

Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) 2006-07 Annual Report

The membership of the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) for the 2006-07 academic year consisted of the following individuals:

Fall 2006

Molly Appel '07 Student representative
Beau Breslin, Government, faculty representative (05-08 term) (Chair)
Deb Hall, Studio Art, faculty representative (05-08 term)
Matthew Hockenos, History, faculty representative (04-07 term)
Dan Nathan, American Studies, faculty representative (06-09 term)
Jon Brestoff '08 student representative
Pat Hilleren, Biology, faculty representative (06-07 replacement)
Pat Oles, Dean of Student Affairs, administration representative
Muriel Poston, Dean of Faculty, administrative representative
Kyle Nichols, Geosciences, faculty representative (06-09 term)

Spring 2007

Heather Vickery '07 Student representative
Beau Breslin, Government, faculty representative (05-08 term) (Chair)
Deb Hall, Studio Art, faculty representative (05-08 term)
Matthew Hockenos, History, faculty representative (04-07 term)
Dan Nathan, American Studies, faculty representative (06-09 term)
Jon Brestoff, '08 student representative
Pat Hilleren, Biology, faculty representative (06-07 replacement)
Pat Oles, Dean of Student Affairs, administration representative
Muriel Poston, Dean of Faculty, administrative representative
Kyle Nichols, Geosciences, faculty representative (06-09 term)

The committee met 30 times this year (28 regular meetings and two retreats). We brought several motions before the faculty and each passed. During the fall semester, the committee was occupied with two main topics: fully dedicated tenure-track lines in interdisciplinary programs and a new writing program. During the spring semester, we continued our discussion of the new writing program while also focusing on such issues as proportional appointments in departments and among departments and programs, service learning at the college, internship guidelines, and the next steps in the evaluation of the restructuring of the Dean of Studies Office. Throughout the year, we heard reports from the Advisory Committee on International Study (ACIS), the Assessment Task Force, The Director of the First-Year Experience, and other invited guests. Reports from CEPP's subcommittees and minutes from the committee's meetings can be found at <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/CEPP/index.html>

Beijing Program

Together with the Beijing Steering Committee and the Office of International Programs, CEPP brought a motion to the faculty floor in September to terminate the College's

affiliation with Beijing University for the Skidmore in Beijing Program. The primary rationale for terminating the arrangement involved “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 motion passed.

A separate motion was brought that same month to establish an affiliation with the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) in Beijing for the Skidmore in Beijing Program. This motion also passed. The hope is that a long-term relationship with IES will alleviate the problems the plagued the program when it was under the authority of Beijing University.

Fully Dedicated Tenure-track Lines in ID Programs

One of CEPP’s major early initiatives, a policy allowing for fully dedicated tenure-track appointments to be made in the College’s interdisciplinary programs was brought before the faculty in the fall semester. In preparation for the eventual motion, CEPP met with several administrators and faculty (including members of CAPT). We also invited Chris Klyza, the Stafford Professor of Public Policy, Political Science, and Environmental Studies at Middlebury College to participate in one of our meetings. The purpose of Professor Klyza’s visit was to allow members of CEPP to ask questions about Middlebury’s experience in assigning tenure track lines in ID programs. We had a fruitful exchange with Chris. Noting that CEPP understands the assignment of fully dedicated tenure-track appointments to ID programs as consistent with the College’s overall educational mission, we brought a motion before the faculty in November. It passed in December 2006.

The New Writing Program

No fewer than 12 of the 15 meetings in the fall semester and 5 of the first 7 meetings of the spring semester were devoted primarily (though not exclusively) to CEPP’s proposal to enhance the College’s writing program. Originally, CEPP was working from the document prepared by the Writing Task Force. Almost all of the recommendations brought forth by the Writing Task Force were included in CEPP’s final proposal.

The committee held an open forum in the fall semester and a “drop-in session” in the spring semester. Several members of the committee were also invited to address the department chairs and program directors during the chairs/directors retreat in late fall. We also visited the Studio Art department for a meeting with its faculty. Finally, CEPP invited numerous members of the community to attend meetings and provide feedback on the developing proposal. Among those invited were the VPAA, the Dean of Studies, the Registrar, the Expository Writing Director, the Director of the Writing Center, and the Chair of the English Department.

Throughout the process of crafting a proposal, CEPP spent a good deal of time identifying the appropriate language that might resonate with a wide and diverse audience. That is, we tried to accommodate the variety of disciplinary pressures and concerns related to the teaching of writing, concerns that genuinely exist across the

campus. The proposal underwent a number of revisions, but in February it was introduced on the faculty floor. In early April (because of a cancelled faculty meeting in March), the motion passed by a thin margin. The responsibility for implementing the new program now lies with the Dean of the Faculty and the VPAA. CEPP remains committed to an inclusive process by which departments/committees and offices are consulted before decisions are finalized.

Proportional Lines

CEPP brought a motion to the faculty floor in the spring semester that would allow the College to hire tenure-track faculty with proportional appointments in separate departments, in separate ID programs, or among departments and ID programs. This motion was the logical extension of the earlier motion relating to fully dedicated tenure-track lines in ID programs. Again, the rationale for the policy stems from the College's need to be more nimble in the hiring process in order to compete for the best faculty available. Moreover, CEPP was influenced by the College's longstanding commitment to interdisciplinary education and the need for more flexibility in hiring so as to further that commitment. This motion passed in May 2007.

Cardozo Law School

In response to a request by the Law and Society Program, CEPP introduced a motion to sever the relationship with Cardozo Law School's accelerated BA/BS-JD program. The program, to which the College has not sent a single student in more than a decade, no longer fulfills the needs of the Skidmore undergraduate population. The motion passed the faculty in April 2007.

Service Learning

CEPP reviewed documents related to the importance of service learning in higher education and the popularity of service learning courses at the College. Ruth Andrea Levinson, Ann Henderson, Michael Ennis McMillan, Penny Loretto, Mike Profita, and Michelle Hubbs participated in conversations related to both service learning and internships. In the end, CEPP agreed that service learning is an important pedagogical tool for those who wish to use it.

Dean of Studies Restructuring

In the fall of 2005, CEPP was charged with the responsibility of reviewing the restructuring of the Dean of Studies office after that office had been operating for two full years. As a result, CEPP constituted a subcommittee, consisting of two members of CEPP (Kyle Nichols, Chair, and Deb Hall), one member of CAS (Tillman Nechtman), one member of FEC (Dan Curley) and the Registrar/Director of Institutional Research (Ann Henderson), to explore all aspects of that restructuring, including how the respective offices are responding to the needs of our student and faculty populations. The subcommittee will report its findings and (possibly) provide recommendations to the full committee sometime in the spring semester, 2008.

Internships

Toward the end of the academic year, CEPP commenced a conversation related to internships. Invited to participate in the earliest iteration of this conversation were the Dean of Studies (Michael Ennis McMillan) and the Registrar/Director of Institutional Research (Ann Henderson). Specifically, the committee was focused on internship grading structures and on the existing guidelines for the approval and completion of internships. It was agreed that the Office of the Dean of Studies has done a commendable job providing information for students and faculty on the topic of internships, but there is still a good deal of confusion on the part of the community about certain aspects of our internship program. There is also very little consistency among faculty and departments on the evaluation of internship credit.

In an attempt to bring institutional clarity to the issue, CEPP produced a document aimed at generating conversation about possible changes in the internship arena. That document, which can be found on the CEPP homepage, was discussed at the spring Chairs/Directors retreat. Further conversation on this topic is expected.

Assessment

CEPP expects that the Assessment Task Force, chaired by the VPAA, will deliver shortly its recommendation on a structure for overseeing assessment projects on campus. CEPP also invited the Director of the First-Year Experience (Michael Arnush) to report on the three FYE Assessment projects that were underway in 2006-2007. Michael visited CEPP on two occasions during the semester, first to educate the committee on the projects themselves and, second, to report on the projects' findings.

Study Abroad

ACIS, a CEPP subcommittee, continues its good work in overseeing many components of the College's study abroad program. This year, ACIS and the Office of International Programs brought to CEPP a proposal to implement a three-year pilot program involving domestic exchange. The National Student Exchange program is dedicated to the exchange of students among campuses in this country. CEPP listened to the pitch and agreed that the pilot program was a good idea. The Office of International Programs will monitor the NSE program and report back to CEPP regularly.

Special Programs

The committee met in April with representatives of the Special Programs Study Group (Linda Simon and Joanna Zangrando). The purpose of the meeting was to explore whether there are questions/problems/issues about Special Programs that CEPP would like to weigh in on. It was a productive and interesting conversation.

Literacies

CEPP spent some time late in the spring semester talking about various literacies, including visual literacy, information literacy, science literacy, and technological literacy. This conversation emerged in part because of the concerns and questions raised by colleagues across campus about the recently passed writing proposal. A suggestion was made that next year's CEPP continue the conversation and try to educate the community about the various literacies identified. A further suggestion was made to tackle only a

couple of the literacies in this campaign to raise awareness. CEPP will continue the dialogue next year.

Academic Calendar

CEPP reviewed and approved the Academic Calendar for 2009-2010.