

Faculty Meeting Statement by Matthew Hockenos, Chair of CEPP

Regarding the 9/06/05 CEPP Discussion about the DOS/DSA Restructuring

CEPP consists of six elected faculty members (this year they include Gordon Thompson, Ruth Andrea Levinson, Michael Mudrovic, Deb Hall, Beau Breslin, and myself) as well as two administrators (the Vice President of Academic Affairs (Chuck Joseph) and the Dean of Student Affairs (Pat Oles), and two students elected by SGA (Molly Appel and Dan Moran). This means, of course, that there are often serious disagreements - particularly when the issue is controversial like the one we are discussing today. My job as chair is to try to present to the faculty an accurate account of CEPP's deliberations, including where we agree and where we disagree. I have tried to do this to the best of my ability in the following statement.

On September 6th CEPP held its first meeting of the new academic year. One of the items on our agenda was to have Chuck and Pat report to CEPP on the restructuring of the Dean of Studies and Dean of Student Affairs Offices. Following Chuck and Pat's report a lively discussion ensued about the restructuring, including some discussion about what had taken place, what should have taken place, and what we might do now and in the future.

Chuck acknowledged that *some* faculty are concerned that there was too little faculty consultation (some would say none at all) in the decision-making that led up to the restructuring. In particular, these faculty members believe that CEPP should have been informed *in detail* about the restructuring so that it could have made an informed decision about whether this was CEPP business or not. Chuck agreed that there could and should have been more faculty consultation *but* he wanted to emphasize two things: one, that there was a member of CEPP and another faculty member on the DOS Study Group that recommended the restructuring. And two, that despite claims that he *did not* report to CEPP on the DOS restructuring, he, in fact, *did*. He reported briefly on the restructuring at a February 2005 CEPP meeting. The minutes from February 23rd, 2005 read:

CJ and PO reported on plans for the Dean of Student Affairs and the Dean of Studies Offices. The Dean of Studies office will be retained, focused on academic policy and advising. The Dean of Studies will work with the director of the FYS. A national search will ensue to fill this position, currently held by Grace Burton as Interim Dean of Studies.

The Dean of Student Affairs will expand its services to focus on retention, especially of international students, honors students, and athletes. The Center for Academic Achievement (current working title) will incorporate ESL and disabilities specialists and also HEOP.

That's how Chuck's report was summarized in the February minutes.

Some of the faculty members on CEPP believe that CEPP should have received a copy of the DOS Study Group's final report of December 2004. This report recommends to the administration much of the restructuring that has taken place, including the creation of a new office, the Office of Student Academic Services called the center for teaching and learning in the report. Had CEPP (or some other committee such as CAPT or the former IPC) received this report CEPP would have been aware of the educational issues involved in the restructuring and might have wanted to deliberate on these changes as a committee.

Some faculty and administrators wonder whether the restructuring is CEPP's business at all. CEPP's charge is to recommend to the faculty and administration short and long-range educational plans for the College and thus be instrumental in clarifying, improving and changing major policies and educational procedures; to evaluate Skidmore's present practices and goals. It is clear to some members of CEPP that CEPP should have been more involved in the restructuring since aspects of the restructuring affect educational policy, for instance, where students in need of academic support will go and what sort of support they will receive.

In light of the limited information faculty received on the restructuring of the office of the Dean of Studies and Dean of Student Affairs, FEC, the Faculty Executive Committee, along with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President have proposed to CEPP that it review and evaluate the restructuring of the Dean of Studies' Office and the creation of the Office for Student Academic Services. CEPP considered this proposal this past Tuesday, September 6th. Although there is disagreement on CEPP whether there was insufficient faculty consultation, there is agreement that the restructuring should be reviewed. CEPP, however, believes that the review should take place *only after* the new structures have been in place for two years.

The primary reasons behind CEPP's decision not to review the restructuring at this time is that such a review would be extremely time consuming and unlikely to influence any of the major changes that have already been implemented, such as the offices that have been created, the promotions that have been made, the personnel that have been transferred from the Dean of Studies Office to the Dean of Student Affairs, and the budgets that have been set. Instead CEPP would rather be actively involved in shaping the educational policies related to whatever decisions might remain and I am told there are significant decisions yet to be made. The Dean of Student Affairs and the Vice President of Academic Affairs have agreed to bring to CEPP all matters of education policy related to the DOS restructuring so that CEPP can deliberate on these matters.

Let me make clear that CEPP is neither endorsing nor condemning all of the changes that have taken place. I imagine that there are several aspects of the restructuring that some CEPP members would applaud. I also get the sense that there are particular aspects that some CEPP members find *extremely* troubling. *However*, I want to emphasize that all CEPP members *are* in agreement that it would not be a valuable use of CEPP's time to evaluate THE RESTRUCTURING as a whole. CEPP does not believe that its charge includes evaluating all aspects of the restructuring, especially the process. What we do intend to do is to play as active a role as possible in shaping the educational policy related to the restructuring. There is no doubt that many members of CEPP would have preferred to be a part of the process earlier -- but that time has passed and it's now time to work with Pat Oles and Sue Layden on developing an overall mission and particular policies for the Office of Student Academic Services.