Minutes of A&S EPC
Sept 18, 2013 4 pm in Gasson 105

In attendance Amy Boesky, Rory Browne, Tim Duket, Kathy Dunn, Clare Dunsford, Gerald Easter, Rudi Hon, Siobhán Kelly Michael Martin, Tom McGuinness, Kara Naccarelli, David Quigley, and Akua Sarr.

1. Chair called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm and made welcoming and introductory remarks.
   - As last year, proposed a division into two subcommittees: 1. Academic affairs; and 2. Honors. EPC is a place for faculty to make a contribution to the academic development of A&S. (David)
   - The work of the EPC can be interesting; proposals for new programs come here first; these are things one would not otherwise come to know. (Clare)

2. Approval of minutes for May 6th 2013. Two minor modifications of the minutes proposed and accepted; motion to approve moved and unanimously adopted.

3. Sheet for joining subcommittees passed around. Call for volunteers to chair these committees also included. Michael Martin promised to try to honor requests, but not all requests could be honored.

4. Business for the year:
   a) Conversation on Academic Integrity and Departmental Honors (continued from last year)
   b) General discussion of honors programs and tracks – moving toward this last year – there should be some honors option in all departments.
   c) Proposal for the Biology Minor has been resubmitted.
   d) Language competency conversation; second language people; departments have full control of competency standards; new discussion of relative difficulty of languages,
   e) AHANA proposal
   f) Membership and elections to the EPC – last reviewed 44 years ago (1969 vision of EPC) – should this be revisited for a stronger governance mechanism? Don Cox (Econ) notified the committee that Stefan Hoderlein is now on leave; rules indicate that EPC must approve the appointment of any new member. Chris Maxwell from Economics recommended by Cox to this committee. Quigley, Duket, Dunsford, Browne all spoke in favor of Maxwell. Unanimous vote to elect Chris Maxwell from Economics for the committee.

5. Discussion of environmental studies major – proposal is now final and ready for us to consider. David has been encouraging Noah Snyder and his committee to develop this major. Interest in environmental studies is mushrooming. Other schools consider this a policy track (David). Some schools make this possible only as a second major (David).
• Environmental Studies is pitched in the proposal as a social science and policy major. Student perception is that it is something else. Peer institutions have made it more science than policy, others the reverse. Environmental Studies is ambiguous. There may not enough science? Reasons for moving to have a major in this subject that a focus in any one department would have. What does this add? Interdisciplinary courses are difficult to pin down. (Kathy)
• Role and importance of environmental studies in recruitment for new students; well-argued case for matching this interest here. (Luke)
• Demand for Environmental Studies exists. Sustainability floor in the dorms is sought after. Interest strong. Environmental geo-science major is difficult yet still going strong. But other interested students turn away from the hard science component of Environmental Science. Students want to get to the policy side and the social science part of it. (Kara)

Question about the application process - creates a large demand that is somewhat artificial (Clare). Tim and Akua agree in varying degrees about problems with an IS-style application for the Environmental Studies major.
• The closed/restricted nature of International Studies has changed over time; after five years we are moving toward the possibility of an open major; would expect Environmental Studies to have a plan for this eventual transition, too. (David)
• Biology does not offer the courses this proposal would require as yet. In order to make this work there will be a growing list of substitutions. This is not a science department proposal, especially lacking Biology. (Kathy)
• Driving force for the major comes from “Hard” Scientists, i.e. Noah Snyder et al. (David)
• At first, thought it should be more “science-based”. Mixed feelings about interdisciplinary majors – colleagues in Political Science tend to dislike inter-disciplinary programs; resources are not there for something additional in social sciences. (Jerry)
• Comparison with other schools – Environmental Studies at other places distinct from Environmental Science. High school students knew the difference between schools that offer Environmental Studies, not Environmental Science. The emphasis on policy is manifest. English as a discipline is new, too; exciting to imagine a new discipline. (Amy)

The discussion of an Environmental Studies major will all carry into the Academic Affairs subcommittee. This committee should meet once or twice and possibly invite Noah Snyder to the October or November meeting. (David)

6. African and African Diaspora Studies request from last year to revive their internship program submitted again. Committee reviewed AADS proposal – David urged Rhonda Frederick to specify the number of credit hours. So far only one credit in four years can go
toward graduation. AADS should consider an internship seminar to allow more credit – but not an R&R. Or some other modification. (David)

- Internships work well in Theatre. (Luke)
- The proposal lacks an academic component. The proposal seems to be a one credit internship only. (Jerry)
- Great that the program is looking for opportunities such as this. (Akua)
- African and African Diaspora Studies might want to borrow from an existing model. Will not send this to Academic Affairs as yet, and only if Rhonda comes back with a modified proposal. (David)

7. One and two credit course options needed. 110 or more seniors are in the position of needing just a few credits (less than three) this spring. Proposals sought for new kinds of courses to fill this need. These ought to come from departments (within majors for seniors?). (David)

Sample courses:

a) Theatre has a one credit Improv course. Much like an acting class. (Luke)

b) One credit “Freshman Topics Seminars” are an example – 12 weeks of 75 minutes. (Clare)

c) Judith Wilt has a one credit reading group on “Infinite Jest”.

Some rules are needed for one and two credit courses. (David) This provoked a discussion of traditional rules for short courses.

- Lab “Boot Camp” for Gateway Scholars Program mentioned as a possible short one-credit course; for six days over holiday break. TAM funds being used for this boot camp for lab skills – voluntary and connected to Molec Cell course. Hours add up to a one-credit semester course. Where should this go for approval? (Kathy) Deans have opposed intense/short one-credit summer courses (Clare).

- Only three week courses have passed muster - on the grounds that there is enough time for actual development and absorption of material. One credit for 1 and ½ weeks is not a sufficient amount of time. Suggested they add an element for later in January (within the semester). (David)

One and two credit courses needed, but innovations clash with Traditions and Rules. The change from courses to credit hours for graduation creates the need for and possibility of innovation. Faculty to be encouraged to propose such courses.


a) One independent major proposal this year. It will be reviewed by the Honors Subcommittee. (Akua)

b) Request for an update on Medical Humanities Minor since approval last academic year (Tim). Amy reported on Medical Humanities Minor to date. 29 minors signed
up already. Students are largely sophomores; with one senior who has done five courses already; the 29 are dispersed across all majors. At this stage Amy is doing advising. Most want to do global health. EN212 capped at 60 in spring semester. 15 seats are reserved for students in the minor.

9. Meeting adjourned shortly before 5 pm.