

CEPP SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE Minutes 10/17/03
12:00-1:00 pm, TLC 100

Members present: Dan Curley, Terry Diggory, Hugh Foley (chair), Kate Leavitt, Ruth Andrea Levinson, Bill Lewis, Pat Oles

Resource persons present: Tina Levith (DOS), Michael Marx (LS1), Gordon Thompson (CEPP)

1. Minutes will be taken by scribes rotating in alphabetical order (except when Dan shows up late)
1. Review subcommittee charge (attached to official copy of these minutes)

Must the language of CEPP's draft Vision Statement (ViSta) be settled before the work of subcommittees can proceed? Gordon and Hugh both feel it should be possible to focus on certain specifics while the general issues await final formulation.

1. Overview

- a. The process so far (reported by Hugh): In response to discussion within the administration about adding students to increase revenue, CEPP expressed preference for higher rate of retention of those students we currently admit. Curricular issues converged on the same pressure points as retention, though it has been recognized that retention is not solely a curricular issue.
- a. The perceived problems (general discussion): We need to seek educational vision rather than merely trying to "fix" retention. At the core of the retention problem is students' sense of being insufficiently engaged during the first year especially, and to some extent up to the point of selecting a major; thereafter they acquire a much clearer sense of direction and report higher level of satisfaction. The role of the majors suggests departments' role in improving the first year experience may be crucial (and any solution along these lines must be open to participation by all departments).

The role of advising also appears to be crucial leading up to the point where advisors in the major take over. What does advising mean? What is the relation between advising and mentoring?

- a. Emerging "clusters" of concern:
 - 1) faculty advising
 - 1) commonality of student experience
 - 1) student choice
 - 1) challenge/rigor

2. Background information

- a. AAC&U Greater Expectations [<http://greaterexpectations.org/>]
- b. NSSE Report
http://www.skidmore.edu/registrar/ir/campus-only/reports/nsse_2003.pdf
http://www.skidmore.edu/registrar/ir/campus-only/reports/nsse_means2003.pdf
- c. National Resource Center [<http://www.sc.edu/fye/>]
- d. Retention reports (and committee)
- e. Withdrawn Student Surveys
<http://www.skidmore.edu/registrar/ir/campus-only/reports/reports.htm>
- f. Best practices at other institutions

3. Directions

- a. Take everything off the table and seek to build the best possible experience, something we could be proud of and excited about
- b. Don't start from sense of limitations in timeframe or resources, although reasonable financial constraints have to be acknowledged. Ways of accounting faculty and student workload can be reexamined.
- c. Review background information as above in item #4
- d. Consultation (Kate offers to survey LS2 faculty)

4. Next meeting: Oct 31, 3:30 pm, place TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Diggory