

**EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

*Implementing the New Academic Structure:
An Interim Report*

November 3, 2003

Introduction

The renovation of the academic structure of the College has been shaped by three factors. First, when the faculty adopted the new model academic structure last year, several existing programs did not fit easily into the new framework of disciplinary departments, interdisciplinary departments and interdepartmental programs. Since last spring, EPAG has been working with those programs to find constructive ways of bringing them into conformity with the new framework. Second, EPAG has been exploring the possibility of creating new academic units/programs that will allow the College to keep pace with developments in higher education and our students to meet the challenges of early 21st century life. Finally, consistent with the new allocation guidelines adopted by the faculty last year, some elements of this structural renovation process have been triggered by EPAG's obligation not to let any department fall below the established threshold of sustainability without faculty deliberation on the future of that department.

This report is intended to provide an overview of where we are in this process of structural renovation. For each program, the options being considered and the status of our discussions/deliberations are described.

1. Russian

The options are:

- 3 FTE Russian Language and Literature Program (the *status quo*);
- 2 FTE interdisciplinary *Russian Studies* Department (offering an interdisciplinary major; and providing modest language instruction);
- 1 FTE on temporary assignment to an appropriate department (no major or minor, just courses)

*Faculty deliberations are ongoing.

2. Latin American Studies

The options are:

- an Interdepartmental Program (like *African Studies*) offering a 'concentration' in LAS (and perhaps affiliated with either *Spanish* or *International Studies*);¹
- an interdisciplinary major 'housed' in *Spanish*. (which might be re-labeled *Hispanic and Latin American Studies*)

*Conversations with *LAS* and *Spanish* are ongoing.

¹Pending approval by the Faculty. For a description of 'concentrations' see the Appendix to this report.

3. Neuroscience Studies (NSS)

The options are:

- embed an *NSS* major in *Psychology*;
- create an *NSS* ‘emphasis’ in *Psychology*;
- create an Interdepartmental Program (offering a concentration) in *NSS*.

*Conversations with *NSS/Psychology* and *Linguistics* are ongoing.

4. Linguistics

The options are:

- create an Interdepartmental Program in *Cognitive Studies* (supported by *Linguistics* FTE embedded in an appropriate department);
- create an interdisciplinary department of *Cognitive Studies* (comprising the *Linguistics* faculty plus jointly appointed faculty from cognate programs);
- discontinue the *Linguistics* major and temporarily assign the FTE to an appropriate department;

*Conversations with *NSS/Psychology* and *Linguistics* are ongoing.

5. Asian Studies

The options are:

- create a Department of *Japanese and Asian Studies* offering two majors: one in Japanese and the other in Asian Studies (the latter offering emphases in Japan, China or South Asia) – this is the proposal submitted by the *Asian Studies* steering committee;
- create a Department of *Asian Studies* offering language programs in Japanese and Chinese; and an interdisciplinary major in Asian Studies;
- create a department of *Japanese and Chinese* (offering language programs); and an affiliated Interdepartmental Program in *Asian Studies* (offering an interdisciplinary concentration).

*Conversations with *Asian Studies* are ongoing.

6. Middle Eastern Studies

EPAG has begun to discuss the following options:

- a 2 FTE Interdisciplinary Department of *Middle Eastern Studies* (housing an Arabic language program, and organizing an interdisciplinary concentration in Middle Eastern Studies);
- an Interdepartmental Program in *MES* (offering a concentration in *MES*) coupled with a language program in Arabic – perhaps offered through an existing language department like

French; this would probably require at least 2 additional FTE with a significant Middle East focus (perhaps achieved through future replacement hires in appropriate disciplinary departments).

7. Russian Central and Eastern European Studies

The future of *RCEE* is highly contingent on the future of *Russian*. Options include:

- the *status quo* (if the Russian major is continued);
- a 2 FTE *Russian Studies* Department administering a version of what is now *RCEE*;
- discontinuation of the *RCEE* major.

8. European Studies

Given faculty interest and expertise, we have the option of creating a robust Interdepartmental Program/concentration in *European Studies* (covering the Atlantic to the Urals) — NB: Amherst and Carleton both have such programs.

NB: If we create a *European Studies* program and a *Middle East Studies* program, we will have concentrations in Africa, Asia, Europe, the ME, and Latin America.

9. Urban Studies

The options are:

- an Interdepartmental Program in *Urban Studies* (offering a concentration) – this would probably require 1-2 additional FTE across the curriculum;
- a concentration in *Urban Studies* administered by a disciplinary Department (*Geography*, for example) – this would probably require 1-2 additional FTE across the curriculum;
- transform *Geography* into a Department of *Urban Studies* (an option not currently supported by *Geography*) – this would probably require 1-2 additional FTE in the new department (as well as the re-location of existing non-urban studies *Geography* FTE).

NB: however it is structured, this program could be expected to receive significant co-curricular support from the proposed *Center for Civic Engagement* (if approved).

*No formal conversation underway.

10. Environmental Studies (ES)

The options on the table are:

- a 2 FTE interdisciplinary department with an emphasis on both science (probably Biology) and policy.
- an Interdepartmental Program in *ES* (offering a concentration) with 2 dedicated FTE housed in other departments.

*Conversations with *ES* and *Biology* are ongoing.

APPENDIX: MAJORS, MINORS AND ‘CONCENTRATIONS’

Introduction

As EPAG has worked to implement the new academic structure adopted by the faculty last year, it has become clear to us that we need to distinguish more carefully between the courses of study that can be offered by each of our new types of academic unit (disciplinary departments; interdisciplinary departments; Interdepartmental Programs).

Disciplinary Departments – Majors and Minors

According to the academic structure adopted last year, a disciplinary department must offer both a major and what might be called a ‘disciplinary minor’. A disciplinary major is a substantial and coherent course of study requiring the successful completion of between 9 and 14 courses (most of which are offered by the department itself). A ‘disciplinary minor’ is a course of study requiring the successful completion of between 5 and 7 courses (all of which are offered by the department). Such minors are intended to provide a limited (but still structured) exposure to an academic discipline.

Interdisciplinary Departments – Majors and Minors

Interdisciplinary departments must offer an interdisciplinary major. An interdisciplinary major is a substantial and coherent course of study requiring the successful completion of between 12 and 17 courses (a substantial portion of which are offered by other departments). Interdisciplinary departments may also offer a minor requiring the successful completion of between 5 and 7 courses (most of which are offered by the department). Such minors are intended to provide a limited but structured exposure to an interdisciplinary field.

Interdepartmental Programs – ‘Concentrations’

According to the academic structure adopted last year, an Interdepartmental Program is a course of study in which courses from a number of departments are organized into a coherent curricular program or pathway. Such programs *cannot* offer courses of their own; they are entirely dependent on courses already offered by disciplinary and interdisciplinary departments. The purpose of such a course of study is to strengthen and complement the major by providing students with an opportunity to apply disciplinary methods or modes of inquiry to problems, issues and regions that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Such a course of study is not required to graduate; rather, it is a way of bringing coherence and focus to a set of electives taken beyond the major (which *is* required for graduation). To date we have been calling this type of program a ‘minor’. This, however, seems to be somewhat misleading. Accordingly, EPAG is proposing to distinguish more clearly between departmental minors and the programs of study offered by Interdepartmental Programs by labeling the latter ‘concentrations’. In addition to having a different purpose, such concentrations would be more substantial than minors (perhaps involving a structured sequence of between 7 and 9 courses), and could include departmentally based introductory and capstone courses.

Comments and Clarifications

1. A student *must* complete a major (either disciplinary or interdisciplinary) in order to graduate.
2. A student does *not* require a minor or concentration to graduate (and *cannot* graduate with only a concentration).
3. Interdepartmental Programs would not be able to offer courses of their own; nor would they be entitled to any dedicated FTE; nor would the sustainability of Interdepartmental Programs be a major consideration in allocations decisions.
4. Interdepartmental Programs might be provided with financial resources to support a co-curricular program and/or program director.
5. Although concentrations are usually offered through free-standing Interdepartmental Programs, certain concentrations might be administered through (or simply affiliated with) departments. This, however, would simply be an administrative convenience – in all other respects interdisciplinary concentrations housed in academic departments would be identical to those housed in Interdepartmental Programs.