

**Committee on Educational Policy
February 20, 2019**

In attendance: Faculty: Catherine Sanderson, chair; Lawrence Douglas; Tekla Harms; Tariq Jaffer; Edward Melillo. Students: Gabriel Echarte '22; Brooke Harrington '22; Julia Ralph '21. Catherine Epstein, Dean, *ex officio*. Recorder: Nancy Ratner, Director of Academic Projects.

Catherine Sanderson, chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), called the meeting to order 8:30 a.m. in the Mullins Room. Catherine S. suggested the committee begin with one FTE request before a member of that department arrived.

FTE Requests

Religion

The Religion department has requested an FTE in ancient Christianity to replace Robert Doran who has entered the third year of his phased retirement.

Course Proposals

Catherine S. next asked the committee to turn to review the 97 new course proposals and courses with major revisions. Tekla noted that courses that include a major travel component are all, of necessity, limited in enrollment, often with rather vague criteria for who will be admitted. She expressed an interest in finding a way to standardize how students will be selected for those courses, but others persuaded her that the range of topics and course components would make standardization impractical. She then recommended that faculty be encouraged to articulate their selection process more clearly before having to make the selections.

Tekla next turned to the plethora of courses offered only once a week. She noted that the committee had, in its letter soliciting new course proposals, explicitly asked faculty to be vigilant about not scheduling introductory level courses in once-a-week slots:

Courses that meet only once a week may present special challenges, both to the instructor teaching the course and also to students wishing to take the course. Because such courses meet across multiple blocks, once-a-week courses also may limit students' access to other courses. While meeting once a week may be appropriate for upper-level seminars, the CEP expects most courses to meet more frequently.

She again noted how once-a-week courses constrain students' other course options and asked that the committee try to make faculty more aware of this problem. Catherine E. said she strictly oversees course slots and requires faculty to abide by the official slots, but there will always be some overlap for these courses. Tekla suggested it might be time for the committee to require a pedagogical rationale for offering any course that is not an advanced seminar only once a week; she recommended that they be scheduled on Fridays from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. whenever possible. Catherine S. said she would contact the English department about a number of introductory-level courses the department had proposed to meet for once-a-week slots.

Lawrence asked about the very low-enrollments—usually no more than six students—that are tied to research colloquia. Catherine E. explained that these are research seminars that include an optional summer research component. Faculty have the option to teach the course as an overload, in which case

they receive a stipend for doing so. Alternatively, if the course is not taught as an overload, the department has the option of receiving a one-course visitor. Catherine E. noted that there are still slots available and encouraged colleagues to consider offering one of these colloquia. Although the summer research component remains optional for students, it was her understanding that most students in the colloquia do participate in summer research. Austin Sarat convenes workshops on how to teach these courses, and the workshops prepare faculty before the course and continue to meet throughout the course. Anyone interested should contact Austin.

The committee then discussed courses in greater detail, focusing on overlap between new courses and courses that are already in the Catalog and courses that needed greater clarity in their descriptions.

Target-of-opportunity (TO) request

Catherine E. informed the committee that she and the president had approved a request that the committee had previously discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.