

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

BOARD OF COMMON UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (BCUC)

Introduction:

The Board of Common Undergraduate Courses is one of the University's Multidisciplinary Departments. It offers courses that are taught to all undergraduate students across the board, regardless of the degree programme that a student is enrolled in. These unique courses are effectively called "Common Undergraduate Courses".

By the Statutes requirement, every undergraduate student has to study and pass three of these courses before graduation. The combination of the three courses that a student must study is such that by the end of the programme, a student of the sciences will have studied two common undergraduate courses from the humanities and one from the sciences. Similarly, a student of the humanities will have studied two common undergraduate courses from the sciences and one from the humanities.

The aim is for the University to produce graduates who are holistic, well-rounded and who are able to command a general understanding of cross-cutting issues that affect society. Thus, a graduate in the sciences should not be completely blank in the humanities and vice versa. It is expected that such a graduate will have an open mind and will be looking at life more broadly beyond his/her profession.

Updates

During the year 2011, BCUC conducted its examinations throughout the University in the two semesters as is the tradition. We are happy to report that unlike in the other years, there were no negative incidences in the administration of the examinations in HIV and AIDS common course. This good news has been attributed to the role played by the satellite office that BCUC set up at the School of Public Health to support the coordinator in the management of this course.

For the first time, BCUC was given a chance to exhibit at The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) held at the Golf Hotel, Kakamega between March 17 and 19, 2011. Hereafter, again for the first time, BCUC was allocated a stand to exhibit during The University of Nairobi Open Day that took place in the University's Great Court Grounds on April 1 and 2, 2011.

We are happy to report that the two events were successful and were an eye opener to many visitors to the BCUC stand. We were able to explain the meaning of and the need for Common Undergraduate Courses. We were surprised to learn that many students who visited the stand had no idea why the courses are taught and by the time they left the stand many appreciated the need for these courses. Thus, our participation in the two exhibitions was beneficial to both the aspiring, and the enrolled students.

Appointment

During the year 2011, the course coordinator for HIV&AIDS common undergraduate course, Mr. Erastus Njeru proceeded for further studies and the School of Public Health which houses this course appointed Dr. Kellen Kimani to replace him in the same capacity.

BCUC takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Njeru for the dedication that he had demonstrated in the coordination of this course and wish him well in his further studies. We welcome Dr. Kimani in her new appointment and assure her that we shall provide all the necessary cooperation that she may need in her duties as the coordinator of this course.

Beefing- up the office of the course coordinator

Course coordinators are very critical in the running of Common Undergraduate Courses. The Board appreciates the heavy responsibility bestowed on these coordinators and would wish to provide staff to assist in their offices.

In this regard, BCUC would like to appoint and post support staff to the office of every course coordinator. Where it is necessary, like in the case of coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDS which is taught in the entire University, BCUC would post a complete team of an administrator and a secretary.

The improvements that have been demonstrated in the administration of HIV&AIDS common course after the establishment of a satellite office to beef up the office of the coordinator has strengthened the resolve by BCUC to beef up all offices of all the coordinators.

Strategic Issues

As the Americans were slaughtering Mr. Osama Bin Laden which was part of their strategy to eliminate terrorism, BCUC was organizing meetings with Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) to discuss the process of writing a teaching module for the common course HIV&AIDS.

This culminated into a workshop for lecturers of the HIV&AIDS common course that was held in Naivasha for the purpose of writing the module. When complete, the module is expected to improve on the efficiency of delivering the course to both residential and distant students.

Teaching and Examinations

The teaching and examinations of common undergraduate courses follow the general academic Calendar. The only difference from the mainstream courses being that the common courses are one-off semester courses and therefore, the teaching takes place in one semester and students sit a final examination in that same semester.

In the year 2011, teaching and examinations in all common undergraduate courses were done on schedule, except in some isolated cases where missed lessons were reported and resolved.

This to remind all concerned that due to logistical problems in the administration of common undergraduate courses, the Board will not administer Special or Supplementary examinations.

However, students who fail or who miss out in their scheduled examinations are allowed to sit the next immediate scheduled examinations in the courses either as a re-take or a re-sit.

The student will re-take or re-sit the examination until he/she passes in order to be allowed to graduate.

It is also provided that a student may have a re-take or a re-sit examination in any centre where the examination is administered, but with prior arrangement through the Board.