

Committee on Educational Policy

January 20, 2021

In attendance: Faculty: Sandra Burkett; Nicola Courtright; Edward Melillo, chair; Krupa Shandilya; Adam Sitze. Provost and Dean of the Faculty: Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*. Students: Nicholas Graber-Mitchell '22; Robert Parker '21; Jalen Woodard '23. Recorder: Nancy Ratner, Director of Academic Projects.

Edward Melillo, chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. The committee approved the minutes of January 13, 2021.

Policy on Educational Leave

Edward asked the committee to review the proposed academic policies for study abroad and domestic study, provided by Janna Behrens, Director of Global Education. The committee suggested one minor editorial change and expressed support for the new guidelines.

FTE Requests

Edward then asked the committee to return to its review of FTE requests, beginning with a cluster hiring proposal.

Black Studies and English

The Black Studies and English departments have jointly requested a multi-position open-rank search in various genres of Black literature and culture, produced by people from Africa, the Caribbean the United States, and other centers of Black Anglophone culture. The departments proposed hiring as many as three specialists in these fields, with one to be jointly-appointed between English and Black Studies. If approved, that position would replace Rhonda Cobham-Sander, who currently holds half positions in both departments. A second position would replace Marisa Parham's full FTE in English after she officially resigns her position at the college. A third hire would replace Karen Sanchez-Eppler's half position in English but, if approved, it would represent an expansion for the remaining half, possibly drawing from the pool available for hiring senior Black or Latinx scholars. The committee discussed the requests.

History

To avoid a conflict of interest, Edward designated Nicola as chair and departed before the next discussion. Nicola then asked the committee to turn to the History department's request that it be allowed to replace John Servos with another position in the history of science. John retired in 2020. Nicola invited the committee to discuss the request.

Pass-fail

Nancy asked the committee if it wished to propose an additional sentence to the Pass-Fail policy that will come before the faculty at its next meeting. Catherine noted that the class deans have general

concerns about academic dishonesty at the college, so the committee may need to take this up more broadly. Adam wondered whether there were plans afoot to fix this problem in the short-term simply by amending the *Student Handbook*. Catherine said that cannot be done mid-year and would still require faculty input and approval. Adam suggested the committee take this up next week and asked Nancy to circulate some options. The advisor could perhaps have a role in whether pass-fail can be allowed.

Academic calendar

Nicola noted that Rob Benedetto has sent the committee a letter proposing an earlier start to the fall semester to accommodate students' Christmas travel. Nancy said the committee will need to develop a three-year calendar, since the college needs a new calendar for the fall, so this will become an agenda item quite soon and can be discussed then. Nicola asked if the CEP could see a chart of the Five College calendars next to Amherst's proposed calendar. Catherine said there is currently lots of conversation about Five College calendars which are still in flux. She suggested thinking about what is desirable for Amherst and then think about how this can work with the other colleges. She asked Nancy to circulate the Five College agreement on the coordination of the academic calendar. Nicola said she supported starting the semester before September so classes can end before Thanksgiving.

Latin honors

Cole asked that the honors discussion also be on a future agenda. Nancy said the committee will return to the honors discussion at a future meeting. Adam asked if the committee could have data on how the FGO has been used and who has used it before starting that discussion. Nancy said she would ask Jesse for that information.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.