

Educational Policy Committee (EPC)

Minutes of the December 2, 2009 meeting

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

The meeting began at 9:30 am.

After a brief discussion and corrections of a report on EPC's work this semester for Tuesday's faculty meeting, we approved with commendation of the minutes for November 18, 2009, taken by the "minutes queen," Cindy Speaker!

The rest of the meeting was spent discussing the proposal for a new interdisciplinary major field, Film and Media Studies. Overall, EPC members were very positive about this proposal but also had some concerns. When EPC had amassed several questions it could not answer, we spoke to the program proposer, Linda Lohn, by phone. Rather than trying to summarize all the discussion or presenting it in order, the following list summarizes some of the main points and concerns raised by EPC members:

- A detail--the Political Science course under "e, Additional Electives," is no longer being offered. Instead the major might want to consider putting PS 155 (on American politics) in its place and, possibly, an introduction to international studies.
- Section "a) Technical Production," received the most comments, including: Students would not receive enough instruction in making films or videos. Art 260 and 261 have not been offered in the past three semesters, so we need a commitment from the College to hire adjuncts to teach them (or for Ted Lossowski to update his photography skills by taking a course). Book Arts courses have to limit enrollments, and similarly, students may not be able to get into Ithaca College courses. Ultimately EPC members endorsed adding a sentence to this section about courses being available through cross-registration opportunities. Linda Lohn also assured people that arrangements can be made for Wells students to get into courses at Ithaca Colleges (in particular, the courses at IC that were originally listed as part of this section of the proposed major).
- Related to the above, some EPC members voiced "truth in advertising" concerns. Would we be giving students the skills they need to be competitive with graduates from other colleges with such a major? Would students be misled in terms of what this major would offer them, particularly since the introduction states that students will have "the opportunity to produce their own works in writing, design, *or filmmaking*"? Some members of EPC argued that students with filmmaking interests could be encouraged to undertake particular types of internships and noted that there are many excellent independent filmmaking companies in Ithaca. Linda Lohn said that she is not wedded to this introduction, which she wrote quickly, and would not mind eliminating this sentence. Linda also noted that the title "Film and Media Studies" is a common one for programs like the one being proposed, i.e., appropriate to a liberal arts college where the focus of the major is more cultural analysis rather than the development of technical expertise.

- Some EPC members were also concerned about the question: “Can we do it?” They worried that Linda Lohn could not teach all the new courses listed, as well as teach American Studies and English courses and direct and teach WLLS 101. Linda answered by saying that American Studies would be folded into this new major, essentially, and so would be deleted as a major field (it may well have similar effects on the communications minor). She noted that several English courses that she has offered have already been deleted from the curriculum and would be covered through courses for this proposed major. She plans on teaching a WLLS 101 section every *other* year. Also, six other faculty members have been involved in developing the proposal and will be teaching courses for it: Dan Renfrow, Laura McClusky, Jan-Martijn Meij, Dandan Chen, Tracy Brandenburg, and William Ganis. A new major will also probably stimulate other faculty to consider offering new or different courses that would be appropriate to include. Such curricular development in response to new majors or minors is a common pattern.
- How often courses can be offered, and ensuring that they are offered on a regular basis, remains a concern, especially as we anticipate increased enrollment and some courses have to limit enrollments due to practical or equipment-related issues. This is not a greater concern for this major than others, however, since an interdisciplinary major should be less affected by faculty members’ leaves.

A motion was made to approve this proposed major with an additional sentence under section a) about cross-registration opportunities and a change to what is recommended as the second sentence to the introduction, i.e., after “cultural implications of living in a ‘mediated society,’” EPC recommends saying something like, “Students will have an opportunity to produce a work appropriate for an undergraduate liberal arts degree in writing, design, or filmmaking.” The motion passed unanimously, with EPC members praising Linda Lohn’s extensive work in developing this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Miller-Bernal