

Committee on Educational Policy
October 2, 2019

In attendance: Faculty: Tekla Harms; Edward Melillo, chair; Christian Rogowski; Adam Sitze. Students: Gabriel Echarte '22; Julia Ralph '21. Recorder: Nancy Ratner, Director of Academic Projects.

Edward Melillo, chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. in Clark House 100.

Request to study abroad during final semester

Edward asked the committee if it wished to discuss the principles behind the rules about studying abroad during the senior year. The college has rules against study abroad during the final semester, since this can complicate graduation if grades are not submitted in time, but exceptions are occasionally made to allow students to study abroad during their penultimate semester. Committee members noted that the more important reason for not allowing students to study abroad during their senior year is the expectation that they will return to campus and integrate what they have learned while abroad into their studies at the college. If the students do not return, many of the most important benefits of study abroad would not accrue. The committee thought the principle behind this rule was correct and thought there should not be exceptions.

New course proposals

The committee discussed 18 new course proposals. Committee members expressed curiosity about the circumstances in which fully retired faculty teach at the college and asked that this be a future agenda item.

Half courses

Edward said the committee will continue its discussion of half courses in the curriculum at the next meeting. Tekla noted that new half courses are brought to the committee, so she was not sure the discussion was needed, but Adam thought that, with a new category of half courses, the issue was worth discussing, particularly as a way to encourage students to take risks. Tekla said half courses in the arts—usually music courses—have value in that they encourage students to keep art as part of their daily lives. The student members agreed. Adam said he would nevertheless like to track the dynamics in the spring semester, examining whether concerns expressed by faculty have been realized. For example, does the awarding of half courses for lab decrease enrollment in the humanities?

Future meetings

Edward noted that the committee will not meet next week. Tekla will chair the following week, and Edward will participate by phone.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.