

Educational Policy and Governance (EPAG) Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2009

Present: Kendrick Brown, Pete Ferderer, Terri Fishel, Chen Gu, Terry Krier, Carleton Macy, David Martyn (chair), Ann Minnick, Kathy Murray, Jayne Niemi, Patrick Schmidt, Robert Strickling, Tom Varberg, Eric Wiertelak

David started the meeting by reminding us that it was the 20th anniversary of the fall of the wall.

1. **Approval of Minutes** – The “awesome minutes” were approved with no changes.

2. Announcements

Grant Meeting 11/25 – Carleton Macy volunteered to attend the 10 a.m. meeting. David will forward information to Carleton on the location.

3. **Meeting time for next semester** – Our options are 8 – 9:30 a.m. or 4:40 to 6 p.m. any day of or Thurs. 11:10-1:20. The group will discuss next week.

4. **CDP proposal deadline is Dec. 4** – The question was raised as to how firm a deadline the 4th was to be. It's firm because reviews begin the following week.

5. **Biology response to EPAG** – After some discussion it was decided that a meeting with Kathy, David, and Mark would be scheduled. David will contact Mark and make arrangements.

6. **Study Away Proposal Deadline Change** – It was determined that the deadline change is an administrative decision with faculty input. The proposed change is based on a 2005 Report from RPC that studied the costs of Study Away with a series of recommendations to help address the imbalance of number of students who choose spring over fall for Study Away. The recommendation of a single deadline addressed two issues – the use of our residential space and seats in classes.

Other issues include:

- an opportunity to grow the number over time (eliminate the cap)
- increase the opportunities as far as available programs
- increase participation in exchange programs
- improve summer and January opportunities
- possibly address financial aid needs
- improve opportunities for students who may be restricted because of athletic or cultural program participation, or limits because of their major field of study

When discussing how the single deadline could work, there were questions about transfer students, and sophomores. The question was also raised whether by doing more publicity we could balance by voluntary participation as opposed to a coercive action. Concern was also raised regarding a single application date and the possibility of more students missing the one deadline. Robert mentioned that fewer students may apply mainly because they can't decide in time. Students need time to do research on the programs. It was suggested that any change be done with an incoming class after we have reviewed all the issues. Until we implement a new policy, we could use the time to communicate with advisors and students and promote applying for the fall semester as we did previously to try and adjust the imbalance. It was pointed out that Macalester is unique among our peers in having two deadlines. Could an exception be made for Macalester's own programs that would allow students to apply in either spring or fall? There was general support for the proposal both because a committee of faculty peers had made the recommendation and because there were some compelling financial implications. However, it was also felt that we needed to address students who would ask for exceptions along with other concerns.

Kathy will take concerns back to the IC and talk about implementation. It was mentioned that it could be useful to conduct a campaign to target first year advisors as well as sophomores to help encourage students to consider fall study away as opposed to spring.

7. EPAG Moodle forum – The forum is up and available. David asked the group to check in and review the information that David has posted.

8. Report from GERC – Clay Steinman has joined the group to replace Terry for the Writing requirement. Pete also handed out a report on the General Education Requirements. He wanted to address three issues:

- a. Supply and demand – Jayne did an audit of all the juniors to see which ones have not completed a W course by the end of their junior year. Currently there are 90 juniors who have not taken a W course and are not enrolled in one now. 47 will be on the campus in the spring and able to take one in the spring, 43 will not. One of the 43 has petitioned to do the W course in her senior year. Jayne emailed all the students and advisors to notify them that they would have to take the W course in the fall of their senior year if they did not take it in the spring. We also need more faculty offering a W course in the 100/200/300 level courses. It was mentioned that many colleges have a first year writing intensive course with critical thinking. It was pointed out that the W courses are the most labor intensive courses, and a suggestion was made that perhaps offering writing assistants for other courses beyond the first year course could be a means of getting more faculty to offer W courses. The W course is the only GE requirement that has a time focus, so can there be a tweak to the requirement with a straight yes or no vote? It was agreed this was a tweak, and not a major revision. Pete will draw up Handbook changes to be submitted to the faculty at a future faculty meeting. Other issues brought up included:
 - i. Complexity of the QT requirement
 - ii. Programs to help faculty provide good GER courses
 - iii. Vetting process – is the current process working?
- b. Assessment – The question is whether we are developing assessment of the GE program for the purposes of determining if in two years we want to continue program or for ongoing in perpetuity. Pete's group decided that GERC should manage the process – start with W and move to QT. W requirement has wider support on campus. The general plan is to collect samples from W and non-W courses and determine if W has significant impact on writing student outcomes. The question was raised as to whether non-W courses would include samples of writing from students who had a W course. These are the types of issues they hope to nail down in the next few weeks. They hope to have a rubric for faculty to score. They would then follow the same plan for QT. Goal is to do this assessment next spring. The overall goal is to look at effectiveness of program not individual course assessment.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Terri Fishel