

Educational Policy Committee
March 28, 2012

Present: Professors Koepp, Stiadle, and Tabrizi, student representative Miller, and Dean Speaker.

The meeting came to order at 9:33am. Minutes of the March 14 meeting were unanimously approved with corrections.

The principal business of the meeting concerned the Institutional and Academic Program Goals. Homework for the April 11 meeting (EPC will not meet on April 4 due to the Innovation and Imagination CS&E day) is for all committee members to submit a draft of goals to the EPC list by Monday, April 9. The group agreed that goals need not be modifications of existing ones but that everything is open for discussion.

As a starting point, EPC examined the Mission Statement, since goals should follow from it. Members noted themes such as different ways of knowing, smallness is conducive to different experiences, Wells can keep students connected to ideas as opposed to narrow outcomes, etc.

Next, the group discussed what “the liberal arts” mean. Terms that arose in this discussion included well-rounded intellectually, adaptable, conversant in many subjects, articulate, makes reasoned arguments, and interprets in context. It is important to move students from simple, black and white answers to informed, supported opinions that cross disciplines. Such an approach ought to lead to creative problem-solving. The Committee agreed that depth in some field is important along with keeping an open mind. Expressing oneself effectively—orally, in writing, through the arts—is an important means for learning about oneself and the world.

Returning to the Mission Statement, the group talked about the phrase “cultivate meaningful lives,” and agreed that it means different things to different people. As written, the Statement presumes that students are engaged in this, not that the College provides it. “To be creative” should apply across and within disciplines. “Learn and practice the liberal arts” implies active student lives and an active community and also is supported by experiential learning and capstone experiences.

Dean Speaker will remind the Committee of the homework assignment on the Friday before the next meeting. Everyone should be prepared to discuss others’ suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Stiadle
Secretary *pro tempore*