

Educational Policy Committee
March 3, 2011

Present: Professors Easter, Koepp, Olson, and Stiadle, Student Representative A. Schloop, Provost Miller-Bernal, and Associate Provost Speaker

The meeting came to order at approximately 9:32am and the minutes of the February 24 meeting were unanimously approved after a few corrections, including the regret that the capstone survey had not asked majors how they determine distinction.

The group first discussed the status of the two subcommittees. Scientific Literacy still lacks a representative from arts or humanities. Prof. Easter will appeal at today's Arts division meeting. LLT (Living and Learning Together, January week) now has Prof. Tabrizi (who had volunteered for either subcommittee). Associate Provost Speaker will find a representative from Student Life. The Provost raised concerns about getting LLT scheduled (or not) in time for appropriate staff and student scheduling. Faculty support is crucial; this cannot be solely a staff responsibility. There is some faculty concern about adding a whole week to the beginning of the semester without some form of compensation. On the other hand, some faculty hope to end the semester a week earlier if we start a week earlier. This would not work as far as credit hours go, however, unless contact time for courses is included in the LLT week. More generally, the questions of shortening senior week and having commencement on Memorial Day weekend arose. Returning to LLT, there was discussion of what critical mass of faculty would be necessary. There should be distribution across divisions. The pool of faculty would include all full time faculty members. Some sort of commitment or rotation among faculty year-to-year is necessary for sustainability. These concerns will be added to the LLT list EPC generated in its February 17 minutes. The group agreed to hear brief updates from the subcommittees each week.

The Committee discussed various descriptions of the first year seminar theme submitted last week. Provost Miller-Bernal will construct a composite of some of the best wordings; Prof. Stiadle will smooth it and circulate the result.

Committee members read their prepared descriptions of the second year seminar. Everyone will send theirs to Rhonda for distribution in preparation for next week.

Finally, attention turned to responses to the first five questions on the capstone survey. Nine of thirteen (received so far) use the term "capstone." Perhaps we could encourage common terminology for the experience. Most majors incorporate a thesis, a seminar, and comps. All but Business give at least four credits, though there is variation up to eight credits. There is a distinction between "thesis" and "seminar." Seminars vary among majors. Some include preparation for the thesis, some focus on preparation for graduate school or work, e.g. producing a portfolio, while others include reading and discussing field-appropriate literature. The group considered what components ought to be essential to any capstone, arriving at the tentative list

- multiple activities, such as comps, seminar, thesis
- writing, with revision, appropriate to the field

- oral communication

The last caused some discussion of whether activities such as poster sessions actually do the job. This in turn led to the question of what components of oral communication the capstone should address.

For next week, everyone will review the responses to questions 6 through 10 of the capstone survey, send their second year seminar descriptions to Rhonda, and prepare descriptions of the third year seminar theme.

The meeting adjourned at 10:48am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Stiadle
Secretary *pro tempore*