1. Personal introductions around the table due to the presence of new members.

2. Minutes of last meeting were approved.

3. Discussions of proposed majors in Arabic and Chinese (Slavic and Eastern Languages and Literature).

There was extensive discussion of the proposal from the Department of Slavic & Eastern Languages and Literatures to create majors and minors in Arabic and Chinese. Perhaps those could be modeled on the existing Russian major, although few students have recently chosen that major.

There was a great deal of concern that too few students would be involved (3-4 / year?) and that a critical mass of faculty does not exist to ensure the proposed courses could be offered when needed.

It appears the motivation for establishing these majors/minors is not coming from students but from the Department instead.

If approved, the Arabic major/minor might be expected to grow over time. That is less clear for the Chinese major.

The Department is targeting American students and does not expect foreign student enrollment will be a factor.

Since enough students and faculty may not be in place to merit approval, there was discussion of allowing the programs to move forward as independent majors instead.

Complications:

A. Independent majors normally are interdisciplinary among at least three different departments, whereas the proposed program would be entirely within a single department.

B. Approval, even as an independent major, requires confidence that the necessary courses would be taught on a regular basis. The small number of faculty involved makes that problematic.

C. Existing independent major programs require at least two faculty advisors for each student.

D. For existing independent majors, students must have GPA ≥3.5.

The resources might be in place to approve these programs as minors, whereas they may well be inadequate to approve them as majors.
There seems to be an inconsistency about the number of courses that could be accepted from outside the Department or institution to satisfy the major. For Arabic it is listed at two but for Chinese it is given as one. Normally, each department polices such things.

This Department offers seven minors currently. A minor in Chinese is advertised on the Department’s website, but that minor apparently has never been approved by the EPC. It is not listed on the MCAS website. The Department should be advised to change its nomenclature from "minor" to "concentration" or "specialization."

Instead of moving forward with this proposal as major/minor, maybe pursue the independent major option even though it involves only a single department.

What do other universities do with similar programs?


There is no real proposal here. It is a trial balloon to get EPC’s reaction. Thus, there is nothing formal for the EPC to do with this right now.

It is not clear currently where the home of this program would be or who would administer it. Nursing? Social Work?

The issue was raised about potential double-counting courses in different Schools (MCAS vs. CSOM, etc.). Policies would need to be in place to avoid that.

5. Discussions of grade appeals.

Two cases were considered by the Grade Appeals Subcommittee, and recommendations were made.

The first case involved a student who took a multiple-choice make-up exam, as requested by the student in lieu of a more usual essay exam. The department chair agreed to the exam format and told the student the exam score would be scaled like other students’ exams, but the faculty member (no longer at BC) felt unable to scale a one-of-a-kind exam and did not scale it. The Subcommittee recommended the student’s appeal be approved due to the Chair’s assurances to the student. The general feeling of the EPC was that the score should be scaled somehow. That would probably result in the student’s final grade rising from C+ to either B- or B.

The second case was from a student who needed to miss an exam due to being away to participate in a sponsored athletic event. As stated in the course syllabus, the make-up exam was essay format even though the original exam was multiple choice. The student took the essay exam, failed to score as well as anticipated, and then claimed the exam was unfairly difficult compared to the multiple choice format. In addition, there was a claim from the student that other athletes were allowed to take the multiple-choice format, which may have been unfair. Since that was simply an allegation by the student at the time the Subcommittee met and would have Title IX implications, the assumption was that those issues would be investigated and addressed separately by the administration. Based solely on the fairness of the grading of the student’s exam, the Subcommittee rejected the appeal. However, facts that came to light after the Subcommittee meeting confirmed that the other athletes (all male) were allowed to take the original multiple-choice exam while the appealing student (female) was not.
That raised much more serious issues of fairness, so the Subcommittee took the matter back under consideration and has the option to revise its recommendations to the full EPC.