

CEPP Agenda
October 6, 2010
213 Library
8:30-9:30 a.m.

In attendance: Logan Brenner, Rochelle Calhoun, Terry Diggory, Mimi Hellman, Chris Kopec, Josh Ness, Bob Turner, Ann Henderson, and Anita Harris

I. Accepting on-line classes from other institutions, Ann Henderson and Anita Harris

CEPP conducted a discussion of whether we should change our current policy that “On-line/distance learning courses ... cannot earn transfer credit.” We agreed that the issue has become timely for a number of reasons.

- Skidmore students may take on-line Skidmore courses offered through a long running pilot program in the Office of the Dean of Special Programs in the summer (LS2 126 Love in Art and Idea, BI 110 Biology of the Mind, BU 338 Foundations of Finance, MU 306 History of Jazz in America, and MS 104 Introduction to Statistics).
- The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers’ official policy is that colleges’ official transcript should not record the method of delivery. Most colleges do not record whether a course was offered on-line or not on their transcripts, including Skidmore. This makes it difficult for the Registrar’s office to implement our stated policy. While the Registrar’s office asks students for a course description and whether the course was offered on-line, if a student did not state the course was offered on-line, the Registrar would not necessarily know.
- 80% of all higher education institutions and 93% of doctoral institutions are offering on-line as well as hybrid or blended learning courses (Arabasz, Boggs, & Baker, 2003). The rise of hybrid or blended classes, where the course is taught partly in the classroom and partly online, make it increasingly difficult to differentiate between what constitutes an on-line class or not.
- An informal survey of our peer institutions by the Registrar found that a number of schools accept on-line classes pending a petition process including Bates, Connecticut College, Franklin and Marshal, Gettysburg, Hamilton, St. Lawrence, and Wesleyan.
- The Registrar’s office noted that a change in policy would particularly benefit students who are on medical leave or are working during the summer and would find on-line courses a useful way to graduate on time.

CEPP’s discussion

Should our policy for accepting transfer credits focus on the mode of delivery or the educational quality of the course? Are on-line courses like other classes in their relative educational quality or should an onus of suspicion rest on the on-line mode of delivery. Many classroom courses may be taught by teaching assistants, have limited professor-student interaction, or be very large classes taught at community colleges. Shifting from using the mode of delivery as our measure of quality might lead us to look at the quality of all classes, such as the legitimacy of the syllabus, the quality of the institution, does the course content lend itself to an on-line delivery, and what is the extent of faculty-student interactions.

CEPP and the Registrar’s Office felt that the issue was important to address for faculty and students and will continue our deliberation.

II. FEC's Division of the Disciplines discussion at Faculty Meeting

CEPP discussed the Division of Disciplines discussion from Friday's faculty meeting. Currently, there are three division of the disciplines: 1. for meeting with DOF to identify opportunities for collaborations; 2. For faculty governance; and 3 for breadth requirements in the curriculum, although this is at the course rather than departmental level. CEPP feels it is okay to have different divisions of disciplines for the DOF, faculty governance, and the curriculum. CEPP is already working with ASC on an assessment of the breadth requirements and does not see a need to reconfigure the current disciplinary alignments for the breadth requirements in the curriculum.

III. Faculty Interest Group Discussion

CEPP briefly discussed the reporting structure and timetable for appointing a Facilitator for the Faculty Interest Group. CEPP reaffirmed our existing conviction that we should name a Facilitator who reports to the Assistant Dean and that a Facilitator should be named as soon as possible, preferably by the start of the Spring Semester. We view this as one of our major items on our Teaching Excellence agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Turner