

Committee on Educational Policies & Planning (CEPP)
Motions
Faculty Meeting – September 8, 2006

Motion: CEPP moves that the faculty terminate the affiliation with Beijing University in China for the Skidmore in Beijing Program. This affiliation would officially end once this fall semester's program has been completed on December 31, 2006.

Rationale: This motion comes to CEPP from the Beijing Steering Committee and Cori Filson, Director of International Programs. The rationale is as follows:

The Beijing Steering Committee, which currently oversees the development and implementation of the Skidmore in Beijing program, proposes that the College terminate its current affiliation with Beijing University because of concerns over the long-term financial viability of the program as it currently exists, and because of a desire to develop a program that allows the College more control and flexibility in academic programming.

The Freeman Foundation, which has funded the Skidmore in Beijing program until this point, has requested that Skidmore make a commitment to maintaining its program in China after the grant period expires in May 2007. With this in mind, the Beijing Steering Committee devoted a good deal of time during the 2005-2006 academic year to investigating different program models and options, with the goal of determining which model might allow Skidmore to maintain a relatively unique program in China, with a strong fieldwork component, and a variety of content courses taught in English. Additionally, the program now must be financially self-supporting, which is challenging given our relatively low enrollments in the current Skidmore in Beijing program.

The Skidmore-Beijing University relationship has served the College well for the past three years. Skidmore students have enjoyed a rewarding experience in Beijing and Skidmore faculty and administrators have benefited from a variety of opportunities to interact with colleagues from Beijing University. The affiliation with Beijing University allowed Skidmore to open a program in China that should be seen as an important addition to our portfolio of overseas opportunities. Nevertheless, the program at Beijing University is extremely expensive and cannot be maintained once the Freeman funds expire. The Beijing Steering Committee investigated continuing our program with Beijing University with the hope that we might build on the solid relationship we have established. Unfortunately, Beijing University has been unable to provide the program structure we want for a price we can afford. The structure they proposed includes 20 hours of language instruction, only one content course, and a pared-down version of the fieldwork component. This is simply not the program we envision for our students. We determined that in the end we cannot afford to stay at Beijing University if we want to deliver the program model we believe is the best for our students.