

Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP), Annual Report for AY 2012-13

The committee met 28 times during the academic year, including two extended retreats. The year began with an ambitious agenda which included the following items:

Curriculum

- Culture-Centered Inquiry requirement
- All-college curriculum

Subcommittee reports and projects

- ACOP (Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study)
- Assessment Steering Committee
- Course caps
- Student rating form (“Dean’s card”) revision
- Transitions & Transformations
- Science literacy

Miscellaneous

- E-portfolios
- On-line education and MOOCs (“Massive Open On-Line Courses”)
- AAC&U Principles and Practices: Faculty Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning
- Academic Affairs budget FY14
- Communications with other committees: CAS (Committee on Academic Standing), CAPT (Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure), CC (Curriculum Committee), FEC (Faculty Executive Committee), IPPC (Institutional Policy and Planning Committee)

This report summarizes CEPP’s work on these matters. For the agendas and minutes of the committee’s meetings, which were held Wednesdays mornings (8.15-9.15, fall; 8.30-9.30, spring); reports submitted to CEPP; and materials related to the curriculum and student rating form, see <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/CEPP/index.html>.

Curriculum

- Culture-Centered Inquiry requirement: since the spring of 2011 CEPP has developed various modifications to the current Cultural Diversity portion of this requirement. CEPP discussed proposals on the floor of the faculty, held an open forum, and finalized a motion and rationale in the spring that would have added a requirement (“Considering Difference”) needing approximately 75-80 courses that would count towards that requirement. CEPP canvassed departments and programs in the spring semester, but since they could not identify a sufficient number of courses the committee withdrew the motion with considerable reluctance. CEPP remains committed to reconsidering the requirement and intends to incorporate its thinking about it into a broader consideration of the all-College curriculum.
- All-College curriculum: the all-College requirements, intended to introduce our students to breadth across the disciplines, contains components that stretch back nearly 20 years. In 2009, the faculty approved a set of student learning goals (GSLD, the “Goals for Student Learning and Development”) which are not specifically in sync with those requirements. CEPP shared at multiple faculty meetings its intention to review the all-College requirements, to compare them with the GSLD and with all-College curricula at other institutions, and to discuss systematically as a committee and with the faculty the results of that review. CEPP has no preconceived notion

of what this curriculum should be; the end result of the review might either produce an endorsement of the current requirements or a proposal for modifications. CEPP began the review late in the spring and at the end-of-year retreat, where the current and incoming members of CEPP examined the requirements at the top 100 liberal arts institutions, identifying broad patterns ranging from no requirements to as many as 18. CEPP will continue with the review throughout the 2013/4 academic year and consult with the faculty regularly on its progress.

Subcommittee reports and projects

- ACOP (Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study): the committee (Cori Filson and Tina Breakell for OCSE, Michael Arnush for CEPP) reviewed student petitions for study abroad at non-approved programs, reviewed faculty proposals for travel-seminars, and discussed with Corey Freeman-Gallant (Associate Dean of the Faculty) and Lisa Hobbs (OCSE) mechanisms to streamline the travel-seminar proposal process.
- Assessment Steering Committee: CEPP consulted with Sarah Goodwin, Assessment Coordinator, about the long-term relationship between the college's on-going assessment activities and CEPP. Because CEPP does not maintain subcommittees and the work of assessment reaches beyond educational planning, CEPP and Sarah agreed that the better locus for the Assessment Steering Committee would be the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC). In consultation with its chair, President Phil Glotzbach, and its vice-chair, Erica Bastress-Dukehart (History), CEPP proposed and IPPC approved the transferral of the Assessment Steering Committee to IPPC's auspices.
- Course caps: CEPP received a report from the CEPP-CC subcommittee on course caps, discussed the report at multiple meetings, and passed along its endorsement of the subcommittee's recommendations to Beau Breslin, DOF/VPAA, who subsequently shared those recommendations with department chairs and program directors at their May retreat.
- Student rating form ("Dean's card") revision: except for the Cultural Diversity requirement discussions, the student rating form revision occupied the lion's share of CEPP's time this academic year. A subcommittee consisting of CEPP and CAPT members had worked for two years on revising the "Dean's Card" form, both to provide additional and more nuanced information to the faculty about their teaching and to reduce the biases that the existing form facilitated. CEPP brought a motion, rationale and revised form to the faculty early in the spring semester, solicited input at the faculty meeting and via email, consulted broadly with current and former members of the CEPP-CAPT subcommittee and other faculty, and brought a final version to the faculty later in the spring, which the faculty approved. Discussions with Joe Stankovich, Director of Institutional Research, who consulted the vendor Scantron, resulted in the decision to continue to use a paper rather than a digital format, to exclude demographic questions because the system cannot accommodate the necessary cross-tabulation of the data, and to implement the new form in AY 2013/4. CEPP will revisit the form and share its consideration with the faculty in three years.
- Transitions & Transformations: this CEPP subcommittee submitted a report during the summer of 2012, outlining the progress and challenges associated with the Transitions & Transformations project. CEPP shared the report with the faculty and discussed the report at multiple meetings, including consultation with Corey Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of the Faculty, and Kim Marsella, Associate Director of Academic Policy and Advising. CEPP endorsed the subcommittee's major recommendations: a) T&T concerns our students' undergraduate and post-baccalaureate lives; b) the faculty are free to choose whether to

contribute to this enterprise, and (non)participation by some should not compel nor constrain others to do so; c) T&T embraces both classroom and independent work, helping our students engage across differences, receive feedback on their work, and reflect on their experiences; d) we should centralize the resources available to students to enhance their academic and co-curricular experiences; define more precisely both service- and community-based learning; create a process to support more concretely and incentivize those faculty who wish/choose to participate in engaged liberal learning practices (ELLPs), which include working with and/or advising students in independent studies, theses, exploratory research, practica, capstone work, colloquia, senior seminars, internships, etc.; equalize student access to such opportunities; and continue to explore “whether demographic differences in ELLP participation [by students based on gender, ALANA identity and financial need] are persistent and significant.” The SEE-Beyond Awards, which CEPP discussed at length with Corey and Kim, represent one very successful component of T&T, for it spanned both demographic and need-based differences, and Corey and Kim shared their aspirations for the expansion of this program. While CEPP discussed the components of the T&T subcommittee report, it did not resolve some of the key issues – centralization of resources for the faculty and students (although Kim has worked with departments to do so for SEE-Beyond possibilities) and financial and course-release incentives for faculty participation. The results from the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) have the potential to reveal further the extent to which faculty feel able to devote time to supporting students’ participation in ELLPs. T&T remains an institutional priority, and this author hopes that CEPP will continue to devote attention to the subcommittee’s recommendations in the coming academic year.

- Science literacy: CEPP received this subcommittee’s report this year as well and discussed its three major recommendations: foster science literacy opportunities in the curriculum, in programs, in communications and facilities; identify science literacy “hotspots” in the curriculum; assess existing science literacy at the college. The first two recommendations CEPP anticipates including in the discussion of the all-College requirements, since components of science and science-literacy courses and experiences often (but not always) fall within the natural, social science, and quantitative reasoning requirements. The last recommendation CEPP postponed; given the amount of work CEPP asked the faculty to conduct on the curriculum and on the student rating form, the committee felt that conducting a science-literacy survey inopportune this year. This author respectfully recommends that CEPP consider developing and implementing a survey of the students, and separately of the faculty & staff who participate in science literacy courses and programs, to determine to what extent we are preparing our students to be scientifically literate citizens.

Miscellaneous

- E-portfolios: Katie Hauser (Art History), whose department has shown interest in providing e-portfolios for its students, attended a conference during the summer of 2012 on e-portfolios sponsored by the Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning. Katie’s report underscored a few key items: the different roles e-portfolios can play in a student’s undergraduate and post-baccalaureate lives, from assessment to engagement, from reflection to professional development; the need for an institutional decision as to the best platform to implement (and purchase, if necessary); and the role of the faculty and staff in our students’ use of e-portfolios. While Blackboard offers an e-portfolio module, it is not transportable as an interactive ‘vessel’ for students after they graduate, and so the College will have to look

elsewhere (e.g., freeware, such as Sakai and WordPress, or off-the-shelf software) for a platform. While a few departments and programs are facilitating the use of e-portfolios for their majors, we have not implemented an all-campus program for our students to use, nor have we outlined what role the faculty and staff will play in its use. This remains an open issue for CEPP.

- On-line education and MOOCs (“Massive Open On-Line Courses”): CEPP was apprised by Beau Breslin systematically of the development of an application from the NY6 schools to the Teagle Foundation to support a blended learning project, one which would “enable faculty to explore new ways of working that may increase efficiency and reduce time pressures while broadening the educational experience of students.” The Teagle Foundation awarded the six institutions \$150,000 in the spring semester, to support development and implementation of two rounds of hybrid courses (in-person and on-line, authored individually and/or collaboratively) in 2014/5 among faculty at the NY6. In addition, the CEPP chair participated in a Board of Trustees’ discussion on on-line education. If the faculty are to engage in teaching paradigms that utilize distance learning, CEPP must play the leading role in facilitating such opportunities.
- AAC&U Principles and Practices: Faculty Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning: Rubén Graciani (Dance, former member of CEPP), Michael Arnush (Classics and current member of CEPP) and Beau Breslin (DOF/VPAA) formed a team to represent the College in this project, funded by Teagle and sponsored by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). AAC&U selected Skidmore, along with eight other institutions, to develop projects individually and/or collaboratively that foster student learning in an integrated fashion. The team participated in meetings and conferences, worked specifically with Bard College and Colgate University, and developed as its projects the review of our own all-College curriculum and a collaborative one-day conference on best practices tentatively scheduled for October 2013.
- Academic Affairs budget FY14: Beau Breslin continued the practice begun by former VPAA Susan Kress of sharing with CEPP, and requesting feedback on, the broad outlines of the Academic Affairs budget.
- Communications with other committees: CAS (Committee on Academic Standing), CAPT (Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure), CC (Curriculum Committee), FEC (Faculty Executive Committee), IPPC (Institutional Policy and Planning Committee): communications were smooth, professional and productive with all five committees. CAS consulted CEPP on changes to policy matters regarding some aspects of the all-College requirements; CAPT continued to work with CEPP on the student rating form; CC and CEPP maintained strong lines of communication on the Cultural Diversity requirement proposal and modified their operating codes to reflect their modes of communication; CEPP consulted with FEC about a summer working group on the all-College requirements and, while the two committees disagreed about the appropriateness of such a working group, relations remained cordial and CEPP agreed to accept FEC’s recommendation not to constitute such a working group; and CEPP remained a presence on IPPC through the membership of the CEPP chair on the committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Arnush, chair

Membership, 2012-13

Christine Kopec, Management & Business	2010/1-2012/3
Josh Ness, Biology & Environmental Studies	2010/1-2012/3
Hope Casto, Education Studies	2011/2-2012/3
Michael Arnush, Classics (chair)	2011/2-2013/4
Bill Lewis, Philosophy & Religion	2012/3-2014/5
Peter von Allmen, Economics	2012/3-2014/5
Beau Breslin, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs	
Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Student Affairs	
Benjamin Bechand, '14, SGA Vice-President for Academic Affairs	
Emily Kowal, '13, SGA representative	

Membership, 2013-14

Hope Casto, Education Studies (on leave, fall)	2011/2-2012/3
Michael Arnush, Classics (on leave, fall)	2011/2-2013/4
Bill Lewis, Philosophy & Religion (on leave, fall and spring)	2012/3-2014/5
Peter von Allmen, Economics (chair)	2012/3-2014/5
Caroline D'Abate, Management & Business (fall only)	2013
Pat Fehling, Health & Exercise Sciences (fall only)	2013
Sarah Goodwin, English (fall and spring)	2013/4
Amy Frappier, Geosciences	2013/4-2015/6
One faculty TBD	2013/4-2015/6
Beau Breslin, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs	
Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Student Affairs	
Andrew Lowy, '15, SGA Vice-President for Academic Affairs	
One SGA representative TBD	