Dean Quigley called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Present: Brian Jacek, Michael Martin, Clare O’Connor, Bill Keane, Ibby Nathans, Akua Sarr, Dennis Hale, Bill Petri, Barbara Viechnicki, Christina Kim, Tom Mcguinness, Gregory Herbers, Beth Wallace, David Quigley.

**Item #1:** The Minutes of February 4, 2010 were approved.

There were no announcements.

**Agenda Item #2:** Proposal from the Math Dept. to create a BS degree.

Bill Keane explained the background and rationale for the proposal: with the upcoming implementation of a new Ph D program in Math and the discontinuation of the current terminal MA program, certain opportunities for advanced undergrads may be lost. These undergrads currently take the MA courses. The new proposed BS would preserve opportunities by establishing a 12 course program, with a required year of algebra and analysis (MT 311 and 312 and MT 321 and 322), as well as MT 460. (These courses currently exist at the Master’s level.)

Q: (Clare) Would there be a lab component? Not required, but recommended. Clare said that other physical sciences do require a lab.

Q: (Bill) Does the existing BA primarily serve LSOE students? Not entirely. It also serves a number of double majors.

Q: (Bill) There would be no additional cost associated with the BS, correct? Correct: new courses would come from existing MA courses.

Comment: (Bill) The program should specify that the required science course be major, and not core, courses, since the phrase “upper division” lacks clarity.

Q: (Bill) Does Economics count for the science requirement? Yes.

Dean Quigley recommended that it be clarified that at least two courses be taken that are not in Economics. He also recommended that a few clarifications be made, in particular that the nature of the natural science commitment be clear. Then the proposal should be brought back to the committee. Clare suggested a list of approved courses for students to
consult. Barb asked about the need for graders, which might in fact require some additional funding.

**Agenda Item #3: Report from Academic Affairs Subcommittee**

(Because Clare Dunsford was not able to be in attendance, Bill Petri presented.) The Psychology Department wants a BS in Psychology for students doing deeper work in neuroscience. They propose that, if the BS proposal is approved, they will eliminate their current, existing concentration in neuroscience and replace it with the BS degree. They are willing to include a lab in their requirements. They plan to offer two degrees, the BA and the BS. The proposal will eliminate some of the overlap with the other departments interested in neuroscience, but will leave open the door to further interdepartmental, interdisciplinary work in neuroscience. The Psych Dept reasons that, since the BS would exist entirely within their department, they have no need at this time to consult with other departments.

Bill expressed some concern that that students currently pursuing the concentration be allowed to finish under the current rules. Clare expressed some concern about governance in Psych: who’s really on board? Bill recommended giving tentative approval to the proposal. Clare pointed out that it remains unclear whether non-neuroscience students can also get a BS. Bill approved of the fact that the list of required course for the new BS did not seem unduly dependent on Biology course offerings, and that a wide list of Biology courses seemed to fulfill the requirements.

Q: Do they have the capacity in the department?
We have no data on resource implications, but Dean Quigley thought they might use the R & R, which Bill thought would be too broad and variable a strategy.

Q: If we approve this, do we limit future opportunities for neuroscience?
Bill: No. We’re exhorting them to remain open to interdisciplinary possibilities, including a major.

The proposal was tabled for now.

**Agenda Item #4: Honors Subcommittee Report**

**Topic A: Independent Major Proposals**

Akua reported the review of three independent major proposals.

The first was denied: The proposal was late, was from a Biology major, who did not have a “coherent and substantial list of courses” for an Irish Studies Major. She and her advisor have been notified, and are not likely to be surprised.

The second was a student applying to be a Hellenic Studies Major (in other words, not take classic Greek, though the student had taken modern Greek.) The proposal was late
because the student was operating under the mistaken advice of his advisor, who believed there was an existing precedent for this major. The student was unaware until recently that he needed a proposal. Letters supported the proposal. The subcommittee does not want to set any further precedent, but approved the proposal based on its coherence. However, it rejected the student proposal for a senior thesis on Greek dance, because the student has not taken the courses leading to this topic. However, he can choose another topic.

The entire committee decided it “would not object” to this independent major—but again sets no precedent in doing so.

The third proposal was for a major in Transnational American Studies, which seemed to be designed to incorporate the student’s study abroad experience in Italy. But Carlo Rotella referred to it only as American Studies—and so the major was approved without the “transatlantic” moniker.

The entire committee agreed to support the decisions of the subcommittee. Akua observed that there seems to be one or two American Studies major proposal per year.

Topic B: Proposal from Bernd Widdig to lower the required GPA for foreign study.

Dean Quigley said that, if we value the importance of international study, then we should allow more exposure. Yet, given the fact of grade inflation, does lowering the GPA for foreign study seem contradictory?

According to Clare, the AOC has to objection to lowering the GPA, but Joe Burns believes there might be financial implications if more students are allowed to go abroad.

Dennis expressed the concern that we’d be sending ill-equipped students, but Bill asked whether students with lower GPA benefit less from study abroad than students with higher GPAs. Kim asked whether students struggle when they return. Mike thought some students in fact come back improved. Bill said students need to take responsibility and that there is no data suggesting that a low GPA hurts students who study abroad. Dennis pointed out there could be lots of reasons for a low GPA. Beth said that advisors would have to take an important role in determining which programs were appropriate for students with lower GPAs.

The main question is whether the required GPA should be 3.0 or 2.8, as Bernd requests.

The committee awaits further information on the financial implications and the impact of foreign study on student performance. Dean Quigley suggested we signal interest, but table the proposal until April.

Topic C: Scholar of the College GPA
The required GPA is currently 3.667, as it has been for 15 years. Students need this GPA to apply and they also need to maintain. Advisors currently prompt students to apply. 26% of seniors have this GPA. Bill is in favor of raising the standards by changing the required GPA to 3.700, with the understanding that a student can still apply if her GPA improves during senior year. We would still be able to handle exceptions—especially for projects that “blossom.” Dennis pointed out that the program is more like an award—it recognizes the scholar and the body of work, not the project.

Question: would this disqualify certain students? Not more than one or two, since the work is usually impressive.

Clare expressed concern that the number of scholars was decreasing: could this be due to the high number of double majors? Bill reminded everyone that students need to plan ahead—in June of their junior years. Should the deadline then be changed to the spring before the senior year?

Dean Quigley asked Bill to make a proposal for the 3.700 GPA and the new, earlier deadline, and then bring the issue back to the committee. No action for now.

Adjourned 5:15