**Skidmore College**

**Committee on Educational Policies and Planning**

**Minutes**

**12 November 2014 at 8:00am, Ladd 106**

Present: William Lewis (Chair), Beau Breslin (Dean of Faculty and VPAA), Rochelle Calhoun (Dean of Students and VPSA), Amy Frappier, Sarah Goodwin (Scribe), Renee Schapiro (Student), Kelly Sheppard, Charles Tetelman (Student), Peter von Allmen. Absent: April Bernard.

1. Announcements: Bill will ask Brooke Thomas to do a doodle poll to find a meeting time for next semester.
2. Minutes from 5 November 2014 meeting approved.
3. New Business: none.
4. Ongoing Business:
	1. Study Day: Michael Casey (VP Advancement) has let us know via Bill that he isn't eager to change the date of Celebration Weekend; he has heard objections before, considered and consulted, and does not want to change; we will return to the question later.
	2. Gathering of studies on curricular areas and goals: Lisa provided a password protected link to an archive of studies documenting problems we are aiming to address:

<https://skidmore.box.com/s/0odjc87dkjrzb6b1q0d2>

Not all of us can access it. Bill will talk to Lisa Christenson about giving all faculty access, so that they can see the reports and the problems to which we're responding. Peter noted that the Annual Report from CEPP for last year summarizes the problems. Still, we agreed we are trying to do more than fix problems--we want a curriculum that has a positive vision.

* 1. November 7th COW results: The first question had a large majority who clicked that they were opposed to a model that would rely on increased advising. Points made: some faculty have a huge number of advisees, and the load is very uneven; some faculty may not trust others to do the necessary advising; faculty who spoke seemed more to favor the increased advising model; some who spoke seemed to equate requirements with the Skidmore curriculum; students at Senate, queried by Charles, favored the increased advising model; the resource implications are serious--we'd need more tenure-line faculty (not necessarily more faculty); we'd need to look closely at how we view and "count" advising. Hamilton has all students rate their faculty advisors. This model would require considerable discussion of advising. Could we imagine students having two advisors--one for "mind," one for "hand"? Students in Senate noted the unevenness of advising; they appreciate the individualized nature of the advising relationship and think that is worth cultivating more; they would like to see advisors more as mentors, or at least more personal; students now only go to their advisors to get their registration hold released; because we're a small college, students expect a relationship with their advisor; if advisors would be reading the reflective essays, students would want some response, something back. Sarah will ask Lisa to help pull together the data we have on advising at Skidmore. Charles will bring the clicker questions to Academic Council this week.

On the second question, about having students write reflective essays: there was some opposition, but not overwhelming. The question is vague. It's useful to have these first two questions--about increasing advising and about having students reflect in writing--out there together, because they're interrelated and they tip our hand and let the faculty know what we're working on. Question 3, about letting students test out with competencies, had good support. Some discussion followed of competency vs. experience.

Some major changes we could make would require a long, slow roll-out so as to meet the resource implications. Example: for the CCI proposal that was voted down, we had 20% of the needed courses; developing enough could take years. We need to continue to alert faculty to a possible slow implementation schedule.

Discussion followed of the writing requirement and whether we could redefine it in some way to implement it more throughout the college, possibly leveraging the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, possibly leaning on the humanities beyond English. This could free up or move some of the regular positions away from English and perhaps allow conversions to tenure track in other departments.

* 1. Curricular reconstruction: Presentation and Discussion of Plan A (formerly "synths") will take place next week.
	2. We also agreed it would be good to talk with CIGU about their discussions bearing on curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Goodwin, scribe