the SDC Policies and Procedures Manual).

Syllabus
Faculty assigned to teach an SDC course for any upcoming semester must meet with other faculty who will also be teaching the course. The meetings should happen twice before the semester starts and at least three times during the semester. Instructors should agree on a general syllabus for the course that has the same format, student learning outcomes, and basic schedule (e.g. due dates), and ideally should feature the same exercises—or be very clear about how different exercises contribute to the integrated whole.

It is understood that there may be a need to feature different exercises depending upon disciplinary needs or faculty interests; however, these exercises should be distributed equally and no one discipline should dominate the others. It must be recognized that the students in SDC classes come from a range of disciplines, and featuring one discipline over the others may fail to teach students the values of integration. It may also, in the minds of the students, appear that they are not learning about their chosen discipline, but that the course is about another discipline.

SDC Course Specifics and "Lead" Instructor

SDC 100: This course has a lead instructor who works and communicates with faculty members who participate in the class. The lead is delineated in the university scheduling system and, while having ultimate authority the direction of the course, is expected to take under advisement previous courses, advice from faculty who have taught the class, and recommendations from the CCC in terms of content, format, exercises, and delivery. Each participating faculty member in SDC 100 typically delivers three lectures total.

SDC 120/140: These courses have multiple sections of the class that are delivered simultaneously. Thus, communication between instructors is key, even if all instructors have agreed to teach the class in exactly the same way. An administrative "lead" instructor for the SDC 120 and 140 courses is unnecessary. However, one faculty member per SDC 120/140 course, each semester, should volunteer to set up meetings and take notes at those meetings (if necessary) to move things forward. Should nobody take the lead or if no meetings are being held, the CCC chair may initiate those meetings and appoint a "chair" or a "lead" for that semester.

SDC 250/350: These courses, given their continuous chronology and similar student cohorts from one semester to the next, should be the same instructor for the academic year. A separate "SDC 250-350" committee should be established annually by the CCC and/or director to share feedback and ensure the rigor of the writing component and content integration among disciplines.

The SDC Director will note faculty who take the initiative to lead/organize SDC courses throughout the semester in her/his annual review assessments, and will also acknowledge those who are "appointed" into this role.

Meetings and Timeline

It is recommended that an initial meeting be set up at least two months before the beginning of the semester to exchange ideas about SLOs, course content, delivery methods, and to establish any deadlines necessary for ordering supplies or requesting equipment. The chair of the CCC should contact those assigned to SDC course(s) and remind the assigned instructors to meet. The SDC-prefix course faculty also should meet once more prior to the beginning of the semester to ensure that everyone "is on the same page." A suggested timeline is as follows:

Fall semester SDC courses
May: (initial meeting, reviews assessment doc from previous class, orders supplies, etc.)
August: (final review of any alterations changes and any necessary revisions)
October: (general progress meeting)
December: (reviews the course and projects; identifies changes that need to made for next time)
January: (works out recommended changes and writes assessment doc to CCC)

Spring semester SDC courses
November: (initial meeting, reviews assessment doc from previous class; orders supplies, etc.)
January: (final review of any alterations changes and any necessary revisions)
February: (general progress meeting)
April: (reviews the course and projects; identifies any changes that need to made for next time)
May: (works out recommended changes for next time and writes assessment doc to CCC)