**CEPP Minutes – November 12, 2013**

**In attendance:** Peter von Allmen (Chair), Beau Breslin, Rochelle Calhoun, Caroline D’Abate (scribe), Pat Fehling, Amy Frappier, Rubén Graciani, Renée Schapiro, Charles Tetelman

**Not in attendance:** Sarah Goodwin

1. **Approval of Minutes from November 5 meeting** - with minor edit
2. **IPPC white paper charge** – IPPC has requested departments, divisions, and committees to contribute to a larger dialogue as part of Skidmore’s Strategic Planning Process. CEPP will need to weigh in on the three questions IPPC has presented, keeping creativity and forward-thinking in mind. Those questions are:

1. How does CEPP view the College today? Provide three keywords (rank-ordered)

2. How does CEPP view the external world? Provide three keywords (rank-ordered)

3. How does CEPP describe the College you would like to see us become by 2025? Provide three keywords (rank-ordered)

Held over until next week. This will be a key topic of discussion in CEPP’s 11/19 meeting.

1. **SGA and sustainability in curriculum**

CEPP chair reported on a meeting with Rachel Church, member of SGA, about SGA’s strong desire to see sustainability become part of the GE requirements at Skidmore. At that meeting, Rachel shared a list of schools with sustainability requirements and described a notation system whereby schools with such requirements earn STARS designation. CEPP chair explained CEPP’s GE review and where we are in the process. CEPP noted that sustainability is a key part of the College’s strategic plan.

1. **The Relationship between Co-Curriculum and Educational Goals**

Given CEPP’s focus on GE review, the topic of the co-curriculum has come up a number of

times – in terms of the role it might play in Skidmore’s common course of study. CEPP, therefore, engaged in a discussion of co-curricular learning and its role at Skidmore, facilitated by DOSA.

Definitions of a co-curriculum were considered as were outcomes of effective engagement in the co-curriculum. Implications of having co-curricular learning become a formal part of graduation requirements were discussed (e.g., how and where to note this on a student’s transcript or degree audit (possibly as “fractional credit”), how to assess co-curricular experiences, how to determine the standards for acceptable completion of co-curricular requirements). For example, since some co-curricular experiences might be designed to earn academic credit while others are more developmental in nature, CEPP discussed how to note/track these activities on a degree audit/transcript.

The notion that some co-curricular learning happens organically rather than in a formally designed learning environment or experience was also discussed. CEPP recognized that this offers an opportunity – by making them part of the common course of study can communicate the value of these and can make co-curricular learning a more intentional process (rather than a by-product of a Skidmore education that some of our students maybe just happen to have). On a related note, CEPP recognized that if some kind of “credit” is going to be granted (even “fractional” credit – i.e., notation on transcript), it’s important to connect the co-curriculum to the larger learning/developmental goals. For example, the current GE requirements are limited in their coverage of “personal and social values” (see Skidmore’s GSLD III; AAC&U’s Essential Learning Outcomes). The co-curriculum might provide a rich opportunity for fractional/credit-bearing experiences to encourage introspection, examination, interrogation, competency development, and application of learning to one’s own personal and social values.

Next steps include a dialogue on co-curricular learning within Student Affairs and on the larger college/faculty level, possibly a scan to identify where these things are already happening, developing methods to more readily recognize them and be more intentional about them, and keeping the co-curriculum in mind for how it might be integrated into the common course of study (GE curriculum).

1. **Common course of study – Evaluation rubric**

As part of the GE review effort, CEPP began work considering how alternate GE models might satisfy current/future needs (i.e., fitting our mission/vision, goals (GSLD), AAC&U’s recommendations, Middle States’ standards). A rubric for evaluating potential curricular models was proposed by CEPP chair. It appears below with additions/revisions that came up during the current meeting in *italics*.

Rubric

1. Does the model address the goals for student learning?
   1. In which areas is it strongest?
   2. What are the major weaknesses with regards to the goals?
2. *Related to item 1*, does it respond to AAC&U recommendations (LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes)?
   1. Broad learning - about science, society, technology, human diversity, and global cultures and interdependence
   2. Intellectual skills - that support evidence-based reasoning and innovation—including analysis, communication, critical and creative thinking, quantitative fluency, information literacy, and collaborative problem solving
   3. Personal and social responsibility - including ethical reasoning, civic and democratic knowledge and engagement, global acumen, and the capacity to work productively with diverse people and perspectives
   4. Integrative and adaptive learning - including the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to complex problems and new settings
3. Is it consistent with CTM *and interdisciplinarity*?
4. Does it foster integration?
5. Is it hierarchical *or present a ladder of learning* (i.e., does it require students to build skills across four years)?
6. Does it represent a reasonable course load (percentage of total)?
7. Does it require a change in our advising model?
8. Does the model respond adequately to Middle States standard 12? (“The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.”)
9. Does it address the students’ stated desire for more emphasis on oral communication and sustainability?
10. *Preparing graduates* - Does it respond to AAC&U research on what employers are looking for? (see “Employer Priorities and Consensus on College Learning Outcomes” from LEAP Employer-Educator compact)
    1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
       1. Civic knowledge, skills, and judgment essential for contributing to the community and to our democratic society 82%
       2. Broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences 80%
       3. Global issues and knowledge about societies and cultures outside the US 78%
       4. Knowledge about science and technology 56%
    2. Intellectual and Practical Skills
11. Critical thinking and analytic reasoning 82%
12. Complex problem solving 81%
13. Written and oral communication 80%
14. Information literacy 72%
15. Innovation and creativity 71%
16. Teamwork skills in diverse groups 67%
17. Quantitative reasoning 55%
    1. Personal and Social Responsibility
18. Problem solving in diverse settings 91%
19. Ethical issues/public debates important in their field 87%
20. Ethical decision-making 64%
    1. Integrative and Applied Learning
       1. Direct experiences with community problem solving 86%
       2. Applied knowledge in real-world settings 78%
21. Is it feasible given our resources?
22. *Does it allow for student-centered flexibility?* 
    1. *Exploration – for students that need to figure out where they want to go (breadth is critical here)*
    2. *Pathways – for students who know exactly what they want to do (these students choose breadth requirements that will help them study what they already know they want to study)*
23. *Is it transformative in some way? Does it offer a formal, intentional moments of reflection and discernment for students to gain a transformative educational/developmental experience?*
    1. *Does it foster transformative moments for students? For example, does it include the co-curriculum as transformative developmental opportunities? Does it consider leadership or some other competency as a common experience that we could make happen in an academic experience and support/supplement that with the co-curriculum?*
    2. *Does it engender real self-reflection for students that could be transformative? (e.g., a developmental interaction in an academic setting or with peers in a co-curricular environment)*
    3. *Not necessarily semester long courses, but opportunities for reflecting on themselves their own values, time devoted to discernment (what am I interested in, what does this mean for me?)*
24. **Common course of study – Potential alternate models**

Two alternate GE models were considered this week. Notes related to their strengths/weaknesses are as follows:

1. Literacy-based model – Proposes students take courses in three or four literacy areas (of their choosing) out of a number of key defined clusters (e.g., cultural literacy, scientific literacy, global literacy, arts literacy, etc). Students would be able to choose among courses in at least two different divisions (i.e., humanities, social sciences, pre-professionals, arts, natural/life sciences).

Proposed changes: Add an integrative cluster (requiring a course on leadership, a course/co-curricular experience on reflection, and an interdisciplinary course)

Concerns:

* Advising could become a real bottleneck
* Do we have enough courses?
* Defining the literacies and grouping them in clusters will take some work (examples: cultural and global literacy, scientific and quantitative literacy, arts and creativity OR global and language literacy, quantitative reasoning and scientific literacy, arts and culture, integrative)
* Does the fact that students would choose their literacy clusters mean that we have the potential of graduating students who are not “liberally” educated? (i.e., only in the areas they chose?)

1. Big ideas – Proposes students choose three timely themes or “ideas” to study (e.g., global health, hunger/food, sustainability, immigration, privacy, etc) and take courses in groups of three to explore those themes. Co-curricular events reinforce the themes. Courses are offered on 100 and 200 level.

Meeting adjourned at 5pm.