

CEPP Meeting – 4/6/04

Present: Michael Arnush, Hugh Foley, Frank Gonzalez, Chuck Joseph, Pat Oles, Ray Rodrigues, Paty Rubio, Linda Simon, Gordon Thompson (Chair)

GT announced upcoming meetings regarding the FYE Proposal with the Expository Writing Group and the Science Planning Group, as well as with students and Academic Staff.

-MA then summarized reactions to the FY proposal brought forward at the faculty meeting, at which several faculty expressed concerns about:

- need for more flexibility regarding advising, the clusters, sabbaticals, and interdisciplinarity
- perceived overlap of FYS and EN 105
- process of approving FYS courses (need for simplicity)
- 1-cr FY Colloquium in spring
- how the FYS fits into the larger picture

-MA: Why are faculty not participating in LS1? LS: How do we know that they will participate in FYS?

-PR: What motivates the proposal to change LS1/LS2 is the integration of advising and the addition of choice for both students and faculty

-HF: We will run into difficulty if we are seen as too critical of LS1, but changes by LS1 faculty indicate the need for change.

-MA: We need data to show that LS1 is in need of change.

-LS: Retention data may be useful to the argument.

-GT: Those data indicate the lack of student engagement in the first year.

-LS: Student comments at the pedagogy session were consistent with the goals of FYS. We need to stress mentoring instead of advising.

-PO: The Student Cultures project would also support the need for change.

-CJ: Introduced a page of suggestions regarding FY Proposal.

-LS: Many faculty have sentimental attachments to interdisciplinarity, so dropping a focus on interdisciplinarity may be problematic.

-LS: The EN faculty may not support dropping EN 105 unless it is clear that writing will be stressed across the curriculum. The proposal needs to stress the importance of writing beyond the FYS.

-GT: Phyllis Roth also mentioned the need to stress writing across all four years in the proposal.

-PR: We need to adopt the strategy of clear information displays used to defend FL requirement and to support the IA proposal. We also need CJ to articulate how central the FYS is to Academic Vision.

-After some discussion, several members seemed in favor of dropping the 1-cr FYC from the proposal, but supporting it on a trial basis for some students and revisiting the notion in a couple of years.

-MA argued for dropping the fixed clusters and allowing them to emerge organically through faculty interests

-We then discussed the option to give faculty 4 teaching credits for the 3-cr FYS, which many members thought to be a good idea. However, it is still not clear if that incentive would be sufficient to offset concerns about the additional “load” of mentoring. There was also concern

that some faculty would not become true mentors even with the incentive, so we discussed the possibility that students would routinely rate their mentors. But there appeared to be a number of ways in which the 4th teaching credit could encourage faculty to enhance the 3-cr FYS (along lines of model for writing credit in EN).

-We then returned to a discussion of the role of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary in the FYS, with some members seeing the requirement of interdisciplinarity as a stumbling block (e.g., let faculty teach what they do best) and others seeing interdisciplinarity as an essential ingredient to the proposal.

-We next turned our attention to the problems inherent in making mentoring integral to the FYS, especially for faculty who would like to routinely offer the FYS. No clear answer emerged, but there was some hope that the extra teaching credit would offset some concerns. We would continue to encourage students to seek out new mentors at the end of their first year, as a relief valve. We seemed unanimous in seeing the value of the RAP for mentoring, as well as the role that a portfolio might play in mentoring. We also seemed to agree that advising (in which we are currently engaged) should not be a faculty responsibility in the future (signing forms, etc.). Instead, students should get advice from an array of people, with faculty engaged more centrally in the role of mentoring.

-We then discussed some concerns about the procedural mechanics of moving the proposal forward as we approached the faculty meeting at which the faculty would vote. For a variety of reasons (including the difficulty of staffing LS1 with the impending changes in the offing), most of CEPP would like to move forward expeditiously. It seemed important to go forward with the proposal and defend it on the floor of the faculty meeting. CJ is going to try to line up faculty who would be willing to teach the FYS (and would publicly acknowledge their willingness).

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh J. Foley