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Minutes, November 29, 2016

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EPC Minutes, 29 November 2016

Present: ~~Jason Mahn~~, Ann Ericson, Taddy Kalas, Brian Leech, Jayne Rose (for Dave Dehnel), David Snowball, Forrest Stonedahl, Shara Stough, ~~James Van Howe~~, Liesl Fowler, ~~Wendy Hilton Morrow~~, Mike Egan, Allan Daily, Christopher Saladin, Michelle Henry, Jacob Devos-Roy.

1) **Approved the minutes for 11/22/2016.**

2) **Review of the proposed Curriculum Conversion policies and guidance document.**

- The proposal document had three sections. The first was text addressed to department and program chairs, concerning their obligations for managing curricular change. The committee agreed that that text was acceptable.
- The second section contained the wording for a proposed motion to the full faculty. The committee recommended two edits. The maximum number of departmental credits in a “normal” major should be increased from 30 to 32, since 32 is divisible by four and eight courses seems like a more manageable size than four. The second edit was to add a 20 credit “normal” max for minors.
- The third section was the template for submitting a revision proposal. The only suggested edit there was allowing the same submission to justify multiple academic programs (e.g., a major, a minor and a concentration).

The committee reviewed the data on numbers of credits required for majors and requested the comparable data for minors.

3) **Program revision: Environmental Studies.** Following extensive discussion at the 11/22 meeting, the revised program was APPROVED.

4) **New course proposal: GRMN/SCAN 340 Diversity and Neo-Nationalism in Germany and Scandinavia.** The course was APPROVED.

5) **Preliminary discussion: making the capstone experience part of the General Education program, overseen by the Gen Ed Committee.** The Gen Ed Committee has received a proposal that would enforce a rigorous capstone requirement on all students and would recognize that as part of the general education program. One portion of the proposal would move jurisdiction from senior capstones from EPC to Gen Ed. The Gen Ed Committee and LEAP team were soliciting initial reactions and feedback.

In general, members of the committee agreed with the proposal’s principles: campus-wide coherence, meaningful work, extended reflection and clear communication are hard to object to, so we didn’t.

Members of the committee raised three sorts of arguments:

- The desire for uniformity must respect the need for flexibility. Some departments have found that internship-based capstones work, others opt for portfolios, performances or projects in a student’s junior year. It’s not clear that even “three sizes fit all” and the necessary proliferation of forms of capstones might moot the advantages of uniformity

- Proposals must fit within the constraints of budget and staffing. The draft proposal requires all departments to offer a specially-designated SI course each year. In 2016, 30 majors graduated fewer than 8 students which raised the prospect that the college would need to find funding for, and departments would need to find staff and curricular space for, 30 under-enrolled SI sections every year.
- The alternative of a non-departmental General Education capstone project should be explored. If the “new” general education is substantial, coherent and meaningful, then it might be logically possible to defend a “signature work” grounded in the broader study of the liberal arts, rather than in the focused study within a particular major. That might have some staffing advantages, as well, for departments coping with chronically under-enrolled SI sections.

No one present objected to the transfer of authority from EPC to Gen Ed should the proposal pass, but we agreed to solicit Dave Dehnel’s take on the matter.

6) Announcements

- Faculty meeting, Dec. 8: EPC will move changing “Foreign Language” to “Second Language” and will report-out course and program approvals.
- Department and program chairs’ meeting, Dec. 8: we’ll solicit feedback on the proposal to simplify the structure of internships.

Submitted by David Snowball, Interim EPC Chair