

EPAG Minutes

September 6, 2012

3:00- 4:00 Campus Center 216

Holly Barcus, Kendrick Brown, Terri Fishel, Janet Folina, Ezequiel Jimenez, Ann Minnick, Kathy Murray, Jayne Niemi, Sonita Sarker (Chair), Jaine Strauss, Chad Topaz, Joelle Vitiello, Harry Waters Jr.

1. Approval of minutes: Minutes from the final meeting of 2011-12 and from the retreat (Thursday, August 30, 2012) were approved as corrected.
2. The EPAG representative for the Psychology department review, scheduled for 9/24 and 25, will be Harry, and the department coordinator will schedule time to fit his schedule.
3. Faculty Meeting: Sonita will introduce members of EPAG and present the year's prospective agenda.
4. Reviewed Board of Trustees representatives from EPAG that were decided at the retreat.
5. Writing Requirement: Recap of where we are today in preparation for a meeting with Adrienne Christiansen (Center for Scholarship and Teaching director) next week. Sonita gave a brief history of the GERC/EPAG recent work on the Writing Req. The EPAG motions requiring actual instruction in writing and recommending that class enrollment be limited to 20 were approved by the faculty last spring. EPAG reviewed the questions that Adrienne asked the Faculty Learning Community: Do you think writing is important? Why? What's its most important goal? Who is/should be responsible for it? If given resources, should there be a writing program and what should it do? How do we assess demonstrable differences between year 1 and year 4 in a student's career at Macalester?

EPAG discussed the questions to present to CST during Adrienne's visit next week. They will be based on a) a review of various initiatives and what has been learned from them, b) the role and goal of the listening sessions in which the Faculty Learning Community is involved, c) EPAG's role in co-sponsoring the listening sessions and in being invited to participate by attending them. A set of questions that EPAG will present to CST is being drafted and will circulate so that they can be finalized in time for the meeting next Thursday. It is not clear how many listening sessions are planned this semester.

Janet Folina raised the issue of having specific questions and tangible goals for the listening sessions in order to encourage feedback, for example, the possibility of models of writing initiatives that faculty could address. Some of the issues are likely to circulate around "argumentative writing," the possibility of a writing program & director, class size, increasing faculty skill and confidence in teaching writing, and continuing assessment efforts that are already in progress. Ezequiel Martinez asked about the process to identify those students who are weak or in need of help with writing, particularly international students. Ann Minnick described the Writers Workshop that is in its second year, and how the students were identified this year. In response to Martinez's question about the First Year Course as a place to start writing evaluation, and Minnick described that the

instructors were asked to do a writing exercise early so that students who need help, and who were not invited originally, can be identified before the workshops begin in the third week. Timing of invitation has increased the participation.

6. EPAG letter to Economics Department response to external review: While the usual course of self-study, review, and response has been followed, the Provost provided the background as to why the usual timeline had been extended. EPAG's letter to the department will commend it on the variety of accomplishments stemming from the external review report. Some aspects on which EPAG will comment will be as follows: a greater number of interdisciplinary and introductory-level courses without prerequisites, especially since the Moe class was successful; a history of Economics course as an entry-level course; a greater focus on macroeconomics, with the arrival of Solis-Garcia; the use of indirect assessment, initially, about the new major requirements; observation of enrollment in business courses; and a revised department assessment plan, in light of the recent changes.
7. SARC plus Task Force: Provost Murray distributed a handout with her selection of names for this group, all current SARC, Christy Hanson (director of the Institute of Global Citizenship), other faculty, plus students. The Provost asked for other possible names before she submits a list to FPC early next week. This SARC+ Task Force will identify the learning objectives for study away and use them as a guide to develop the criteria for evaluation & prioritization of specific programs. A draft of these criteria is expected by the end of the 12-13 academic year.
8. FACT application – The Provost has asked EPAG members to review and revise it this coming week, respond through email by using “Reply to all” so that it can be sent out soon.

Adjourned at 4:01.

Respectfully submitted by

Jayne Niemi, Registrar

Revised slightly by Sonita Sarker, EPAG chair