

Minutes of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC)
October 27, 2015

Present: Provost Cindy Speaker, Professors Jeanne Goddard, Niamh O'Leary, and Susan Wansor, Student Rep. Chris Castro

Call to Order: 12:02PM

1. Minutes approved as corrected: "Roadmap" vs. "M.A.P." in reference to draft Gen.Ed. curriculum.

2. Discussion of additional class time slot, MF 1:00-2:15PM, proposed by Curriculum Committee. While acknowledging some potential conflict with Science Colloquium (Fridays) and Sustainability Perspectives Series (Mondays), EPC approved the new time slot by consensus.

3. Discussion of double major:

Change of GPA requirement from 3.5 to 3.0 for declaration of double major. The committee acknowledged that a significant percentage of current students would already be double-major eligible under the 3.5 GPA requirement. In other words, the numbers do not necessarily support our rationale for lowering the GPA requirement from 3.5 to 3.0 to make the double major more accessible.

Thesis. Another challenge for double majors is the requirement of two full thesis projects. A future consideration might be the conflation of two theses into a single large project that would satisfy both disciplines.

Deadline. The issue of EPC's proposed earlier deadline for double-major declaration may come up at the next faculty meeting.

4. Proposed revision of Gen. Ed. Program. Feedback was solicited from faculty in all three divisions, as well as other teaching staff. A sample of the range of suggestions includes:

The program should

- Have an overarching structure.
- Encourage breadth.
- Prepare students for a global citizenship in a changing world.
- Set students up for success over the four years, building on strengths while addressing weaknesses.
- Connect students with their best-fit major (and minor) to aid retention.
- Encourage self-directed, independent learning.
- Develop skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and different modes of research and learning.
- Maintain the Wells tradition of educating women for leadership, and also prepare men to work in women-run organizations.

An issue mentioned consistently is the improvement of students' writing skills and the debate over how and by whom writing should be taught at the college. The current SC 101 model does not address the issue consistently. EPC members stressed the difference between "doing a lot of writing" and improving writing skills. Committee members

wondered if new staffing could be provided, possibly to teach a college-wide first year writing course, and how that course might be structured (e.g. two 7-week segments for 1-2 credits?). Whatever the model, assessment must be built in from the start. Individual majors will also need to assess writing directly, and demonstrate progress.

Next week (November 3) Registrar/Director of Academic Advising Nicole Pellegrino and Director of Experiential Learning and Career Services Alicin Welsh will meet with EPC specifically to discuss the Gen. Ed. Curriculum.

Adjournment: 1:04PM

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Goddard
Secretary pro tem