

## **Anthony Roy Day**

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**From:** "John Day" <jday@jcu.edu>  
**Date:** Friday, December 6, 2013 3:20 PM  
**To:** "Anthony Day" <aday@jcu.edu>  
**Cc:** <budget@jcu.edu>  
**Subject:** UBC concerning FYS

Dear Roy:

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At its December 5, 2013, meeting the University Budget Committee voted (8 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstaining) to recommend to the Faculty Council that it reconsider the decision to offer First Year Seminar as part of the curriculum for the students who matriculate for the Fall 2014, in order to reallocate course releases and other funds for faculty development in preparation for the new Core curriculum.

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If you have any questions about this action of the UBC I would be happy to talk with you.

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Thanks

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John

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MEMORANDUM

To: Colleagues on the Budget Committee

From: Gerald P. Weinstein, Ph.D., CPA  
Chair, Department of Accountancy

*GPW*

Date: November 22, 2013

Subject: FYS

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I have been in conversation regarding a budget-related proposal concerning FYS which Rich Mausser has agreed to set forth at the November 21 meeting. Due to another commitment I am unable to attend but wanted to have my position known to you, hence this memo. In short I support the idea of eliminating FYS and repurposing the savings towards relevant faculty development.

There are many compelling reasons to end the course now instead of waiting. Most importantly for this committee is that in terms of finances the proposal is on solid ground. The coming change in the core curriculum will involve faculty in many new course preparations and freeing up the funds used to replace FYS faculty will provide monies which can be used to provide stipends for this purpose to incent this course development. This is an opportunity for the Committee to make a substantive proposal to direct funding from one source to another, something many have expected us to do in the past but which we have not.

There are several good pedagogical reasons for ending FYS also. Among them:

- Removing faculty from their in-discipline courses takes them away from what they know and the preparation required for FYS is time consuming because we are not subject matter experts. It is doubtful anyone's scholarship is informed by this experience.
- The fact that it is not a component of the newly approved core effective Fall 2015 is an indication that faculty do not deem it to be an important component of the student's education.
- It has always been and continues to be difficult to recruit faculty to teach the class and will be even worse in 2014. If some faculty decline to teach it again (I will be one) new faculty will have to be brought in and prepare for a class they will only teach once.

- FYS has never been adequately evaluated to determine whether or not there is a discernible benefit to the students. It does not support any course which a student would take later in his or her degree program or in the liberal arts core. Anecdotally, students I have spoken with are nearly unanimous in their distaste for this course.
- Teaching and in particular grading is inconsistent in the course. The last statistics I saw (many years ago) revealed an average section GPA range from 2.4 to 3.7. Student grading is dependent on the faculty member to whom they happen to be assigned. This is in part a function of the fact that FYS has no departmental home and hence there is no chairperson who can oversee performance. No department would permit a range of grades like that in a course.
- If FYS is eliminated students could be permitted a free elective of their choice to make up for the three hour deficiency towards 128. Allowing them to choose makes it more likely the elective would be relevant to them.

I have taught FYS nine times by my count so I also speak from my own experience. I would urge you to give serious consideration to this proposal. Thank you.