

**Committee on Educational Policy**  
**September 2, 2020**

**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: Cole Graber-Mitchell '22. 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 and welcomed the committee to a new year.

**Flexible Grading Policy and the First-Year Seminar**

Edward reported that, based on advice from the committee via email, he had informed Rick López, the first-year dean, that the committee wished to continue the policy of not allowing students to take their First-Year Seminar (FYS) under the Flexible Grading Policy (FGO). The committee briefly discussed whether this policy required a vote of the entire faculty but concluded that it should not require a vote since the policy of the college has long held that FYS courses are not eligible for pass/fail (or FGO) status. Last spring the committee revised the FGO policy to state this explicitly, as requested by the class deans, and the CEP advised the Office of Student Affairs accordingly, but the pandemic prevented this, along with other policy changes, from moving forward to the Committee of Six for a full faculty vote. The committee agreed that the FYS is a special course, different from any other course at the college. While one member noted that the CEP could recommend, but not execute policies, most committee members concluded the committee was just clarifying a policy that has long been in place.

**Letter Soliciting Spring 2021 Course Proposals**

The committee tentatively approved a draft of the letter soliciting additional spring course proposals, with final approval delayed until the next meeting.

**FGO, Readmission, Degree Requirements**

Edward said he and Nancy would create a summary of the changes recommended by last year's committee, just before it disbanded due to Covid-19. The committee agreed to return to these policies at its next meeting.

**Education Studies Proposal**

Edward noted that the committee has been considering whether to establish a major in Education Studies for several years. Last year, the committee asked that the proposers, led by Hilary Moss, obtain from each department connected to the policy a letter stating the strength of its commitment to staffing this program. Nancy agreed to gather the minutes covering conversations about adopting this major for

the committee prior to the next meeting. The committee said it was eager to consider this proposal expeditiously this year.

### **Film and Media Studies proposal**

Edward next turned to the proposal from the Film and Media Studies (FAMS) faculty asking that the program be converted to department status. The committee said it would discuss it at a later meeting.

### **Committee on Student Learning**

Last year the Committee on Student Learning proposed that the college adopt a new index which faculty would use to identify the work required for mastery of each of their courses. At that time, the CEP had discussed whether this might recreate new opportunities for avoidance, especially in areas that might stretch students' weakest skills. The committee decided to invite Adam Honig to its next meeting to hear more about website changes his subcommittee might propose to encourage greater access to the full curriculum.

### **Letter Soliciting FTE Requests**

Edward asked the committee to consider a draft letter soliciting FTE requests for the 2021-22 academic year. Committee members asked whether Covid-19 would require any changes to the process. Catherine thought it would not. She noted that the number of faculty lines that will be available is not yet known and added that two departments which had been approved for a search for the coming year—a search for a sculptor by the Department of Art and History of Art and a search for someone in political theory by the Department of Political Science—have chosen to delay their searches for one year. The committee will review a final draft at its next meeting.

### **New Business**

Cole expressed concern about rumors that minor infractions of social distancing rules have led to academic probation. Catherine said she was unaware of any such cases. She had only heard of a student who had been removed from campus housing after a serious infraction. She said it was possible that significant infractions could lead to disciplinary action, but these would have to be serious cases—hosting a super spreader party or attending one off-campus—to warrant academic probation or dismissal.

Adam was very concerned that the procedures protecting students were unclear, including whether an accused student would have access to an advisor, as is the case for a Title IX infraction. Catherine said disciplinary cases frequently lead to academic suspension, as it would be unusual to ask students to leave campus but allow them to continue with their academics. She thought the resolution to problems has mostly been confined to warnings or conversations at the moment. If there were a more serious violation, the case would be heard by the Community Standards Review Board if it involved students

and the Grievance Process if it involved the faculty. Staff members have less robust protections. The CEP would not have a role. Adam thought the CEP should have a role if it involved educational policy. Cole was asked to keep the CEP informed if he heard otherwise.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

**CE**

**CGM**

**SLB**

**EDM**

**ACS**