

CHAPTER 11—THE NEW SCHOOL

The New School—oldest of eight academic divisions that comprise New School University—was founded in 1919 for the purpose of providing “intelligent men and women” with insight into the “grave social, political, economic, and educational problems of the day.” Education for educated adults has remained the heart of the school’s mission. Every year, 20,000 adults enroll as non-degree, non-credit students and 10,000 more attend lectures, readings and concerts.

The New School’s student base has changed since the last full re-accreditation review more than ten years ago. In part, the school responded to shifts in the landscape of higher education. Adult students returning to school to complete undergraduate degrees and to commence graduate studies had become an expanding sector. At the same time, non-credit enrollments were steadily declining as more and more academic and cultural institutions, especially in New York, began to program for adults. In response, the school revitalized the B.A. program and developed new graduate programs. While measures were taken to develop new courses and programs for non-credit students, the focus became degree programs. As a result, in fall 2002, 1,282 students matriculated in degree programs; within the university The New School now ranks second only to Parsons in the number of matriculated students.

Mission

The New School provides higher education for adult students, serving as an intellectual and cultural center with the aim of promoting an informed and reflective citizenry. Throughout its history, it has emphasized progressive thinking with a strong commitment to academic freedom, a global perspective and social responsibility. This core mission is enacted in different formats and settings: undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs; an extensive curriculum for credit and non-credit adult students taught by practitioners and scholars; and a wide variety of public events responsive to the political and cultural issues of our times. In all of these contexts, it strives to advance independent and critical thinking; the ability to link theory and practice; artistic and intellectual creativity; scholarly inquiry and publication; and civic engagement.

STUDENTS

During the past ten years, the percentage of students who are pursuing an academic degree has increased from 5% to 15% of the total number of students registered for courses. Headcount enrollments from 1990 and 2002 demonstrate the extent of the shift in populations.

FALL 1990		FALL 2002	
<u>Nondegree:</u>		<u>Nondegree:</u>	
Noncredit	11,435*	Noncredit	5,677**
Nondegree credit	532	Nondegree credit	299
		Certificate	428
		Institute for Retired Professionals	280
Total nondegree	11,967	Total nondegree	6,684
<u>Degree:</u>		<u>Degree:</u>	
B.A. Liberal Arts	265	B.A. Liberal Arts	576
M.A. Media Studies	184	M.A. Media Studies	416
M.S. Tourism	44***	M.S. in Teaching	8***
		M.F.A. Creative Writing	146
		M..A./M.S. International Affairs	136
Total degree	493	Total degree	1,282
TOTAL	12,460	TOTAL	7,966
* Includes one-time registrations for special programs			
** Does not include one-time registrations			
*** Programs phased out			

Since matriculated students typically carry a load of 6 to 15 credits each semester, while noncredit students usually take a single course, the shift in course registrations from non-credit to credit is even greater.

Recruitment and Admissions

In each of its degree programs, The New School seeks students who are mature, self-motivated, socially responsible and able to demonstrate intellectual and creative strength. Each program has specific admission criteria. The B.A. program judges applicants on the basis of (1) maturity to manage their own learning process; (2) ability to work successfully in an intellectually challenging academic environment; (3) evidence of being inquisitive, independent and self-directed; (4) verbal skills (spoken and written) and capacity for clear, critical thinking. Applicants must submit a statement of educational plans and goals, a writing sample and transcripts of all prior college work. An in-person or telephone interview is required. Applicants must have completed at least one year of successful college study in the liberal arts. (Exceptions: exceptional applicants who are 24 years or older with fewer than 24 credits may petition for admission; applicants who intend to complete their degrees online must have a minimum of 60 transfer credits.)

Graduate programs assess applicants on the quality of their preparation for advanced study in their field and on their commitment to the field of study. Applicants for the graduate programs are required to submit a statement of purpose, a résumé, two letters of recommendation (one academic and one professional) and transcripts of all prior college work, including documentation that they have completed an undergraduate degree. In person or telephone interviews are required except for the Creative Writing program, which requires the

submission of a writing portfolio. Fall 2002, the number of students admitted as a percentage of total applications was as follows: B.A.—76%, Media Studies—69%, International Affairs—89% and Creative Writing—32%.

Student Profile

The following chart summarizes demographic information for undergraduate and graduate students for fall 2002. See Appendix A for university and school profiles.

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Total	576	706	1282
Male	206 (36%)	216 (31%)	422 (33%)
Female	370 (64%)	490 (69%)	860 (67%)
International	28 (5%)	125 (18%)	153 (12%)
Asian-American	13 (2%)	36 (5%)	49 (4%)
Black American	64 (11%)	59 (8%)	123 (10%)
Hispanic	41 (7%)	61 (9%)	102 (8%)
Multi-Ethnic	4 (1%)	6 (1%)	10 (1%)
White	316 (55%)	336 (48%)	652 (51%)
Unreported	110 (19%)	83 (12%)	193 (15%)

The New School has made special efforts, outlined in our Affirmative Action/Diversity Plan (described earlier), to attract students from diverse backgrounds. Some progress has been made diversifying the student body. One barrier for many prospective students is the high cost of tuition and living expenses, coupled with inadequate scholarship funds. As a private institution dependent on tuition revenue, additional resources for student scholarships and grants must be a priority to attract a diverse student population.

Student Services

With the increasing number of degree students, The New School has had to rapidly develop academic and student services appropriate for working adults.

Academic Advising. Studies show that adult students prefer and perform best in programs that allow them to make choices relevant to their own needs while having access to individual advising. To address this need, the school has created a core faculty to provide consistency in the curriculum and advising for degree students (see Faculty, below, for a description of core faculty.) Each student, undergraduate and graduate, is assigned to a core faculty member upon admission, based upon the student's academic interests and area of concentration. Students meet with their faculty advisor for course registration advising and approval every semester. In addition, all core faculty hold weekly advising hours. Student and alumni surveys indicate that most students consider the individual attention they receive from faculty advisors to be among the school's greatest strengths. This is one reason why retention and completion rates are high, especially for programs geared to working adults who often have high dropout and stopout rates. In order to continue providing adequate

advising for students, the number of faculty advisors needs to be increased. Although core faculty have been added as fast as the budget allows, increasing from zero in 1990 to twenty-nine in fall 2002, the advisee load for core faculty is too high, ranging from 1:40 to 1:60.

Skill Development. Another challenge given the rapid increase in degree students is the need for skills development, especially academic writing. While communication skills are among the criteria for admission, the reality is that students enter with a range of skills. Moreover, an increasing number of international students, especially in graduate programs, bring with them the challenge of providing support in English as a Second Language. These needs are being addressed in a number of ways: undergraduates with weak writing skills are required to take preparatory writing in the first semester; both undergraduate and graduate students whose first language is not English have access to The New School's courses in English as a Second Language; writing centers have been expanded to provide tutorial assistance and writing resources to adult undergraduate and graduate students.

Career Development. Degree students need career counseling, and in 2000-01 the University Career Services Office was established, providing workshops and panel discussions as well as one-on-one counseling. Workshops on résumé writing, interview skills, exploring various career fields, choosing a graduate program, and obtaining scholarships and grants are on going throughout the year. Additional professional development activities have been established within each of the graduate programs. The Writer's Life Colloquium offers M.F.A. students in Creative Writing the opportunity to hear directly from authors, editors and publishers about their work. The Practitioners Workshop offered by the International Affairs program brings to campus professionals working in the field. The Media Studies' series, "Fridays at 4," invites artists and media professionals to speak with students.

THE FACULTY

Faculty Structures

As the number of degree students increased in the early 1990s, The New School recognized the need to create new structures for providing instruction. The traditional reliance on part-time faculty has made it possible to offer an unusually fresh curriculum and provide, especially on the graduate level, a strong connection between theory and practice. We wanted to retain these strengths while also creating an involved faculty, which could provide a cumulative, progressive education for growing numbers of matriculated students. Over the past decade, major changes have occurred in the way we hire, compensate and review faculty.

Independent Contractors. In fall 1990, The New School had nearly 650 part-time instructors of whom 628 (97%) were paid as Independent Contractors. (The remaining 22 faculty members were part-time faculty members in the graduate program in Media Studies.) Independent contractors were hired to teach their "dream course" and students came to partake of a lively exchange with other adults. The emphasis was on teaching.

Part-time Teaching Staff. The first major change in faculty structures came in 1994, when all instructors teaching credit-bearing courses were converted from Independent Contractors to part-time teaching staff who were university employees. January 2002, this process was completed when virtually all instructors teaching non-credit courses were converted. The university now is able to better enforce standards regarding teaching responsibilities. At the same time, the institution has a

greater commitment to the faculty, including an obligation to engage part-time teachers in the institution's academic life.

In 1996, a multi-year plan was begun to improve salaries of teaching staff in the adult education/undergraduate program. With the increase in degree students, rigorous academic standards were implemented in all areas, particularly in departments with heavy credit enrollments, such as humanities and social sciences. Beginning with these departments, most faculty salaries were doubled over the next few years. For example, the salary of most humanities faculty increased from \$965 per course in fall 1996 to \$2,110 per course in fall 2002. This increase represents a sizeable investment by the school in its faculty.

Core Faculty. Another major change was the creation of core faculty positions in degree programs. The decision to create this new category was made to provide more continuity and coherence in the curriculum and in academic advising for degree students. The graduate program in Media Studies was the division's first program to introduce core faculty in 1991. The original intent was to select the new core faculty from among part-time faculty, asking them to assume additional responsibilities beyond teaching, particularly advising and, for graduate programs, thesis supervision. Initially, core faculty were paid a stipend in addition to their per course faculty fees. The B.A. program adapted this structure in 1996.

Half-time Faculty. Fall 1999, the model changed again when the administration created the position of half-time faculty. Instead of being hired on a year-by-year basis, now half-time faculty are appointed after national searches for three-year, renewable terms. Compensation is significantly improved because faculty are paid half a full-time salary with full employee benefits. Under the half-time model, various responsibilities for which core faculty members were paid separately became integrated. Half-time instructors teach three courses per academic year, advise students and serve on committees. With the creation of half-time core faculty, The New School has created a viable structure for recruiting and hiring faculty. This has required considerable financial investment, and has yielded a high quality, competitive faculty who are engaged in the school's academic life.

Fall 2002, The New School has 29 half-time faculty members: 13 in the B.A. program, 10 in Media Studies, 5 in International Affairs, plus one faculty member in Teacher Education (which is being phased out). The M.F.A. in Creative Writing follows a different model in order to attract a world-class faculty of published writers. The instructors are not categorized as "core," but their teaching role includes thesis supervision and mentoring.

Assessment of Faculty

Core Faculty. Degree program directors are responsible for oversight, evaluation and review of core faculty under the supervision of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. At the end of each academic year, directors meet with their core faculty individually to review performance and set goals. Core faculty are appointed for three-year terms on the basis of a thorough evaluation of teaching, scholarship and/or professional activities and service to the program, the university and the profession. For each reappointment review, the director is responsible for convening a faculty committee, which recommends individuals to the director who recommends to the dean and, finally, to the provost.

Part-time Faculty. Program directors and department chairs are responsible for oversight, evaluation and review of part-time teaching staff and part-time faculty. The sheer size of the part-time faculty presents a major challenge. Having well over 100 teachers in some departments, chairs were faced with the daunting task of maintaining regular contact with faculty and conducting class observations. Currently, chairs are asked to observe new instructors during their first semester of teaching, at a minimum. Also, course evaluations completed by students are an important measure of teaching effectiveness. These evaluations are reviewed by the chair each semester and made available to individual teachers upon submission of grades.

Faculty Support

Support for faculty has increased substantially and the administration is especially mindful of the responsibility to provide support and professional development for part-time teachers.

Orientation. All new instructors are invited to attend an orientation session conducted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, covering topics like: developing a syllabus, methods of assessing outcomes, access to library and computer resources, ordering audio-visual equipment and pay schedules. A *Teaching Handbook* is distributed (available as an exhibit).

Faculty Development. The New School provides travel grants of \$200 to help fund part-time faculty who present papers at academic conferences. Part-time faculty are eligible to compete for university grants for curriculum development and innovative uses of technology in the classroom. Travel funds for half-time faculty are provided by their program. Half-time faculty may apply for paid sabbaticals.

Benefits. It has long been the tradition to offer part-time faculty full tuition allowance for as many equivalent courses as the faculty member is teaching during the term. In addition, most part-time instructors are eligible to select from a “cafeteria style” menu of benefits including health, pension and employee reimbursement accounts.

CURRICULUM

Adult Education and Undergraduate Study

Throughout its history, The New School has been known for its stimulating adult education. Course offerings are published three times a year—fall, spring, and summer—in *The New School Bulletin*. During each regular semester (fall and spring), over 1,300 courses are offered, of which more than 1,000 carry undergraduate credit. The liberal arts curriculum (Humanities, Social Sciences, Communication/Film, Writing and Foreign Languages) makes up over half of the courses offered for credit—over 500 each semester. Most courses listed are open to any interested adult on a non-credit basis.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ The New School has always treated noncredit students as engaged students who participate in the classroom and complete outside work. Teachers are required to submit syllabi for each course that meet standards established by The New School Academic Affairs Committee and described in the *Teaching Handbook*.

The primary undergraduate degree offered is a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts. (In conjunction with the Academy of Musical and Dramatic Arts, The New School also offers a B.F.A. in Musical Theater.) The B.A. degree requires completion of 120 credits, of which 90 must be in the liberal arts. Students design programs of study to build on their previous education and to meet current needs. Advisors work individually with students to construct a program that balances general education in the liberal arts with a concentration, which can be disciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature.

Concentrations. Fall 1997, the faculty created concentrations to help students organize their studies. Disciplinary concentrations are now offered in: Psychology, Writing, Literature, and Film. Interdisciplinary concentrations have been developed in Democracy and Cultural Pluralism, Media Studies, and The City. Concentrations consist of 24 credits (ten courses) and are designed to provide a foundation in the discipline or subject area, introduce students to disciplinary methods of inquiry and prepare students for graduate study.

B.A. Courses. The majority of courses offered for undergraduate credit have been upper division. In recent years, recognizing the needs of increasingly diverse undergraduates, foundation courses in the primary disciplines have been added. Fall 1999, we initiated a group of courses for B.A. students. These "B.A. Courses" are introductory in content, emphasizing writing and research. Experienced teachers are assigned to teach them for which they are offered a higher salary to compensate for extra work. In the academic year 2001-02, we had 220 registrations in 24 courses.

Curriculum Committee. Fall 2001, the dean established and chaired a Curriculum Committee, made up of the chairs from the four largest liberal arts departments (Humanities, Social Sciences, Writing and Communication), the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. During its first academic year, the committee reviewed the curriculum with the aim of creating more integrated programs of study including developing new interdisciplinary concentrations, reducing curricular redundancies and adding course sequences.

Mix of Students. The New School offers a rich, diverse curriculum because its courses are open to adults on a non-credit basis as well as those pursuing a degree or certificate. This mix of students in the classroom works well in several ways. First, and most importantly, all students, whether studying for credit or not, enroll in a course because of their genuine interest in the subject being taught. Since no one is required to take a particular course, no one is a reluctant learner. Moreover, most students have the characteristic qualities that researchers have associated with adult learners: motivation to learn, a preference for active rather than passive learning and a desire to connect theory with practice. In addition, noncredit students bring to the classroom considerable experience and knowledge. Since most are college graduates (nearly 90% have an undergraduate degree and 40% a graduate or professional degree), the level of course content and class discussion enhances the academic experience for everyone.

Graduate Programs

Fall 1990 The New School offered an M.A. in Media Studies and an M.S. in Tourism; the total number of courses offered was 36 and 228 students were matriculated. Today, the M.A. in Media Studies has tripled in size and we have added an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and an M.A./M.S. in International Affairs. (The M.S. in Tourism was phased out and a newer M.S. in Teaching will be phased out by spring 2003.) With graduate programs, we now offer 130 graduate courses each semester to 700 graduate students. Although the school's graduate degrees are in different fields of study, they share important characteristics. Each program is designed for adult students who have already launched careers and seek advanced knowledge in their field, or who are planning a career change. Qualified recent college graduates are welcome, but are not the focus. Also, each program is designed to integrate theory with practice. Finally, each program encourages students to address social, political, and moral issues that affect work in their fields.

Undergraduate/Graduate Status

Approximately one-third of New School B.A. students go on to graduate school, many of them within New School University. Qualified undergraduates can apply for undergraduate/graduate status in a specific graduate program after completion of at least 60 credits, which enables them to apply up to 12 graduate credits toward their B.A. degree requirements and then, upon graduation from the B.A. and matriculation into the graduate program, to apply those credits toward the requirements for the masters degree. Programs are available in Media Studies and International Affairs, as well as in all departments at the Graduate Faculty and the Milano Graduate School. Spring 2002, 44 students were accepted to undergraduate/graduate status: 9 with the Graduate Faculty, 1 with Milano, and 34 with The New School. We expect this enrollment to grow.

Online Curriculum

The New School in 1992 became a pioneer in asynchronous, online education for adults when it launched three experimental courses (see Appendix D). Today, the school offers over 100 online courses each semester, most of which can be taken either for credit or noncredit. During the last three years, nearly 600 registrations for credit in online courses have been offered by NSOU, now a university service to academic programs. Students with a minimum of 60 transfer credits in the liberal arts (with grades of C or better) can complete their B.A. in Liberal Arts completely online. This has opened the program to students living as far away as Beijing and Paris. In fall 2002, 57 B.A. students live at a distance, completing degrees online. On the graduate level, the Media Studies program offers 15 courses online each semester. These courses provide the curriculum for 100 M.A. students completing degrees online.

Certificates

The New School offers state-registered certificate programs, both undergraduate and graduate. Undergraduate certificates include Creative Arts Therapies, English Language Teaching, Film Production, Screenwriting, Graphic Design and Electronic Publishing, Design for the Web, and Web Development. Each certificate includes requirements and approved electives, ranging from six to ten courses. They can be applied to the B.A. or taken freestanding. In addition to undergraduate certificates, the Media Studies program offers a graduate certificate in Media Management, which can be applied to the M.A. in Media Studies, or taken alone.

Recommendations

1. Increase the number of core faculty committed to degree programs, both by increasing the number of half-time instructors and by introducing full-time teachers.
2. Improve the coherence of the curriculum for undergraduate students through increasing the number of concentrations and courses, providing more sequencing and advancing levels to the curriculum, and adding prerequisites to selected courses.
3. Implement rigorous syllabi and workload standards to strengthen the curriculum.
4. Develop new degree programs to prepare students for specific careers.
5. Increase student access to academic resources across the university through cross-registration and cross-divisional collaborations.
6. Develop procedures for faculty appointments and reappointments, especially for half-time and full-time faculty on multi-year contracts.
7. Develop effective pedagogical training and support services for faculty, especially part-time faculty who are practitioners.
8. Develop appropriate structures for faculty governance.
9. Increase the scope and quality of student services, especially in writing, English as a Second Language and career planning.
10. Increase financial aid to improve the quality and diversity of students as well as reduce student debt upon graduation.
11. Improve services that support academic programs, especially library resources, computer services and classroom technical support (both online with the university portal and in class with audio-visual equipment).
12. To sustain fast-growing programs, improve and increase the space available for classrooms, faculty offices and student study space.
13. Track graduates and develop relations with alumni. To improve assessment of student outcomes, collect data regarding graduate school acceptance and employment.