

MINUTES
CEPP MEETING #26
Monday, February 5, 2001
MALS Conference Room
2:00 PM

Present: Adam Abramowitz '01, Sandy Baum, Sue Bender, John Brueggemann (Chair), Sarah Crosier '04, Pat Fehling, Pat Oles, Lary Opitz, Phil Ortiz, David Peterson (scribe)

- 1) Minutes #25 were approved without incident.
- 2) Announcements: Pat Oles reported on the work of an informal group (incl. Mary Lou Bates, Jon Ramsey, John Berman, Ann Henderson, Pat Oles) who have been studying student retention. The group is presently conducting a "Withdrawn Student Survey" (add your own humorous remark here) and will report its findings to CEPP later in the year. Pat asked whether CEPP wished to formally appoint a representative to this group. The silence was palpable.
- 3) John reported that he was in the process of seeking input from key faculty members regarding our Breadth Guidelines, in an effort to better coordinate and balance them. Mary Lynn has thus far agreed to help and will hopefully be assisted by Hugh Foley and Tad Kuroda.

The committee went on to discuss Lary's superlative "Arts" guidelines, recognizing that such guidelines not only inform Curriculum Committee but also guide course development. Lary offered to play with the structure of his guidelines to bring them closer to the form used in our Humanities and Social Science drafts.

- 4) At 2:30 the meeting was joined by Jon Ramsey, Leslie Mecham, and Giuseppe Faustini who had previously requested an audience with CEPP to discuss the pros and cons (well, cons mostly) of "grandparenting" into the "newest curriculum" our rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors. A variety of thought-provoking themes emerged including*:

Arguments against grandparenting:

1. The old curriculum as defined in the Catalogue is a "contract," and should not be changed for any of our current students.

2. Requiring new classes of students to adopt a curriculum (or giving them the choice to do so) is the main precedent we have for this sort of transition.
3. Seniors who have finished all of the core requirements may resent a system that allows their classmates who have not completed requirements to end up with a lighter set of requirements.
4. Departments need more time to figure out how many sections of different kinds of courses under the new curriculum they will have to offer.
5. There will be no new Catalogue with all of the changed requirements before students have to register for next fall.
6. If a number of juniors and seniors do not have to take previously required courses next fall, they may seek out other classes that are already full and assert more pressure on instructors of those classes.

Arguments in support of grandparenting:

1. The Catalogue has no binding legal status and since requirements are being reduced, not expanded, most students will not mind.
2. Seniors who have fulfilled all their requirements may be sympathetic to classmates for whom requirements are reduced because they understand how constraining the system has been.
3. More than half of the senior class would (in all likelihood) benefit by grandparenting. That is, they would have to take one or more fewer courses under the new curriculum.
4. Some precedents from the past should not be emulated simply because they represent tradition. For example, giving students a choice between one curriculum or another was probably not worth the trouble.
5. The spirit of the new curriculum is based on the recognition that the old curriculum was constraining, which means seniors with outstanding requirements should not be viewed as negligent procrastinators. Perhaps the constraining pressures have victimized them.
6. Students who do not seek out previously required courses next fall will take courses that are available, perhaps even experimenting with elective courses that are open, which they might not have taken if there were openings in all classes.
7. Departments are going to have to alter their offerings in a way that is consistent with the new curriculum. They might as well scramble around and make such adjustments in the coming months.
8. Strong and informed advising will help students find courses that serve their needs and interests even if the Catalogue descriptions are not available.

*respectfully lifted from JB's notes to Academic Staff.