

October 29, 2008

Dear CEP,

Following up on today's meeting I have a few comments:

1. On behalf of Environmental Studies I heartily support teaching writing in the major. We have the same resource concerns about student to instructor ratios, TA training, and sufficient writing tutors that have been voiced by other departments, but we feel strongly that writing should be taught in the major.

2. I agree with many who spoke that having both the "breadth" and "perspectives and proficiencies" requirements is confusing and cumbersome. I liked the proposal to focus on the "perspectives and proficiencies" that we want students to have. I would add to those proficiencies "scientific reasoning" which could take the place of a specific scientific breadth requirement.

3. I found the initial CEP request for information about possible topical clusters confusing and the clarification today was helpful. I had thought that all general education courses would need to be coordinated into clusters, which concerned me. Although I see the benefits to clusters, I think that they are going to be logistically difficult to organize and present another constraint to the student in planning their schedules. We already have a hard time getting our students to take their required courses for the major in order.

Thank you for all your work on the general education reform. I know it is a thankless task.

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