A&S Education Policy Committee  
April 16, 2015

Announcements

The next EPC meeting will be May 4, 2015, 9:30 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 12, 2015 were approved with the amendment that John Baldwin, Killian Buechler, Kathy Dunn, Clare Dunsford, Jerry Easter, Rudi Hon, Luke Jorgensen, Gregory Kalscheur, Michael Martin, Chris Maxwell, Kara Naccarelli, William Petri, Akua Sarr, Eve Spangler, Hagop Toghramadjian, Mary Troxell.

Honors Subcommittee Recommendations on Language Competency

Gerry Easton reported on the work of the committee that reviewed the foreign language requirement. The committee did extensive work to produce the report, including the review of quantitative data on the many ways BC students meet the requirement at present, qualitative interviews with language and literature faculty in four Departments (Romance languages, German Studies, Slavic and Eastern languages, Classical Studies), and comparative work on the ways in which other universities, comparable to BC handle, the language requirement.

The report shows a consensus that: 1) a language requirement be part of the Core curriculum and 2) a rationale for the language requirement be articulated.

The Committee offered four recommendations:

1). Draft language for the rationale for the language requirement as part of the Core

2). Recommendation to delete the term “proficiency” from all discussions of the language requirement, specifying instead the precise ways that the language requirement can be met.

3). Creating a “high bar,” superior to proficiency, for which students could be recognized with a certificate or transcript notation.

4). Reviewing the multiple ways that students can demonstrate language skills other than passing two language courses at the intermediate level.

The sense of the meeting was that the suggested language for the rationale be edited for greater brevity.

Although no vote was taken, all who spoke to the point endorsed the idea that the term “proficiency” should be deleted from the rationale for language study. The principal
reason recognized that “proficiency” is an overly vague term that lends itself to inconsistencies in the administration of language testing. Further, several people noted that Core requirements in the sciences and social sciences are described solely in terms of Core courses that allow students to fulfill the requirement, and not in terms of substantive proficiency in science or social science.

The proposal to create some recognition for “high bar” of language learning was not discussed.

The EPC also discussed alternative ways to satisfy the language core requirements, especially native proficiency, testing out, and study abroad. No action was recommended, but administrative difficulties were noted, especially with regard to evaluation in languages not taught at BC or for which no standardized proficiency tests are available. Further discussion is also needed on the subject of whether “native fluency” refers only to mastery of spoken language or also requires includes the written forms of the language. The rationale for language learning (appreciation for cultural diversity, cognitive skill development, practical life-skill tools) could support either or both positions.

**Charge to the EPC**

Gerry Easter, chairing the Honors Subcommittee on Language Proficiency will organize the on-line editing of the statement providing a rationale for the language requirement in time to have text ready for voting at the May 4, 2015 meeting of the EPC.

**In Attendance:**
Michael Martin
Gregory Kalsheur, S. J.
Kathy Dunn
Clare Dunsford
William Petri
Chris Maxwell
Amy Boesky
Kara Naccarelli
Rudy Hon
Akua Sarr
Eve Spangler
Mary Troxell
Tom McGuinness
John Baldwin
Gerry Easter

Submitted: Eve Spangler