

Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)**April 22, 2016**

In attendance: Faculty: David S. Hall, Chair; Alexander George; Klára Móricz; Sean Redding; Catherine Sanderson. Catherine Epstein, dean. Students: Rashid (Chico) Kosber '17. Recorder: Nancy Ratner, Associate Dean of Admission and Researcher for Academic Projects.

David Hall, Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), called to order the CEP meeting at 8:30 a.m. in the Kennick Room in Cooper House.

Announcements

David informed the committee that the Advisory Committee of the Program in Architectural Studies has asked for a bureaucratic change that would bring the Architectural Studies program under the administrative aegis of the Department of Art and the History of Art. The committee will discuss this proposal at its next meeting.

Continuing, David said IT has apologized for the mistakes and software bugs that have mired the course evaluation system and particularly its mistakes in sending emails about the upcoming course evaluations for senior faculty members with the wrong dates. David said he thought that many of the problems stem from a decision that was made a number of years ago about the way courses (and their related labs, section meetings, etc.) are represented internally. Catherine E. encouraged him to share his concerns with David Hamilton.

In other matters, David said he had spoken with Chico about the impact that his recent election to vice president of the AAS will have on his ability to represent the AAS on the CEP. David did not think the CEP should advise the AAS as to whether Chico can or should continue to serve as its AAS representative. Chico will now discuss the issue with the AAS.

Conflicts between evening exams and other courses and activities

Klára shared with the committee an example of how one professor has quite effectively managed the conflicts that sometimes arise when a faculty member schedules an evening exam. That professor asks students at the beginning of the semester to advise him of potential conflicts and commitments and then schedules multiple exam times in a way that allows students to avoid conflicts. Catherine S. said she thought faculty were offering alternatives, but students may not always take advantage of them. In particular, if the instructor offers several exam times, students may opt for the latest date, regardless of conflicting obligations, because it allows them more time to study. She agreed, however, that the committee should send a letter to the faculty reminding them that students may have conflicts and provide flexibility for exams wherever possible. That said, she also recommended that the committee may wish to discuss this issue with department chairs. They can explain the particular issues their departments are facing and the reasons that some may feel a need to be less flexible than some other departments, with the result that students may encounter conflicts.

Klára thought it might be sufficient to send all faculty a reminder that 7:00-10:00 p.m. is a very busy time, with many musical ensemble and theater rehearsals. She also noted that students in ensembles have varying commitments, with some participating in ensembles for credit and some not. This may affect how an individual student deals with a conflicting obligation. She thought it might be very helpful if professors ask students at the beginning of the semester to let them know about other commitments. Faculty often schedule multiple exam times, so she knew it was often quite complicated. Sean thought the faculty also needed guidance from the administration about how to deal with students who are mandated to have extra time for exams. Some have back-to-back classes and then skip the next class if an exam time carries beyond the original class. The committee also noted that the issue of cheating, which seems to be a growing problem, falls at the intersection between the CEP and College Council, and may require attention. David said he would draft something for the committee to consider. He suggested the committee place the issue of student cheating on a future agenda.

Due dates for final papers and exams

Turning next to the due dates for final papers and exams, David noted that the rules described in the Faculty Handbook (IV.F. and IV. G.) are not reflected in practice. Those rules require faculty members to choose how they will give an exam, which may take several forms, including providing the student with a copy of the final examination before the beginning of the examination period, to be taken at any time during the examination period according to the procedure outlined by the instructor. Faculty are also instructed to inform the Registrar of the manner in which they intend to conduct their final examinations. And the rules require that all course work in a given semester must be submitted by the last day of classes at 5:00 p.m.

David pointed out that the rules require that all work other than exams be completed before the end of class. He said the committee needs to bring this policy into alignment with current practice. He proposed deleting the first part of IV. G. and replacing it with "All course work in a given semester must be submitted by the last day of the examination period at 5:00 p.m." He added that there should be no new assignments during the reading period.

Catherine E. pointed out that nothing should be due during reading period. She suggested changing the title of IV. F. to "End of Semester Work." David noted that the college now has a new reading period, for a reason, and this is an opportunity to set appropriate boundaries on coursework during this time. Sean thought the policy should say explicitly that no final assignments or final exams should be due during the reading period. Assignments could be due during finals period.

Klára noted that many faculty members give a final exam on the last day of class. She thought this was a problem and should not be allowed. David disagreed, and expressed a reluctance to interfere with instructor autonomy within their teaching time. Catherine E. then suggested encouraging professors to use the last exam day as the due date if assigning a paper. This would reduce conflicts for students. David proposed a paragraph that would say at the end of IV. F.: "With the exception of final examinations, as outlined above, no new coursework may be assigned after 5 p.m. on the last day of classes. No assignments can be due between the last day of classes and noon on the first day of the

examination period, and a due date of 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the examination period is preferred.” David will speak with Janet Tobin about the appropriate placement for this within IV. F.

Half-credit courses

David asked the committee next to consider the college policy towards half-credit courses. The policy currently states that “Half courses are not normally included in the 32-course requirement for graduation” (Catalog, p. 72). He said this is not the policy of the Music department. That department allows two half-credit courses in the same instrument to count towards the major. The committee recommended deleting the sentence from the Catalog that states “Half courses are not normally included in the 32-course requirement for graduation.” Alex asked whether there were restrictions on how many half-credit courses can be counted towards graduation. Klára said that the Music department limits the number of half-credit music courses that can count towards the major to two courses.

Members of the CEP agreed to retain the remainder of the policy governing half-credit courses. That is, students seeking to take half-credit courses must take the full-course equivalent to receive credit towards graduation and must take a semester with the additional half-credit (4.5 courses) before taking a semester with a deficit (3.5 courses). Furthermore, half-credit courses must be matched in the same subject for a student to receive credit, subject to department rules. David said he will draw up new language, eliminating the problematic sentence.

Teaching evaluations for visiting faculty

David next asked the committee to consider extending its new policy on teaching evaluations to visiting faculty members. Catherine E. said she always encourages visitors to request teaching evaluations and would prefer that they use the tenure-track faculty approach towards teaching evaluations, as opposed to the electronic version used for senior faculty course evaluations. She then asked whether the college should adopt a policy that withholds students’ grades until they have submitted evaluations, a policy that she favors. David suggested the CEP take up that question in the fall. Catherine E. thought the CEP should recommend to departments that visitors should have course evaluations. This would affect the roughly 20 visitors and 15-20 course borrows on campus each year. David thought that might be something she would want to discuss with the department chairs at the upcoming chairs’ meeting. Catherine E. said she would encourage departments to be in touch with their visitors and to figure out what type of course evaluation the visitor might prefer, since more senior course borrows may have different needs than junior faculty looking for a job. The chair could recommend to the visitor at that time that receiving a course evaluation could be helpful to them in their careers. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.