EPAG Minutes
Thursday, September 13, 2012
3-4:30 pm, Campus Center 215

1. Approval of minutes – Sept. 6 minutes approved as distributed.

2. Welcome to new student member – Zach Avery [Avre] joined the group today.

3. Conversation with CST Director, Adrienne Christiansen on the Writing Requirement - Adrienne provided the background and historical overview regarding a 2009 EPAG decision that writing instruction would not be done with a new faculty hire. Since that time most efforts have been focused on low-cost ways to improve writing instruction, develop faculty capacity, and motivate students to improve writing performance. It has been a cooperative effort with Ann Minnick. In 2011 Kendrick Brown and Nancy Bostrom assisted GERC with an assessment of student essays. The 2011 GERC report revealed the scope of the problem and the work required based on that assessment. GERC had two recommendations:
   a. Design a writing program
   b. Hire a director of writing to organize and oversee the program
Adrienne mentioned that it is in the Statement of Purpose and Belief that our expectations for students include critical thinking and the ability to communicate. Adrienne presented a summary of all the programs that have been in place over the past several years in an attempt to address the needs to improve the teaching of writing on campus. Workshops and classes for faculty are helping the situation, but another direct assessment is needed to determine if these efforts are making measurable improvements.

Adrienne stated that although we are making progress, these efforts are good but insufficient. She supports GERC’s recommendation, but wanted to outline the three programs that have been developed by the CST:
   a. Writing Well Program – the 2-minute videos are getting used by faculty in classes and are getting outside recognition.
   b. Supplemental writing workshop – began last year with ten faculty members teaching a one-credit overload for 58 students. Each session met for one hour per week. Students brought papers they had written for other courses to this class. This year 100 students have selected to enroll in ten sections.
c. Faculty Learning Community - a group of faculty have been meeting every week for one year to focus on writing pedagogy. Learning objectives and writing expectations for W courses were developed in the spring and these are generic, not discipline specific. These guides are being used in W classes this semester and they will be gathering the papers produced in these courses and using a rubric to evaluate. Those papers will be evaluated in January by faculty who were not part of the class. After this evaluation, a report addressing what a program could look like to meet writing needs will be prepared.

Additional comments by Adrienne included:
- 1 credit writing course is not sufficient
- would like to see writing as the core of student learning at Macalester, but writing that is expressed in multiple forms: multimodal writing, digital storytelling, technologies and media of the future. If all we do is teach students how to write a traditional research paper, it is not sufficient.
- to meet the Statement of Purpose of Belief we need to be creative

A report to Provost Murray will be prepared in mid-January. In addition to the work outlined above, Adrienne has been visiting with writing directors of other colleges, and is preparing listening sessions for faculty at Macalester. Two questions are being asked:
- What do you identify as the most significant need in writing?
- If money were no limitation, what would be the ideal writing program you would support?

Questions and answers - When asked about the relationship with the MAX center, responded that there is no formal relationship with the Max Center and the initiatives undertaken by the CST. There is a growing concern that writing instruction for international students needs to be addressed based on increased numbers of international students. For the listening sessions, Adrienne is asking that each member of EPAG come to just one session to listen. EPAG members do not need to attend every session. When asked how to include students in the discussion, Adrienne responded that the CST focus is on faculty, so that is the emphasis, but she would welcome help and assistance from students on the question. Kendrick and Nancy can assist with this. Suggestion was made to share the documents that EPAG received with those who participate in the CST conversations. The first listening session is next Friday, 8:15 a.m. Cross-disciplinary conversation is a key component, so faculty members are being invited not by individual departments, but across divisions.
Adrienne was thanked for her time and report.

4. Minute distribution – Sonita solicited input on timing for distribution of materials. Members of EPAG agreed that Monday is acceptable.

5. Google Calendar – Sonita has set one up and all members should have access.

6. SARC and FACT - SARC is done. FACT - are one-time offerings, funding covers the replacement course. EPAG decides on which courses to fund. Could apply again if offered beyond the first year. It was suggested that examples of previous courses that were funded be included in the memo. Jayne and Kathy will produce. Departments get credit for team-taught courses in the same manner as cross-listings when counting students.

7. Psychology Dept. Review - Harry Waters, Jr. is the EPAG representative.

8. Strategic Planning for Faculty Allocations – Sonita distributed a rough outline. The group endorsed the proposal, but suggested calling it something other than Strategic Planning for Allocations. A curricular vision, staffing plan, and discussion of what is going on in the field were the suggested components. Sonita will work on draft.

Other Business - Language Requirement next week.

Sonita requested that members send the rankings of Other Business to her.

Adjourned at 4:30

Respectfully submitted by Terri Fishel, Library Director