

CEPP Minutes, 3/9/05

Present: Gordon Thompson (chair), Meaghan Fair '05, Hugh Foley, Matthew Hockenos (scribe), Chuck Joseph, Ruth Andrea Levinson, Pat Oles, Ray Rodrigues, Paty Rubio, Linda Simon

1. No minutes approved
2. Gordon reminded CEPP of the Shades of Gray discussion tonight on the strategic plan.
3. CEPP Chair for 2005-06: Gordon recommended to CEPP that Matthew Hockenos replace him as chair of CEPP in 2005-06. There was general agreement.
4. Academic Calendar 2007-08:
 - a. Ann Henderson sent CEPP Skidmore's academic calendar for 2007-08 for approval.
 - b. Pat Oles suggested that (perhaps) in future years it would be possible to begin the academic year earlier – before the end of the (horse) Track season. However, no change was recommended for 2007-08.
 - c. Ruth-Andrea pointed out that the first day of class for the spring semester (Monday January 21, 2008) falls on Martin Luther King day. Classes will be held that day. This raised the larger discussion of how Skidmore decides which holidays and religious observances warrant the cancellation of classes. Pat Oles pointed out that the fall semester is very tightly scheduled, which makes it more difficult to cancel classes for religious observances in the fall. If the semester were to start one week earlier then there would be a greater possibility to cancel classes.
 - d. Ruth-Andrea wondered whether Ann Henderson was asking CEPP to seriously consider every aspect of the academic calendar or to give it just a brief perusal. Gordon agreed to ask Ann exactly what aspects of the calendar she would like CEPP to give serious consideration.
5. Assessment Plan 2004-2009:
 - a. Ray asked whether CEPP was prepared to approve the “Institutional and Academic Assessment Plan, 2004-2009.”
 - b. After some discussion, CEPP endorsed the assessment plan with the understanding that the assessment taskforce (to be appointed by the VPAA) will work out the details of how best to implement the plan.
6. CAS policy on withdrawals, fails, transfers and freshman deferrals in Scribner Seminars (SS).

- a. Jennifer Delton, chair of CAS, sent CEPP a memo requesting that we make a recommendation on the policy regarding students who withdraw from a SS, fail a SS, transfer to Skidmore after the first semester, or defer acceptance to Skidmore to the spring semester. She offered 2 options (quoted below):

“Option 1: The Scribner Seminar is a transitional experience required of all incoming freshmen in the fall semester. Its unique mentoring component, designed to help students adjust to academic life at Skidmore, cannot be re-taken or “made up” at some later time.

If the faculty decides that because of the unique nature of the SS nothing is gained pedagogically by requiring students to retake it, then the following policy might apply:

- CAS will review individual cases of Fs and Ws and, according to guidelines yet to be drawn, decide whether the student has experienced enough of the SS to move on or whether a substitution is in order.
- Students who seek to withdraw because they are doing poorly will be discouraged from doing so. CAS recommends a withdrawal application and an interview with the DFYE to work out a solution.

Option 2: Students must successfully complete a Scribner Seminar with a grade of D or above in order to graduate.

If the faculty decides that the successful completion of an SS is required for graduation, then CAS recommends that F and W students work with their mentors and/or the DFYE to find a substitution. Substitution guidelines will be issued by the FYE Program. This substitution must be taken the following Spring semester.”

- b. Several CEPP members preferred option 1. Paty, Chuck, and Hugh voiced concern about option 1 and seemed to want the SS to be a requirement. No one was completely satisfied with either option. There was concern in particular about the message sent to students that if they withdraw or fail the course they will not be required to re-take it. One suggestion was that students not be allowed to withdraw from a SS unless they were withdrawing from all their classes. This would mean that the student would be required to re-take a SS the following fall.

CEPP thought it would be useful to ask Jennifer Delton and Michael Arnush to join CEPP at its next meeting to help clarify many issues. No recommendation was made at this time.