

EPAG Minutes

November 10, 2011

Present: Holly Barcus, Kendrick Brown, Janet Folina, Terri Fishel, Katharine Hamilton, James Heyman, Ann Minnick, Yeukai Mudzi, Kathy Murray, Patrick Schmidt (Chair), Chad Topaz

1. Approval of the Minutes of the 20 October 2011 - Minutes were approved as circulated.

2. Guest: Jeff Allen, Director of Admissions joined EPAG, to discuss a set of issues that bears on many issues, including the Russian Studies question and Allocations. The larger question is whether and how we as a college have shaped the curriculum by whom we recruit and for those who eventually enroll. Jeff's presentation explored academic interests as seen through the admissions process. Jeff had a series of slides that provided information on prospective students, students who apply, and students who enroll. There are limitations to the data. Jeff stated that we only collect academic interest data when students apply and students can submit up to three academic intended majors on the common application. Because the common application may not have our exact majors, that information is translated by admissions, i.e. business translates to economics, and international relations to international studies.

During the summer before their first year, students may indicate interest in one intended major at the college and approximately 75% do so. Of those 75%, 50% actually complete the major in the area specified. Students may submit up to three academic intended majors on their common application. Admissions translates those values to the majors that are available at Macalester. Jeff provided a chart with data for 2008-2011 that showed the basic summaries of choices by applicants, admitted students, and enrolled students. A member of EPAG asked about any distinctions between international applicants and US applicants, and in fact Jeff had prepared data that showed notable differences between international and domestic students. In another vein of analysis, Jeff reviewed data that showed the institutions students indicated they would be attending when declining an offer from Macalester. Those data are limited, too, because we never learn the final destination of a high percentage of students who decline admission. The schools most often mentioned do vary by intended major.

In another vein, additional data was shared regarding interest in specific majors, including Russian Studies. The data has limits. We only record an intended major in a specific major when the student has indicated an interest in a languages major on the common application and then the Admissions staff can identify the likely language from their application package. The data prior to 2008 is limited, but no students expressed an interest for Russian Studies in 2008, with one student in each of the three years for 2009-2011. Jeff provided comparison data. Upon questioning, Jeff suggested that these data can be vulnerable to fluctuations in data collection.

There was further discussion about students and languages. General discussion included the following illustrative points:

- Students who express interest in a language often have had an experience abroad
- Students who major in a language usually have a double-major
- International students are unfamiliar with the concept of a liberal art education
- 31 of the international students this year were from UWC
- Community and Global health is a popular concentration and there is increasing awareness and even sophistication among applicants about the notion of concentrations within the curriculum.

The Chair requested a copy of the slides for EPAG's use. Jeff was thanked for his presentation.

3. FACT grant applications – all five applications were approved and department chairs will be copied as they are the individuals who submit the course release. The five are:

- Writing Human Rights – Diana Shandy and Jim Dawes
- Computational and Synthetic Biology – Paul Overvoorde and Libby Shoop
- Placing Race and Seeing Social Inequality – David Lanegran and Karin Aguilar-San Juan
- Politics of Elections – Julie Dolan and Karen Saxe
- Projects in Global Health – Devavani Chatterjea, Becky Hoyer, Elizabeth Jansen

The comment was made that “these are exciting”. There was continued discussion about efforts to increase awareness and interest in collaborative teaching. The timing of doing collaborative teaching can be difficult to arrange. The funding for FACT allows for twelve course replacements—i.e. six applications in which both instructors require replacements—so this year (the second year) we were closer to capacity, though still not in a situation requiring competition between proposals. It was suggested that CST sponsor a workshop and invite those who have done team-teaching and had a successful FACT grant to share their experiences.

Next week: Russian Studies. Provost Murray and Kendrick Brown are gone next week for the Higher Education Learning Commission.

Ajourned at 12:50

Respectfully submitted by Terri Fishel, Library Director