

Minutes for EPC Meeting, April 28, 2010

Present: Faculty members Amy Godert, Cynthia J. Koepp, Ted Lossowski, Susan Tabrizi;; Associate Dean Cindy Speaker; Dean Leslie Miller-Bernal

The meeting began at 9:05.

The minutes for April 21 were approved as submitted.

We discussed the possibility of setting up a joint meeting with Curriculum committee in order to get opinions of its members on issues of interest to us both.

We had a lengthy discussion a Gen Ed proposal (including career connections and experiential learning).

This proposal lays out a structure of courses that could be altered, depending on the designation of organizing concepts or guiding principles (“pillars”).

This set of courses could build on one another over the four years in each area/division, and could culminate in a cross-disciplinary capstone senior seminar.

These “pillar” courses would replace current distribution requirements; ideally at least some of them might be inter-divisional courses.

The underlying design speaks to learning outcomes/goals as outlined by the LEAP document.

One goal of 4 year integrated Gen Ed is to get students out of the checklist mentality toward required courses.

We discussed the possibility of linking certain courses together in pairs, to enhance interdisciplinary connections. These courses could be taught separately and then linked once a week with one-hour discussion section.

These courses might have “teamwork” components for students—since much of world of work requires teamwork rather than the solitude of academic research.

We discussed the virtues of a team-taught seminars (with instructors from different areas) aimed (especially) at sophomores to help those students get used to encountering different perspectives on same material. Also could perhaps enhance retention at that crucial level.

We discussed the likelihood that some majors would need to offer fewer courses to free them to teach in new Gen Ed courses. Our majors currently seem to require more courses/hours than similar majors at other comparable institutions. We might need to rethink how we define majors as well.

We talked about scheduling issues and possibilities of a renewed J-term on campus.

We wondered if our majors offer too many courses as afternoon seminars. What courses benefit from seminar slots versus sessions of 75 or 90 or 50 minutes? We wondered about how to add more flexibility to the schedule. What changes might make our schedule more productive and efficient? Should we reserve lunch hour for meetings?

We also discussed the possibility of using J-term more fruitfully, as the place when some of these new courses and activities (internships, experiential learning, “pillar” courses) might take place.

We discussed the current January issue. The first time we offered Wells 190 in January, 30% of students participated; in January 2010, only 16%.

Now more students are on campus for sports and other activities, so perhaps we could have more courses happening on campus again.

We used to have interesting and intensive courses in January.

There would likely be staffing issues. Who would teach in January?

On the other hand, in J-term more team teaching would be possible; courses could focus on more specialized topics courses also.

Our task for next time: to think about a design for a January course.

What is on the table now? In opening meetings in 2008-09, Wells faculty members have discussed a curriculum including the following:
2 courses in quantitative reasoning and critical thinking, Wells 101, 2 writing attentive courses, language requirement, expanded Wellness and different activity courses. In 2009-10 open meetings looked at proposals concerning experiential learning and information literacy and oral communication.

We could perhaps integrate some of these areas into the Gen Ed courses—critical thinking and reasoning, for example.

Many questions to consider in our designs. Who will participate? What number of students? In the future we will need to keep in mind general workload issues: overloads of senior theses, internship sponsorship, and compensation.

Meeting ended at 10:20am

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Koeppe

