

**Committee on Educational Policy  
September 30, 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; 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. Edward welcomed Jalen and Robert to the committee. The committee approved the minutes of September 16, 2020, and September 23, 2020.

**New courses**

The committee approved a slate of ten new courses and two courses with major revisions. Cole expressed concern about course descriptions with long lists of questions but no clear statement at the beginning saying what the course will be about and what students should expect. He asked that the committee clarify this expectation before requesting courses for next year.

**Degree credits policy**

The committee next returned to the policy governing course credits for an Amherst College degree. The committee approved the following revised version and asked Edward to forward this language to the class deans and the Committee of Six:

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All students except Independent Scholars are normally required to elect four full courses each semester. Students may, **AT THEIR DISCRETION AND WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION, ADDITIONALLY** elect one or two half courses, **INCLUDING LABORATORY HALF COURSES THAT ARE REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF SOME SCIENCE COURSES**, ~~in addition to four full courses at their discretion and without special permission. A student may not elect more than one half course in any semester except by consent of the class dean and the departments concerned. In such cases, the student's program will be three full courses and two half courses.~~

Half courses are not normally included in the requirement of thirty-two courses for the degree; however, with the permission of the academic advisor and the class dean, a student may combine two half courses to be counted as equivalent to a full course if (1) the student completes the 4.5 courses in one semester and 3.5 courses in a subsequent semester, or (2) the two halves match within the same semester in a manner designated by the offering department, with the approval of the offering department (in this case, the student's program will be three or four full courses and two half courses). No more than four half courses may be so combined for credit toward the degree.

In exceptional cases a student may, with the permission of both the student's academic advisor and class dean, take five full courses for credit during a given semester. Such permission is normally granted only to students of demonstrated superior academic ability, responsibility, and will. Fifth courses cannot be used to accelerate graduation. ~~On occasion, a student who has failed a course may be permitted to take a fifth course in a given semester if, in the judgment of the Committee on Academic Standing, this additional work can be undertaken without jeopardizing the successful completion of all courses taken in that semester. Students may only~~

~~retake a course for which they have received a failing grade or from which they have withdrawn in a prior semester.~~

A student who by failing a course incurs a deficiency in the number of courses required for normal progress toward graduation is usually expected to make up that course deficiency by taking a three- or four-semester hour (AS DETERMINED BY THE REGISTRAR) course at another approved institution during the summer prior to the first semester of the next academic year and no later than the semester prior to the student's last semester at Amherst. ALL COURSE DEFICIENCIES MUST NORMALLY BE MADE UP PRIOR TO THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE FINAL YEAR, EXCEPT THOSE ARISING IN THE FINAL YEAR, IN WHICH CASE THEY MUST BE MADE UP PRIOR TO GRADUATION. ALL MAKE-UP COURSES MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE REGISTRAR. COURSES TAKEN AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION BY A STUDENT AFTER WITHDRAWING FROM AMHERST COLLEGE ARE NOT APPLICABLE TOWARD THE AMHERST COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE.

STUDENTS MAY ONLY RETAKE A COURSE FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED A FAILING GRADE OR FROM WHICH THEY HAVE WITHDRAWN IN A PRIOR SEMESTER.

Students may not add courses after the last day of add/drop at the beginning of each semester or drop courses after this date except as follows:

In any semester prior to the final year, a student who experiences severe academic difficulty and has exhausted all academic resources (e.g., met with professors during office hours, received tutoring, met with class deans, etc.), may be allowed to withdraw from a course without penalty ~~and graduate with 31 courses~~. This ~~exception~~ AMHERST COLLEGE ACADEMIC COURSE DROP may be invoked only once, and requires permission of the instructor, advisor and class dean. The deadline for withdrawal requests is the end of the tenth week of the semester.

STUDENTS STUDYING OFF-CAMPUS IN AN APPROVED PROGRAM MAY EXERCISE THE AMHERST COLLEGE ACADEMIC COURSE DROP WITH THE APPROVAL OF THEIR ACADEMIC ADVISOR AND THEIR CLASS DEAN, PROVIDED THEY HAVE EXHAUSTED THOSE ACADEMIC RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAM AND PROVIDED THEIR REQUEST IS MADE TO THEIR CLASS DEAN PRIOR TO THE LAST DAY OF THE COURSE AND AS PER THE RULES OF THE OFF-CAMPUS STUDY PROGRAM.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE TAKEN THE AMHERST COLLEGE ACADEMIC COURSE DROP MAY GRADUATE WITH A TOTAL OF 31 COURSES.

STUDENTS WHO ARE APPROVED FOR A REDUCED COURSE LOAD OF THREE FULL COURSES IN A GIVEN SEMESTER, THROUGH PROCEDURES OVERSEEN BY THE OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES, MAY GRADUATE WITH A TOTAL OF 31 COURSES.

Further exceptions shall be made for DOCUMENTED EMERGENCIES (HERE UNDERSTOOD AS ~~disabling~~ medical reasons or ~~for reason of~~ grave personal emergencies, RATHER THAN ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES), and shall be made by the class dean.

~~All course deficiencies must normally be made up prior to the first semester of the final year, except those arising in the final year, in which case they must be made up prior to graduation. All make-up courses must be approved in advance by the registrar.~~

~~Courses taken by a student after withdrawing from Amherst College, as part of a graduate or professional program in which that student is enrolled, are not applicable toward an Amherst College undergraduate degree.~~

**Target-of-opportunity request (TO)**

Edward left the meeting, and Nicola acted as chair for the remainder of the meeting. The committee then considered a request for a target-of-opportunity (TO) appointment.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.