Minutes for EPC Meeting on April 12, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 pm.

In attendance: Michael Martin, C K Cheung, Brendan Kelly, Clare Dunsford, Tom McGuinness, Kathy Dunn, William Petry, David Quigley, David Vanderhooft, Akua Sarr, Rudi Hon, Frank Gollop, Kristin Canfield, Beth Wallace, Tim Duket.

1. There were no announcements.

2. Approval of Minutes: A roster for Feb. 2 was circulated after the fact. Minor changes were proposed and the minutes were approved.

3. Updates from three subcommittees:

   David Quigley thanked the subcommittees for their hard work and their efficiency

   Natural Science: All requested changes (all minor) in Physics and Earth and Environmental science have been made.

   Humanities: The Fine Arts Department has decided to pay their TAs and not to grant credit.

   (David questioned the cost of paying the TAs and offered a cautionary tale.)

   Social Sciences: Communications has a three-credit internship, which includes a graded seminar and a paper. The committee is satisfied that this is appropriate. Communications also has a one credit pass-fail internship. Lisa Cuklanz reports it is possible in theory for a student to take the 3-credit seminar and the one credit internship, for a total of 4 credits.

   Though some questions persist, the Committee approves of the arrangement.

   History 300 will be changed back to three credits. Their senior thesis will also be three. The Committee urges clear communication with the students about these changes.

   Sociology: Students doing a thesis currently receive three credits in the fall for their projects, and six in the spring because of the “unusually labor intensive research.” There was a great deal of discussion and some skepticism expressed. The Committee recommends that the students doing the thesis receive three credits each semester, unless they are doing Scholar of the College, in which case they would receive 6/6. The Sociology department will get back to the committee about this.
Discussion: Michael Moore pointed out that there may be gaps in the logic of credit given to Scholar of the College, but we probably have to let it go for now.

David Quigley made the case for the possibility of a three-six arrangement—to be decided at some future date.

Kristen Canfield asked why it’s easy to get Scholar of the College distinction in some departments and not others. Michael Martin answered that it’s a distinction given afterwards, upon completion of the project.

David then suggested that in the future, work be done to see how the Scholar of the College program might expanded into a wider range of departments.

4. Interdisciplinary Majors and Double Majoring

Clare Dunsford started off the discussion by expressing her concern about students who already have an interdisciplinary major and who try to then add a second interdisciplinary major. One issue is whether double counting is occurring. Another is that, by doing two interdisciplinary majors, students pile “breadth upon breadth” (David’s phrase). Data lacks for how many students currently layer majors this way. The committee considered responses from the heads of programs in which the practice occurs:

Ali Banuazizi defended the practice of double International Studies and Islamic Studies majors on the grounds that doing so allows students to concentrate on a certain region of the world, and it provides further opportunities for language study. It also helps with postgraduate degrees.

Bob Murphy similarly likes the idea that IS studies have a second major in a language. But he also recognizes that, if a student follows a particular track within an interdisciplinary major, the second major should be a different track. (It would make no sense, for instance, for students to follow the economics track in IS and then to take on an Economics major.)

Frank Gollop said that Bob Murphy further clarified his point in conversation: he approves of an interdisciplinary major with a major in a second field but disapproves of the idea of two “tasting menus.” But he does not want a blanket injunction against second majors. The key seems to have good advising.

Evan Kantrowitz is in favor of double majoring, provided there is not too much overlap between the two.

Michael Moore spoke out against the idea of double major. He said the opportunity to take other courses is there anyway. He argued that double majoring restricts the possibilities of independent scholarship.
Beth Wallace raised the question of whether there is coherence within the major. Cathy Dunn said that if the first major is broad, then the second major could bring substance.

Michael Moore questioned whether students really seek out the coherence. Students mistakenly assume that multiple majors lead to better job opportunities: are they escaping freedom? Are they avoiding having to make choices?

Frank Gollop repeated that he supports Bob Murphy’s position: make sure students don’t double count.

Several people expressed concern about whether students in an interdisciplinary field are getting access to depth. Rudy Hon defended environmental science as an interdisciplinary field that does indeed offer depth, but he echoed the concern that there’s no room for research when double major sets up too many requirements. He spoke in favor of one major and one minor.

Kristen Canfield pointed out that some of these double majors may result from parental pressure.

David Quigley laid out possible positions emerging from the discussion:
1. the committee could abolish majors. (This idea was clearly rejected. Michael Moore clarified that, despite his concerns, he does not want to abolish double majors. He reiterated that good advising is essential.)
2. The situation is fine and we leave it alone
3. Though we trust our colleagues, some council might be offered to IS in particular.
4. We implement a new policy.

A lively discussion followed. A decision was made to include Bob Murphy, Ali Banuazizi, and Bob Kantrowitz to the final meeting of the EPC on May 7 and to let them speak in more detail about their positions.

### 4. Notely Course-taking services

Clare Dunsford explained that Notely is a “a student powered study aid.” Students from Northeastern University contact BC professors to ask permission to hire BC students who will take notes in that prof’s class. The notes will later be posted and made accessible for a $5.00 fee. The Committee had many questions, including whether Notely violates academic integrity. The students who take the notes are not trained. Flashnotes is a similar service that has also contacted BC. Many universities allow students to purchase notes. The committee expressed skepticism about the practice. Some schools have a policy against it, but BC doesn’t.
David Quigley proposed that BC create a prohibition against any student taking notes and selling them. David asked David Vanderhoof to work with Clare and draft some language to bring to the committee. Frank Gollop and Tim Duket also agreed to work on the language.

Meeting adjourned at 5:34

Submitted by Beth Kowaleski Wallace
College of Arts and Sciences  
Educational Policy Meeting  

*Thursday, April 12th 2012 4:00 p.m.*  
Gasson 105  

**AGENDA**  

1. Announcements.  
3. Updates (or final reports) from Course Credit subcommittees.  
4. Interdisciplinary Majors and Double Majoring.  
5. “Notely” course note-taking services.  

**FINAL MEETING:** The next and final meeting of the year is scheduled for May 7th, 9:00-11:00 a.m., Gasson 105.