March 2, 1987

To: The Faculty
From: Educational Council

Subj: PROPOSALS FOR A FRESHMAN CORE PROGRAM, TO BE COMPLETED IN THE FIRST THREE SEMESTERS

SECTION 1: OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the curricular proposals included in this resolution are as follows:

1. To increase the opportunities for students to enroll in small courses in their first three semesters at Middlebury.

2. To improve academic advising by assigning all freshmen to a faculty adviser who is also the instructor of one of their courses.

3. To increase the opportunities for students to work on the development of their writing skills early in their college careers.

4. To encourage freshmen to make intellectual connections across the traditional academic departments and disciplines.

5. To increase the opportunities for members of the faculty to work together across departmental and divisional lines, and in so doing to move toward greater educational community.

SECTION 2: FRESHMAN SEMINARS

Freshman Seminars are thematic courses which approach an area of intellectual inquiry from a perspective which attempts to make connections among a number of the traditional disciplines (departments). The specific format of Freshman Seminars (one instructor? multi-instructor? common reading lists? etc.) will be determined by those faculty members teaching in the program. A Freshman Seminar will have an enrollment of no more than 15 students for each faculty member in the seminar. The Freshman Seminars will have an intensive writing component comparable to the present Freshman Writing courses.

All students shall enroll in a Freshman Seminar during their first term at Middlebury.
Freshman Seminars will be classified [either] in one or more of the four divisions (Foreign Languages, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences). [or] in a new inter-divisional category. A student may count a Freshman Seminar in one and only one division.

Normally, Freshman Seminars may not satisfy departmental major requirements. A department may request permission from the Curriculum Committee to have a Freshman Seminar count as an elective course in a major.

Instructors proposing new Freshman Seminars may apply for Faculty Development Grants to support their course development work.

SECTION 3: WRITING COURSES

Writing Courses will be defined according to the guidelines distributed by the Freshman Writing Committee on December 19, 1986.

Writing Courses may be either free-standing courses or sections of larger courses.

Writing Courses (or writing sections of larger courses) will have an enrollment of no more than 15 students.

An ongoing faculty support and development program for the teaching of writing should be established. Support and professional tutorial services for students in need of developing basic writing skills should be strengthened.

SECTION 4: FRESHMAN FACULTY ADVISING

A booklet describing all fall term Freshman Seminars will be distributed to entering students in the summer prior to their arrival at Middlebury. (February freshmen will receive a comparable booklet describing spring term Seminars.) All entering students will register in advance for one Seminar. The instructor of this Seminar will be the freshman faculty adviser for all the students enrolled in the course.

SECTION 5: CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

All students must fulfill the following degree requirements:

1. One Freshman Seminar, to be taken during the first semester at Middlebury.
2. One Writing Course, to be taken during the second or third semester at Middlebury.

3. Foundations Courses in three of the [five] four divisional categories (Foreign Languages, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences [, Interdivisional]), but not including the division in which the student counts [of] the Freshman Seminar. This requirement should normally be completed by the end of the third semester at Middlebury. It must be completed by the end of the fourth semester at Middlebury.

Students will declare their major no later than the end of their third semester at Middlebury.

All departments will be expected to contribute to some aspect of the Core Curriculum Program.

SECTION 6: EFFECTIVE DATES

All sections of this resolution will become effective at the beginning of the 1988-89 academic year. They will have the status of graduation requirements for students beginning with the class of 1992. Students in earlier classes will be subject to the existing graduation requirements.

SECTION 7: REVIEW

The Educational Council will undertake a complete review of the Freshman Core Program in the Fall of 1991 and report its findings to the Faculty by December 1991.