

Educational Policy Committee (EPC)
November 18, 2009

Present: Professors Amy Godert, CJ Koepp, Ted Lossowski, and Susan Tabrizi ; Student Representative Kelley O'Keefe '10; Dean Leslie Miller-Bernal; and Associate Dean Cindy Speaker

The meeting began at 9:30am.

1. Minutes from the November 11, 2009 Meeting

After review, minutes were approved as corrected. During consideration of the minutes, discussion took place regarding the statement that "...Wells may be on the heavy side with 36-42 hours (14-18 courses) in the major." Question was raised regarding the evidence behind the statement. Leslie noted that she has found in her research that Wells majors tend to require more credits than comparison schools. She plans to share her compiled results in the future. Amy indicated that in her review of peer institutions that Wells falls in the middle of the group regarding required courses in the major. Her review was confined to her own major, however. Faculty in chemistry are looking at their requirements and working toward being able to participate in WLLS 101 or another non-majors course every two years.

Kelley provided follow-up on the traditions related to the wearing of the Wells ring.

2. Subcommittee Reports

The Physical Education subcommittee report will be to the Committee after Thanksgiving Break for discussion at the December 2nd meeting. Experiential Learning plans to submit a revised report that will be available after Thanksgiving Break also for discussion at the December 2nd meeting. Susan hopes to have a revised report from the Information Literacy and Oral Communication subcommittee to the Committee for the December 9th meeting. Since the work of the subcommittee considering the Distribution across the Divisions is now being done by the Committee of the Whole, a report will not be ready after break. Leslie suggested that the open meeting for faculty to discuss these reports be held the third week of February. The Committee agreed to February 17th at 4:30.

3. Enrollment Projections

Susan noted that members of her subcommittee were wondering about the anticipated increase in enrollment for Fall 2010. In particular, how a larger first-year class would affect offerings of general education courses. Leslie responded that she doesn't see this as an influence right now. We do not what the actual enrollments will be at this point. No matter what occurs with enrollments or the gen ed curriculum, we can't adjust to rapid change all at once. Ted shared that when his division met last week they discussed the possible enrollment increases. Faculty indicated that increases would necessitate revamping how they teach and how they evaluate students in their courses.

4. Review of Homework Assignments

The Committee began its review with a discussion of how difficult most found it to categorize goals into To Know, To Do, and To Be. The categories were meant to indicate knowledge, skills, and values, respectively. Some found that elements in one category overlapped with another category.

Kelley asked what the format of the eventual goals product was to be since it would help her in developing goals. There appears to be agreement that the goals would be stated in some form of a list (expanded upon with the articulation of the general education requirements). Leslie noted her preference for numbered lists as they facilitate easier reference to specific items.

The Committee then proceeded to review Cindy's submission (completing the prefatory remarks and the "To Know" category). Comments and rewording suggestions included:

Prefatory remarks -- Consensus with "The nature of a Wells education is one of transformation". Suggestion made not to indicate domain of development but to just state "from student to scholar" (some expressed interest in using the phrase lifelong learner). Other suggestions included "from participant to leader."

"How to think critically and creatively" – Consensus

"The breadth of human understanding of the physical world, societies and their institutions, individuals and their thoughts and behavior" – Suggestion: The breadth of human understanding of the physical world, cultures, individuals and their interrelations

"The methods employed by different disciplines to achieve understanding" – Suggestion: The ways of knowing used by different disciplines to achieve understanding

"The relationship between theory and practice" – Suggestion: The connections between theoretical knowledge and application

"Begin developing an expertise in a particular field of study" – Suggestion: Gaining a foundation in a particular field of study

With discussion of this last goal, the Committee revisited its discussion at the beginning of the meeting regarding the credit amounts that are required in majors.

5. Next Steps

Members should continue to work on their categorizations TO DO and TO BE. Should the TO KNOW category be missing any key goal, members should feel free to add to it. Leslie expressed concerns that at this time the TO KNOW list does not include scholarship about women or sustainability (diversity is included). She feels that if they are not in the goal list that they won't be accomplished. The actual general education requirements will include justification statements.

It was decided that meetings next semester will be on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. Members should check schedules to see if there are any problems with this meeting time.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Respectfully submitted,
Associate Dean Speaker