

Educational Policy Committee (EPC)
December 1, 2010

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

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Minutes from November 17, 2011 were approved in advance (by email) as submitted.

1. The major item for discussion was the upcoming Open Meeting of the EPC: what should we present at the meeting and what should we send the faculty in advance? We carefully reviewed the document composed by Leslie entitled "Overview of Sustainable Community, Proposal for a new Gen Ed program." This "Overview" summarized much of the work and thinking of this committee, and lists proposed requirements, themed seminars, and other details. We agreed that Leslie should distribute this document to the faculty so that they might prepare for the discussion at the open meeting. We also agreed to send the sample "Darwin seminar" out to the faculty as well. The following are some of the issues that came up under this general discussion about the open meeting.

- a. As our discussions about Gen Ed evolve and develop, we need to keep Admissions Office informed, for their feedback and so that their recruitment efforts reflect these changes.
- b. We were reminded to keep Middle States recommendations in mind, to make sure that our institution can continue to meet specific objectives as required.
- c. Concern was expressed that the Arts Division would have a hard time participating in extra themed seminars, given the courses already on the books that must be covered.
- d. We discussed the number of January sessions to be required over the four years. First year and sophomore years seemed very certain, and then probably one other (junior or senior year). One possibility: seniors could present their thesis work/senior projects at this time. Desire to make January sessions feasible for transfer students expressed.
- e. We talked about establishing a conference model for the activities in January, starting the week before regular classes in the spring term. There would be many, many details to work out. Who would have responsibility for these events, workshops, etc? We wondered who makes changes in the academic calendar and how far in advance? We thought Phyllis Rhoda Dellinger would be great to involve as January activity coordinators.
- f. We discussed the possibility of Service Learning in January and during the semester. We wondered how Service Learning might relate to the experiential learning requirement. Some themed seminars could include a service-learning component.
- g. We noticed that Division of Natural and Mathematical Sciences was not included in the themed seminars as listed in the Proposal. That led to a discussion that broached on issues of scientific literacy, a comparison of the scientific method as practiced by the natural sciences and social sciences, and lab courses. We talked briefly about the lab requirements and what labs teach—for example, how labs relate to experiential learning?

h. We also discussed how the Gen Ed focus has changed nationally, now emphasizing defined learning objectives for students. That led to an even bigger question. Assessment. How to assess this program? How to demonstrate that students have achieved learning objectives? Portfolios? We discussed assessment issues further, noting that we would have to get learning objectives defined for January sessions, themed seminars, etc.

i. We also talked about calendars and timing, recognizing that any new program for the first-year class would need to be ready no later than the February before. Deadline for course approval for Fall 2011 curriculum is March 4, 2011 (that is, February 2011 faculty meeting).

j. We recognized the on-going discussions (some hardly yet begun) on reducing the number of courses required or offered by a major, revisions of majors, and the senior capstone are very much in flux and will no doubt have a bearing on Gen Ed sooner or later.

k. We mentioned possible names/abbreviations for these new themed courses in the catalog: SC (Sustainable Community) or WLLS (as in Wells 101).

l. We also recognized the need to get student feedback and information on any proposed changes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J.Koepp