

Committee on Educational Policy
May 1, 2019

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

Catherine Sanderson, chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. in the Mullins Room. The committee approved the minutes from the meeting of April 24, 2019.

Course proposals

The committee then reviewed remaining course proposals and asked that two courses be revised, removing jargon and opaque references and clarifying the readings by adding the authors' first names.

Chair and meeting time for next year

The committee next elected Lawrence to serve as chair for the coming year and agreed to continue to meet on Wednesdays at 8:45-9:45 a.m.

Recommendation from the EACDIEA

Catherine S. next directed the committee's attention to a letter from David Cox, sent on behalf of the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, which asked that the CEP respond to the third recommendation from the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence (EACDIEA). This recommendation asks for a commitment from the faculty to articulate a vision for scaffolding student learning (both in and out of the classroom) across the full four years; for mentoring students from the point of admission to graduation; and for expanding the intentionality that currently marks the first year through the whole life-cycle of the student. While the letter from the task force noted that the Curriculum Committee articulated such a vision in its report of May 2018—the report proposed a new set of learning goals, a college seminar program with required seminars in both the first and second year, and an expansion of the role of advisors—the letter expressed concern about the faculty's commitment to these proposals.

Tekla said the external committee has lofty goals but she was unsure what the CEP could do with these. Lawrence suggested the committee might be able to state that it was committed to expanded intentionality. Tekla disagreed. Catherine E. said the intentionality is clear for students in their first year when students all take a first-year seminar and in their senior year when they write theses and engage in capstone projects within the major. However, the college needs a more intentional program for the sophomore and junior years. Catherine S. pointed to the recommendations to add both a sophomore seminar and enhanced advising during the sophomore year. She thought these initiatives both addressed the recommendation for greater intentionality.

Tekla repeated her concern that, while the EACDIEA's goals were lofty, its evidence that the curriculum lacks intentionality is lacking. She thought it hard to react to this charge in isolation from that evidence. Edward agreed with her. Lawrence was uncertain what the committee meant by intentionality here. Tekla thought it referred to courses which emphasize process over content. Catherine S. said she would share the committee's thoughts with David Cox.

Proposed updated language for thesis submission and support

Catherine S. asked the committee to consider a proposal, sent by the registrar, library, and writing center, saying they would like to update their web pages to centralize all resources and information. The goal is to create a hub of information for students. Tekla supported the request, noting that this would not change any requirements; it would just reorganize the information. She then suggested that, while the registrar is making changes, she should clarify the deadline for thesis submission. There has been some confusion about the deadline this year, due to the late declaration of snow days, which changes the last day of classes. She suggested the registrar pick a date that would not change even if the last day of classes does. Edward asked that the committee discuss next year whether a thesis can be revised after being submitted.

Approval of letters to the Committee of Six

Turning to the last item on the agenda, Catherine S. asked the committee to review two letters commenting on the Curriculum Committee's recommendations. The committee took up the letter on the advising recommendations first, suggested some edits to that letter, and approved sending the letter to the Committee of Six.

The committee took up the letter on the College Seminars proposal next and discussed whether the pilot program, proposed by the FYS committee, was intended as the first step in creating a sophomore seminar or whether it was simply a request to launch a pilot program. Lawrence argued that this was not intended as a model that would become the first step towards mandating such a course for all sophomores; it was just a proposal for a new type of course. Catherine S. pointed out that this pilot course would first have to appeal to students before it could be expanded further. Edward expressed his concern that adding another category of service courses would draw faculty away from participating in the FYS program. The committee decided to focus the letter on what is needed before the proposal could be discussed on the faculty floor while giving a green light for the interested faculty to pilot their course.

Thanks

Committee members noted that this would be the last meeting for Catherine S., Tariq, and Brooke and thanked them for their contributions to the work of the committee. The committee then offered special thanks to Catherine S. for chairing the committee for the last two years. The meeting adjourned for the year at 9:50 a.m.