

Annual Report of CEPP - 2004-5

The membership of the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) for the 2004-05 academic year consisted of the following individuals.

Fall 2004

Michael Arnush [03-06 term], Classics Faculty representative, chair
Meghan Fair '05 Student representative
Hugh Foley, Psychology [02-05 term] Faculty representative
Matthew Hockenos, History [04-07 term] Faculty representative
Charles Joseph, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Administration representative
Ruth Andrea Levinson, Education [04-07 term] Faculty representative
Peter Logan '05 Student representative
Pat Oles, Dean of Student Affairs Administration representative
Ray Rodrigues, Director of Assessment Guest
Patricia Rubio, Foreign Languages and Literatures [02-05 term] Faculty representative
Gordon Thompson, Music [03-06 term] Faculty representative

Spring 2005

Molly Appel '07 Student representative
Meghan Fair '05 Student representative
Hugh Foley, Psychology [02-05 term] Faculty representative
Matthew Hockenos, History [04-07 term] Faculty representative
Charles Joseph, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Administration representative
Ruth Andrea Levinson, Education [04-07 term] Faculty representative
Pat Oles, Dean of Student Affairs Administration representative
Ray Rodrigues, Director of Assessment Guest
Patricia Rubio, Foreign Languages and Literatures [02-05 term] Faculty representative
Linda Simon, English [spring 2005 replacement] Faculty representative
Gordon Thompson, Music [03-06 term] Faculty representative, chair

Michael Arnush chaired for the fall semester and then resigned to direct the new freshman seminar program. Gordon Thompson agreed late in the semester to chair in the spring. CFG replaced Michael Arnush with Linda Simon, who had served on CEPP in the previous year. Peter Logan also resigned in the spring to concentrate on his studies. Student government replaced Peter Logan with Molly Appel.

The committee met 21 times this year and CEPP members served on subcommittees, task forces, and study groups; made proposals; and participated in broad discussions concerning the educational mission of the College.

The following report has two parts. Michael Arnush has prepared the report for the fall semester and Gordon Thompson, the spring section.

Fall Semester, 2004

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) focused its attention on the Academic Vision Statement and, more specifically, the proposal for the First-Year Experience (FYE) through most of the fall semester 2004. CEPP hosted a retreat in May, an open forum in September, and disseminated both the proposal (revised 9/29/04) and a clarification via email (9/29/04) prior to the October faculty meeting (see attached). On October 1st, the faculty voted to phase out the Liberal Studies program at the end of the 2004/5 (LS1) and 2005/6 (LS2) academic years and implement the new FYE, whose centerpiece will be the Scribner Seminar Program (SSP). A few elements of the SSP distinguish this new program from LS: faculty will design the seminars according to their own intellectual pursuits, similar to LS2; the seminars will contain no more than 15 students, as opposed to 18 (LS1) or 25 (LS2); the faculty instructors will also serve as the enrolled students' advisors and mentors. CEPP, and the faculty, mandated a report from the program's administrators based upon a comprehensive assessment at the end of the second year of implementation (2006/7).

CEPP was consulted by VPAA/DOF Chuck Joseph and Sponsored Research Officer Bob DeSieno about the elimination of the Geosciences Department and the enfolding of the Geosciences faculty into the Environmental Studies program. CEPP consulted with members of the faculty in the ES program and the Science Planning group, respectively; at the end of the discussions it became clear to all concerned that there was insufficient faculty support for this move and so CEPP took no action.

CEPP brought to the faculty on 10/1 a motion to create a separate Dance Department: CEPP hosted an open forum later that month, and the faculty voted unanimously on 11/12 to create the Dance Department. Other issues handled by CEPP:

CEPP co-hosted with the Expository Writing Committee a retreat on student writing in May to explore ways to strengthen the all-College writing requirement.

CEPP was consulted by Sarah Goodwin, Associate DOF, on the creation of a Middle States Steering Committee for the 2005/6-2006/7 accreditation; two members of CEPP (Michael Arnush, Paty Rubio) and Bob DeSieno were appointed to chair the three major areas under assessment: the FYE, Diversity, Science.

CEPP was apprised by Chuck Joseph and Dean of Student Affairs Pat Oles of the creation of a task force to examine the role and future of the office of Dean of Studies. Ruth Andrea Levinson was appointed to represent CEPP on the task force.

CEPP brought motions on 11/12 to terminate the affiliation with Regent's College in London for the FYE, and affiliate with the Institute for International Education of Studies in London (IES). The faculty approved these motions on 12/3/04 (attached).

CEPP brought a motion on 12/3 to affiliate with the MBA 4+1 program at the Graduate College of Union University (attached).

CEPP constituted a subcommittee on study abroad to provide advice to the Office of International Programs on the implementation of the Approved Programs for overseas study. The members of the Advisory Committee on International Study (ACIS) are John Anzalone (FLL and humanities), Michael Arnush (CEPP representative; chair), Susan Bender (social sciences), Jim Kennelly (pre-professional programs), Monica Raveret-Richter (natural sciences), Peter Stake (arts), and Cori Filson and Marie Alice Arnold (OIP). ACIS has helped OIP develop a list of

Approved Programs, in consultation with the faculty via chairs and departments, and has shaped the policies which will guide overseas study for our students. The committee members agreed to serve for a two-year term, and will submit a report to CEPP at the conclusion of their tenure; at that time, CEPP will decide whether ACIS will continue and under what auspices.

Spring Semester 2005

CEPP continued the agenda set in the fall, bringing several issues to the attention of the faculty. Although Michael Arnush departed CEPP to direct the new First Year Seminar program and Gordon Thompson, as the chair of CEPP, replaced him on the Institutional Planning Committee, Arnush continued to sit on ACIS (see above) and the committee preparing for the Middle States review. Gordon Thompson sat on IPC and represented CEPP at interviews of candidates for the position of the Dean of the Faculty.

Below are the principal issues with which CEPP dealt this spring semester (in alphabetical order).

Academic Affiliations. CEPP dealt with two tasks related to academic affiliations. First, Matt Hockenos and Gordon Thompson revised the academic affiliations guidelines to reflect the development of an Approved Programs list by ACIS and the OIP as well as the changes in the administrative reporting structure (notably the relocation of the Dean of Studies from the Dean of Student Affairs to the Dean of the Faculty's office). CEPP approved the changes in the document, but also recognized that the guidelines will need further revision both to reflect the continued evolution of the administrative structure, but also to more clearly define Articulation Agreements and Exchange Programs in relationship to our Approved Programs list. (2 February 2005) Second, CEPP approved the list of programs recommended by ACIS (9 February 2005); however, CEPP also recognized that with the growth of study abroad programs its ability to individually evaluate and approve programs is limited. CEPP approved of ACIS acting as a temporary entity and recognized that we need to identify a long-term structure and process of program approval that is efficient and responsible.

Academic Calendar, 2007-08. Part of CEPP's responsibilities is the approval of the academic calendar. The Registrar prepares the calendar for CEPP's consideration and takes into account the required number of contact hours in a semester, Skidmore's class periods, and holidays. The principal issue with the 2007-08 calendar was with the start of the spring semester and Martin Luther King Day. After discussions with Kimberly Erwin (Director of Multicultural Student Affairs) and the Registrar, CEPP concluded that we could start on that Monday, especially if the College finds ways of recognizing the holiday.

Assessment. For the past three years, Ray Rodrigues has been spearheading Skidmore's efforts to develop an assessment plan. He has also been a guest on CEPP since his arrival on campus. Rodrigues led a working group of faculty and staff in the development of an academic assessment plan for Skidmore that "seeks to ascertain what our students have learned" (memo to CEPP). CEPP reviewed this plan and, after some discussion, endorsed the assessment plan with the understanding that an assessment taskforce (to be appointed by the VPAA) will work out

the details of how best to implement the plan. The taskforce is to include (a) a representative from CEPP, (b) a representative from the Curriculum Committee, (c) a member of the faculty at large who is also a member of the Assessment Group, (d) the Vice President for Academic Affairs [chair], (e) the Dean of the Faculty, (f) a representative from the office of the Dean of Student Affairs, (g), a student representative, and (h) the Registrar/Director of Institutional Research.

Department of Exercise Science. In the fall, when the faculty approved the formation of a Department of Dance, the consequence was the creation of a Department of Exercise Science and Athletics. However, the administration's reorganization of the athletics program and its relocation as a part of the Dean of Student Affairs left a de facto Department of Exercise Science. CEPP debated whether or not this situation constituted the creation of a new department. We concluded that the reorganization had not created a new department and that CEPP had no role in the process. (CEPP has the responsibility of determining whether to recommend that departments be created or terminated.)

Enriched Writing. Linda Simon representing the Expository Writing Committee brought a proposal to change Skidmore's writing requirement (8 December 2004) and she then joined as a CEPP member for the spring of 2005 (replacing Michael Arnush). CEPP reviewed and revised the proposal that sought to recognize courses with a significant writing component, but which did not have the status of Writing Intensive courses. CEPP hosted a faculty forum (11 February) and the chair (with Linda Simon) participated in a discussion of the proposal at Academic Staff and in a panel discussion at SGA. CEPP presented the proposal at the 4 March 2005 meeting and made modifications after discussions with the faculty. Nevertheless, the faculty rejected the proposal at the 1 April 2005 meeting. Some faculty asked for revisions and a resubmission of the proposal, but CEPP felt that the objections went deeper than the proposal itself and required a longer process of education and consultation. CEPP put out a call for participation in a task force to be chaired by Matt Hockenos and, after reviewing the list of volunteers, invited Lenora de la Luna (Education), Greg Pfitzer (American Studies), Michael Marx (English), Katie Hauser (Art History), Judy Halstead (Environmental Studies and Chemistry), Chuck Joseph (VPAA), Matthew Wilson '06 (Studio Art major and tutor at the Writing Center), and Kendra Asplund '07 (Chemistry) to sit on this task force.

Scribner Seminars. With the establishment of the first-year seminar program, inevitable operational problems demanded addressing. The Director of the First-year Experience and the Committee on Academic Standing brought to CEPP's attention several related issues (a) students who withdraw or fail the first-year seminar and (b) students who either transfer into the college in the spring semester or whose admission to Skidmore has been deferred to January (the so-called "January admits"). The principle issue is whether the first-year seminar is a requirement or an experience. Contributing to this question is the new emphasis on mentoring, which will create a strong bond between the incoming freshmen and their faculty advisors. After considerable discussion of the options and the recognition that we have no perFECt solution, the DoFYE and the CAS drafted a set of guidelines that would allow the first-year program to deal with the small percentage of students who either do not arrive with most of our students in the fall or who are unable to complete the seminar. CEPP reviewed these guidelines and presented them to the faculty at the 1 April meeting.

Strategic Plan. The chair of CEPP brought versions of the Plan for Skidmore to CEPP for comments and recommendations. CEPP made several recommendations, some of which were adopted by the IPC and included in the Plan.

CEPP Membership 2005-06. Several issues emerged over the course of the year relating to the 2005-06 CEPP membership. First, CFG's original recommendations for the faculty representatives, included a one-year replacement and two faculty from the same department. The Faculty Handbook mandates that no two faculty members on the committee should be from the same department. The second issue had to do with the representation by the Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs on the committee. With the splitting of the positions of Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the question arose as to whether (a) the Dean of the Faculty was the representative, (b) the Vice President for Academic Affairs was the representative, or (c) whether both should be on CEPP. We resolved that for one year, we wanted both the DoF and the VPAA on CEPP until we decide who best represents these issues.

Closing Thoughts

Having had the privilege and the responsibility of being the chair of this committee for a year and a half of the last two years and (also served one year as a replacement), I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary contributions of Patricia Rubio and Hugh Foley. Professor Rubio has tirelessly sought to maintain the importance of diversity on this campus both in its population and in its thinking. We are enriched by her intrepid attention to these details. Professor Foley laid the considerable foundation for the first-year seminar proposal, demonstrating through his own commitment to his students and his experiments with teaching strategies that we could indeed find a better way to engage our students in their first semester on campus. I have learned a great deal from them and my other colleagues on CEPP.