

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY  
MINUTES**

**January 20, 2010  
Wednesday, 11 am-1:30 p.m., Kerr Hall, Room 307**

Present: Holly Cordova (NSTF Rep), Cormac Flanagan, Jimin Lee, Roxanne Monnet (Staff), Matthew Palm (SUA Rep), Eric Porter, Deanna Shemek (Provost Rep), John Tamkun (Chair), Peter Young, Eileen Zurbriggen.

Absent: Pam Hunt-Carter (Registrar, *ex officio*).

Guests: Margie Claxton (Associate Registrar), Elaine Kihara (Academic Preceptor Designee), Bill Ladusaw (VPDUE), Barbara Love (Articulation Officer), Michael McCawley (Associate Director of Admissions).

**I. Minutes.**

The minutes from October 21 were accepted by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)

**II. General Education Reform and Scientific Inquiry GE proposals.**

CEP discussed development of check lists for each general education (GE) designation in order to thoroughly and consistently review course proposals. They also discussed the need for cyclical review in the future of GE designations assigned to courses. Addition of a GE specific question on student evaluations of courses is thought to be one way of gaining important feedback on how well courses are meeting the educational objectives of the GE attached to the course. All course approvals should discuss how students will be assessed in the course, whether or not the course carries a GE designation. Discussion of what amount of the course needs to focus on the GE content will continue in future meetings.

The Committee held an in-depth discussion of a subset of proposals for the Scientific Inquiry (SI) designation. They considered to what extent the content of a course may be science versus scientific method or inquiry. It was agreed that some explicit indication in the proposal regarding methodology or inquiry could clarify the links between the implicit information of a science course. Anatomy was given as a course that would generally not qualify for the SI designation because it is classically taught as memorization of body parts.

The current guidelines for the SI designation do not the need to give contrasting points of view, for example, creationism in an evolution course. It is hoped that students will learn such things as how to understand when scientific facts are placed before them, what would be relevant data, and what would falsify the data. SI proposals should demonstrate that students will gain an understanding of scientific thinking.

### **III. Mathematical and Formal Reasoning proposals.**

CEP held an initial discussion of a subset of Mathematical and Formal Reasoning (MF) GE proposals. Most MF proposals received were for existing mathematics or statistics courses. Three of the five discussed were found to meet the criteria. One proposal gave little more justification than its currently having the old Quantitative designation. The Committee decided to ask for a response specific to the MF educational objectives. The fifth proposal left CEP wanting to ask how much of the course was devoted to the GE topic.

### **IV. Disciplinary Communication proposals.**

The Disciplinary Communication (DC) requirement for each major should involve courses that are required for the major so that students satisfy their DC automatically while completing their major. At least 5 credits at the upper-division are required to satisfy this requirement and may occur over 1-3 courses according to Divisional Senate regulation. In reviewing DC proposals, CEP decided to hold the department to the standard that they themselves set, as described in their proposals, in addition to the general guidelines that were provided to the Senate when the regulations were voted in last year.

CEP formed a definition for what is one page of writing toward the DC requirement. As a start CEP discussed what were the initially established expectations of the Writing-Intensive (W) Requirement, for which 6,000 words was given in the justification that accompanied the legislation. Over time it changed to 25 pages. However, 25 pages, double-spaced, in Times Roman 12 point font and a one-inch margin equals 6,000 words. That seemed a reasonable amount to CEP and decided that their definition of a page will also be based on 6,000 words.

Given the number of students and the need for individualized feedback on writing, CEP recognized that instructors often do not have the time to give the feedback on students writing without reliance on their teaching assistants (TAs). For this reason CEP during 2008-09 included in their funding proposal to Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Kliger the need to provide for TA training to support the DC requirement.

CEP held an initial discussion on a subset of DC proposals in order to identify key considerations for DC proposals. The proposals discussed at this meeting will come back to CEP for further discussion and decision at a future meeting.

Literature: The course proposed for the DC is required toward the degree and is taken early in the upper-division requirements. Different instructors teach the course, from differing perspectives. CEP decided to request more information on instruction of disciplinary communication in the lecture and section.

MCD Biology: A number of options toward for the DC were given in the proposal including research reports, laboratory notebooks, oral presentations and scientific posters. It will need to be confirmed whether all majors are required to take one of the courses listed in the proposal. CEP wondered whether the department would adopt some standard syllabus text for all of its DC courses. CEP found explicit reference to instruction in writing to be lacking in the proposal.

The writing in some courses was limited to laboratory notebooks. CEP will consider at a future meeting whether those notebooks should count as another form of disciplinary communication rather than toward the core writing requirement. The Committee recognized that laboratory notebooks are an extremely useful part of disciplinary communication, but were not convinced that it alone is sufficient to meet the DC educational objectives.

Discussion of DC proposals will continue at future meetings.

The remaining agenda items were carried forward due to lack of time.

So attests,

John Tamkun, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy