

CEPP Minutes 1/29/14

All members were present: Peter von Allmen, chair, Michael Arnush, Beau Breslin, Rochelle Calhoun, Hope Casto, Amy Frappier (scribe), Sarah Goodwin, Rubén Graciani, Renée Schapiro, Charles Tetelman, and outgoing committee member Pat Fehling

1. Welcome back to Hope and Michael, and thanks to Pat for her service.
2. An in-depth discussion was held regarding Skidmore's Master's of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) Program and the creation of a MALS subcommittee of CEPP to investigate the role of MALS in the College in response to the self-study and external review, and propose alternative models for MALS Program structure.
 - a. Language for the subcommittee charge was drafted, to be finalized at the next meeting.
 - b. Subcommittee membership issues were discussed. One CEPP member will serve as subcommittee chair, and the MALS Director (Jacquie Scoones) will participate as a non-voting member. Committee size and membership distribution will be finalized at the next meeting.
 - c. Members will be appointed after consultation with FEC.
3. The remainder of the retreat time was dedicated to CEPP's ongoing General Education (GE) assessment/reform initiative.
 - a. Members reported on table discussions generated by the curricular model presented at the Faculty Summit. Although faculty and staff reactions to the model varied widely, some consensus emerged: discussions about specific models were more productive than discussing theoretical curricula, and there was general interest in exploring other possible GE models in the coming months in a similar format. It was generally agreed that our curriculum lacks distinctiveness. The lack of a foreign language in the requirements of the model presented was controversial, but the community was very enthusiastic about some form of senior seminar to ensure upper level integration and thinking about transformation and demonstrating higher-order skills. The idea of reconvening the same FYE faculty and students in the senior year was mostly panned. Some creative model revisions included:
 - i. Make FYE focus on a common topic for all seminars, and revisit the same topic in the Fall of senior year at a more advanced level. This would generate programming excitement and synergies between the first year and senior classes. The integrated, broad conversation on campus would be akin to the intellectual excitement of Human Dilemmas, but could focus on big issues from many perspectives like the successful recent Apocalypse and Monsters pilot projects.
 - ii. Create a 2-credit fall Senior Seminar on integration, application, and leadership. This would be in part a process of revisiting and revising their FYE RAP. Instead of faculty leading the class, the students are expected to direct the class by choosing their own project to develop in the latter half of the semester. Instructor would provide guidance and support students in considering their college experience in the Liberal Arts context and communicating their personal transformation and abilities to others. Students would discuss their project results along the way and present their final project to 1-2 Alumni

Mentor(s) (and a community member, as in *A Brand Called Me* course), providing a connection and accountability to the postbaccalaureate world, the alumni network, and the wider community.

- b. In-depth discussions were held around curricular models in general. Should we choose a model for our current students, or the students we want in the future? Our graduates were discussed as T-shaped and Pi-shaped individuals, following President Ainley's point at the Academic Summit about intellectual breadth vs. depth. How does curriculum affect student admissions? CEPP agreed that Mary Lou Bates should be invited to talk with us. In soliciting faculty input, how can we get people to stop advocating for their discipline as a stake, and look holistically at the curriculum? How can the curriculum and co-curriculum prepare students for their world?
- c. Three new curricular models were discussed preliminarily: Bates, Cal State Chico, and Kalamazoo's K-Plan. Each has interesting elements worth considering for Skidmore, and will be addressed in detail at the next meeting.
- d. CEPP advocates being bold in considering alternative curricular models where Skidmore could be a leader in higher education. While the process of 'trying on' or altering models developed at other institutions is an essential and efficient part of the process, there is interest in also considering 'homegrown' curricular models.
 - i. What is distinctive about Skidmore? We are first, a Liberal Arts college. There's no one way to be a Skidmore student, but our students are eclectic and perhaps less cliquy? No Greek student culture. We have a traditional connection to practical applications (mind & hand), and the arts. We are uniquely located in Saratoga Spgs.
 - ii. Co-curricular role: Although the college should not try to manage student social interactions, we can create moments and interactions that go beyond group identities and encourage discussing difference and common ground. This is shared by curriculum, with a greater role for the co-curriculum.
 - iii. The most high impact moments in college are 1) the opportunity to get in-depth help from a professor with writing through one-on-one revising of a paper, and 2) being invited to a professor's house for dinner. How might we encourage/highlight these interactions?
 - iv. Renée presented a model that would add a seminar in Spring of sophomore year as a bridge between FYE and the popular senior seminar idea. The sophomore curriculum would be forward looking, encouraging students to take time at the midpoint to look seriously and thoughtfully at their gaps and goals for the final two years of college.
- e. Keeping the conversation going: Faculty input will be sought at roundtable events during the spring semester. Multiple dates and times will be provided to capture broad input. Incentives? Student input is also essential in considering alternative models for meeting the Learning Goals. Students could participate in the process through Senate, Academic Council, Town Hall meetings, and a survey and/or tables set-up in Case or MAD atrium to gather responses to specific questions or models.

adjourned at 7:33 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Frappier