

Educational Policy Committee (EPC)

March 31, 2011

Present: Professors Siouxsie Easter, CJ Koepp, Tom Stiadle, Ernie Olson; Student Representative Alex Schloop '12; Provost Leslie Miller-Bernal (chair); and Associate Provost Cindy Speaker

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Approval of minutes from last EPC Meeting: Minutes of March 24, 2011 EPC meeting were approved.

AGENDA ITEM ONE: REPORTS ON SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS:

1. Scientific literacy subcommittee: the committee met and decided it would not be necessary to meet again and a report will be submitted to EPC within two weeks
2. January conference week subcommittee had a “virtual meeting” last week via email and reports that the faculty, staff, and student responses have largely been positive but there have been some **key questions**:
 - A) Who is in charge?
 - B) Is there a budget?
 - C) Impact on RA training?
 - D) Impact on internships and OCS programs?
 - E) Is there faculty “buy-in”?
 - F) What about hands-on programs?
 - G) Will each January have a different theme?
 - H) How will we phase in the program?

The subcommittee reports that the brainstorming of ideas is still ongoing; however, given the key questions just outlined, it is difficult at this point for the subcommittee to know what to propose.

Question and Answer Period for the January conference week subcommittee:

1. **Question:** Is the idea of a three or four day mini-conference still suggested, recommended?
Answer: yes, the proposal, as it stands, is for 3-4 days rather than a full week.
2. **Question:** Would this just involve the first year students?
Answer: No; we need to reach the upper class students who might be most interested in this program.
BUT there is some concern that second, third, and fourth year students might already have things lined up for January. Therefore, the conference could be required for first year students and open (optional) for all years.
3. **Question:** Who is in charge?
Answer: The Provost would likely be in charge, along with commitment from a subcommittee of faculty, a subcommittee that should have representation from each division. There was some discussion of the practical advantage of the Curriculum Committee being in charge of program content because the CC consists of representatives from all the divisions and is in charge of curriculum. In regard to the administrative component, it was suggested that the Provost and various support staff would take the lead. It was noted that

there is no currently designated person or office at Wells assigned to such a task; therefore, it seems reasonable that this be a shared commitment.

4. **Question:** Is this still a credit bearing activity?

Answer: Yes. Therefore, someone needs to be in charge of giving credit, of giving grades (it was suggested that we might consider WLLS 111 as a model).

Conclusion: The subcommittee needs some answers before bringing the report before the faculty (particularly in regard to the question of who is in charge). There was general agreement among EPC members that we certainly want inclusive buy-in from faculty, staff, and students. On the positive side, the subcommittee noted that there is no problem with generating ideas for programs.

At the end of this question and answer session, it was decided that these suggestions and ideas would be taken up for continued work by the subcommittee.

AGENDA ITEM TWO: DISCUSSION OF THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD YEAR THEMES:

DISCUSSION OF THE DESCRIPTION FOR THE FIRST YEAR THEME:

Note: descriptions for the first year and the third year are more similar than one might expect or desire: (see “self and society” as compared to “selves and others”).

It was suggested that the first year theme needs to emphasize the excitement of doing “real” academic work and that “meaningful lives” is enough of a title without “relationships between self and society.”

It was proposed that we cut the last sentence of the first year description (Through thinking....a meaningful life.”).

It was proposed that we either simply use the title “Meaningful Lives” or change title to “Meaningful Lives through Relationships between Self and Society.”

DISCUSSION OF DESCRIPTION FOR THE SECOND YEAR THEME:

It was argued that the last two sentences of the second year theme are problematic (it was suggested that the penultimate sentence be revised to “...by considering variations in ecological, economic, and cultural differences.”

It was agreed that “Think Globally. Act Locally” should be changed to “Think Globally, Act Locally is more than....”

EPC concluded its discussion of the second year theme by agreeing to send it back to Prof. Stiadle for another revision.

DISCUSSION OF THE DESCRIPTION FOR THE THIRD YEAR THEME:

There was a suggestion to cut “exploitation of natural resources” and change to “environmental degradation.”

There was discussion of the phrase “writing attentive” in sentence two. Question: do we keep it? Should we put it in first year description as well? (It’s already in our second year description). A more general question: Does discussion of “first year” cover WLLS 101 as well as spring semester?

It was proposed that we change “first year” to “these writing attentive seminars.....”

AGENDA ITEM 3: THE CAPSTONE SURVEY

It was noted that there is considerable variation in regard to what counts as comps and this raised a number of questions for future discussion. Is this a problem? Is there a need for standardization? What are the learning objectives? What are the assessment goals?

Suggestion: Perhaps we should go back to an examination of the comps experience in order to assess our common expectations.

Question: What is credit bearing?

Question: What counts as comps? (There seems to be a rather loose definition at Wells).

Suggestion: Perhaps comps should be a focus for next year’s EPC.

AGENDA ITEM 4: INTERNSHIPS

EPC noted that the pattern is that almost all majors require a journal of one kind or another. Only a few majors assigned readings but almost all required a final paper of varying length and requirements.

It was noted that there seemed to be some confusion over the “oral presentation” question and different definitions of oral presentation.

After discussion of the information gathered from our survey, we asked a number of crucial questions:

1. What does EPC want to do with this information?
2. More specifically, do we want to make recommendations?
3. More specifically still, do we want to call for standardized internship requirements?
4. As part of experiential learning, should there be a “reflecting and sharing” of the experience in a community context?
5. If so, might this include posters, oral presentations, a formal report?
(note: the internship contract can be easily changed in regard to student and faculty responsibilities).

Decision: EPC decided it would like to endorse a recommendation for standardized internship requirements, including sharing and reflecting, that stress the experiential learning aspect.

Homework: Think about our upcoming special meeting. Review everything!

Meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ernie Olson
Social Sciences Division Faculty Representative