

CEPP minutes 3/23/05

Present: Gordon Thompson (chair), Meaghan Fair '05, Hugh Foley, Matthew Hockenos, Ruth Andrea Levinson (scribe), Pat Oles, Ray Rodrigues, Paty Rubio, Linda Simon, Molly Appel, Michael Arnush (visiting representing Scribner Seminars) and Jennifer Delton (visiting representing CAS)

Foley minutes for March 2, 2005 were approved.

1. Jennifer was seeking advice from CEPP about how to handle students who drop out (withdraw) or fail the Scribner Seminar (SS). At the core of the issue was whether the SSs are defined as a requirement that students must fulfill (similar to the Breadth requirement) in order to graduate or a transitional course to college that is unique and temporal in nature. If the course is conceived of as transitional (considering such components as the faculty mentoring and the living/learning community emphasis in addition to the writing and interdisciplinary aspects) then a student could withdraw from the course or fail without having to retake a SS. Several CEPP and CAS members felt that the faculty voted on the course as a requirement in place of LS1 and LS2. Other CEPP members expressed the wisdom of considering the SS as a transitional course that evolved from but is distinguished from LS1 and LS2. CEPP discussed this point at length weighing the advantages and disadvantages of these definitions and the consequences for students and faculty. Michael reported that he had just returned from a conference where the First Year Experience course was the central topic. He said that most colleges were approaching the course as transitional in nature. It seemed to be the final consensus of CEPP to weigh in on the side of a viewing the SS as a transitional course. Thus, transfer students with 12 college credits would not need to take SS as it would no longer be appropriate to their needs. Likewise, students who fail or withdraw from the course would have to work with their advisors and CAS on an individual basis to determine subsequent registration for a course of study. Of course, a failure or withdrawal from the SS might indicate that a new advisor would be sought for the student.

2. Jennifer asked CEPP if CAS or CEPP needed to bring a motion for a vote at the faculty meeting to approve these interpretations of the procedures for SS. CEPP suggested that she confer with CFG but supported the notion that CAS should report to the faculty about the conclusions of their deliberations as a committee. CAS would present these intended procedures for coping with withdrawals and failures as preliminary and subject to future scrutiny informed by practice and cases over time.

3. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing CEPP's motion on the writing requirement. Linda, Gordon, and Molly described the 2 hour meeting from the prior night between the Student Senate and a small group of faculty. Students seem to appreciate the CEPP motion as a statement of intentionality about the central importance of writing throughout the students' curricular experience at Skidmore from the 1st year through the senior capstone. Students did not see the CEPP motion as a structural change in the way that writing is taught at Skidmore. Matthew emphasized that if CEPP could further develop the definition of Writing Enriched (WE) courses, we might be able to foster

greater coherence about how WE courses can enhance and extend the current EN105 or WI courses.