

EPAG Minutes

Thursday, November 17, 2011

11:30-1:00

Campus Center 214

Holly Barcus, Terri Fishel, James Heyman, Patrick Schmidt (chair), Sonita Sarker, Kate Hamilton, Ann Minnick, Janet Folina, Yeukai Mudzi, Chad Topaz, Chris Willcox, Jayne Niemi

1. The minutes from November 10th were approved with a few corrections.
2. Jim von Geldern joined us. We offered him the opportunity to ask questions and make comments as he wished. He reinforced the importance of the student letters, which help us in understanding how the major has functioned in practice, how it has prepared students, and the rule of the Russian House. We asked follow-up questions on these subjects and members of the committee had opportunity to raise a variety of questions about the Russian Studies program at Macalester, its interdisciplinary focus, connections within the German and Russian Studies department, language instruction, and about other programs in the U.S.
3. On Jim's departure, Kiarina Kordela, Linda Schulte-Sasse and David Martyn joined us. Offered the opportunity to begin with some comments, they expressed their appreciation for thoroughness of this process. They also commented about procedural or contextual issues with discontinuance review process. One question is if EPAG decides to discontinue, what will it look like in concrete terms, and will there be an opportunity for the department to respond to it. They also spoke about how the 2003-04 history and the recent allocations denials may color the current discussion, as could the fact that this is the first use of the new procedure and a vote to retain the major could be seen by some as a "failure" of the new procedure. They provided a chart that compared colleges, endowments, and those who have Russian majors. The case of Classics at Mac was cited as a successful resuscitation of a dying department. Does rejuvenation such as that require a champion? It was suggested that the new Critical Theory concentration could be one thing that will help rejuvenation. The committee members then had opportunity to ask questions, which pursued a number of these topics for further clarification and discussion.

Adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jayne Niemi, Registrar