

Committee for Educational Planning and Policy - Annual Report (6/4/01)

INTRODUCTION:

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning met 37 times during the academic year 2000-2001. CEPP representatives met with the Board of Trustees' Sub-Committee on Academic Affairs three times to discuss the faculty's work on revising all-college requirements. CEPP representatives met with Academic Staff five different times to discuss the committee's work. A CEPP representative met with the Student Government Association's Senate to discuss CEPP's proposal to amend all-college requirements. There were also a number of other meetings of various CEPP subcommittees (e.g., Sub-Committee on Academic Standards and Expectations, Sub-Committee on Guidelines for Culture-Centered Inquiry, Sub-Committee on Guidelines for Humanities, Sub-Committee on Guidelines for Arts, Sub-Committee on Guidelines for Social Sciences, Sub-Committee on Guidelines for Natural Sciences, etc.) and committees that jointly include CEPP members (e.g., Institutional Planning Committee, Committee on Committees).

REGULAR BUSINESS:

While the year was dominated by attention to the core curriculum, CEPP carried out a number of more routine tasks. We approved a proposal for

During last summer and early fall, CEPP continued its efforts to consult numerous parties in planning for a new curriculum (e.g., Offices of the Dean of the Faculty's Office, the President, the Dean of Studies, the Registrar, Student Affairs, Academic Staff, Student Government Association Senate, SGA Academic Council, Admissions, selected departments and numerous individual faculty, especially previous CEPP members). The committee brought a preliminary proposal to the faculty at a Special Faculty Meeting on September 22, 2000.

With the generous help of Leo Geoffrion and Ann Henderson, we established a web-site with several sources of information and means for communication. These included links to AAC&U white papers, data analyses (generated by CEPP and the Registrar) and SGA documents. We also set up a newsgroup discussion to facilitate more dialogue, which generated a cluster of concerns. CEPP then distributed a short survey to the faculty in an effort to develop a broader sense of the faculty's wishes. In addition, CEPP members continued to have dozens of informal conversations with various individual colleagues.

Based on all these exchanges, CEPP revised its proposal, which it then presented as a formal motion at another Special Faculty Meeting on November 17. Subsequent conversations with key departments most involved in proposed changes led to additional revisions of the proposal, which came to a vote on the faculty floor at the Faculty Meeting of December 1 (see Minutes from Faculty Meeting for a copy of the motion). After several amendments were considered and rejected, CEPP's motion was approved (89 voted "yes," 33 voted "no," 3 Abstentions).

The committee then turned its attention to the many details of implementing the new curriculum. In consultation with the offices of the Dean of Studies, the Registrar, Academic Staff and various departments, CEPP devised a general plan for implementation. Along the way, a concern developed among some faculty about the appropriate procedures for determining the best way to move through the period of transition. CEPP then consulted with the Committee on Faculty Governance and Professor John Thomas (the Parliamentarian) about appropriate procedures. CFG and Professor Thomas indicated that the wording of the motion passed by the faculty on December 1 suggested that all students were now under the new curriculum. Recognizing the logistical problems of that default arrangement and the tight timeframe for making changes in the catalogue and reworking course offerings, CEPP was eager to delineate a specific alternative plan for implementation. The most difficult issue to resolve at this stage was how many classes of students would be under the new curriculum.

CEPP then brought two motions to the Faculty Meeting on March 2. The Chair of the Faculty Meeting, President Studley, concluded that the effective date, class, or method for launching the new core curriculum is not a "major matter of policy" and therefore is not subject to the conditions for being held over for a vote. The first motion, which included a friendly

amendment offered by Professor David Wiess, stated the following: "CEPP moves that the all-college requirements for the Classes of '01 and '02 remain unaffected by the curricular changes voted in by the faculty in December of 2000." This motion passed. The second motion read: "CEPP moves that students in the classes of '03 and '04 who have already met the foreign language requirement according to the curriculum in place when they entered Skidmore will be deemed to have met the foreign language requirement under the newly adopted curriculum." This motion also passed.

We then organized subcommittees (including CEPP members and other faculty) for drafting guidelines for each of the new requirement categories in the core curriculum, which included Culture-

campus politics, often at the expense of using valuable time for more substantive conversations about curricular philosophies, logistics and possibilities underscores this problem. Figuring out a better way to negotiate this challenge will be crucial to any future effort to revise the curriculum or for that matter to develop any kind of substantially new direction in educational policy in general. Paying more attention to

Institutional Planning Committee this year in the Strategic Planning Initiative as well as concerns raised by the Committee on Faculty

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Sandy Baum
Susan Bender
John Brueggemann (Chair)
Pat Fehling
Pat Oles
Lary Opitz
Phil Ortiz
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