

EPAG Minutes
September 30, 2010
11:30 to 1:00
Campus Center 207

Kendrick Brown, Janet Folina, Gerbrand Hoogvliet, Taren Kingser, Terry Krier, Ann Minnick, Kathy Murray, Jayne Niemi, Patrick Schmidt, Chad Topaz, Tom Varberg (Chair)

1. The minutes from September 22nd were approved as circulated.
2. Course change memo: Tom gave a brief review of the process. There was a question on consistency among the Classics major track requirements. Jayne will review this with the department before the catalog is updated. The course changes were approved.
3. Physics and Astronomy review: There were comments and discussion about various aspects of the review. The review pointed to strengths of the department and its good track record of research and involvement with students. The numbers are strong. There was discussion of math preparation for physics majors and pre-med students, and the future of a non-calculus-based physics course. We concur with the recommendation that the math and physics faculty meet to chat about calculus issues in the curriculum. There was also discussion about the development of courses without prerequisites that would be suitable for everyone when the eventual retirement of the popular Contemporary Concepts course occurs. These issues are under consideration by the math/science division. Reviewers and EPAG seem to agree that future configurations of the department should not focus so much on non-major courses. Some reconfiguration of the major might address the gap(s) noted by the reviewers. It was noted that the department has been very thorough in deliberating about these issues, and we continue to appreciate the care and thoughtfulness in their planning. As they add upper level courses, we urge them to continue to be thoughtful about how often the courses are offered and whether there is a bank of electives from which students may choose. There was a brief discussion of grants and funds and smaller equipment purchases. We agree that the applicant pool should be left broad to support the department's effort to diversify the faculty. We laud the department for their handling of the entire review process, from self-study to response.
4. Next week we will consider the Art and Art History Department's review documents. Be sure to read both the review and the response – both are on the Moodle site and will be emailed with the agenda.
5. Development of a discontinuance plan: Tom gave some history and background as to why we will be working on such a plan. There exists a clear process for adding a department and major, but very little guidance on how to eliminate one. It's important to focus on the process aspect of this, so that if in the future we need it, the process has been defined without a particular case in mind. Tom's document summarized the options that have been put forth thus far. We

- acknowledge that there is a political aspect to this, but we should deliberate about doing the right thing, rather than simply considering a plan that is politically expedient. We recognize that the thought of discontinuing a department or major is fraught with fear and worry for faculty, even if one's own department is not the subject of the discussion. If history is our guide, we know that the current process won't help the college to pursue new areas of study, because we seem unable to stop offering current areas of study. Technically, an eliminated department means that department's faculty would also be terminated. However, we seem to want to place affected faculty member into another department, which then does not free up any resources for new things. Patrick added another proposal to Tom's list of options. We should also be careful that any examples we use are neutral so that it is clear we are focusing on the process. We discussed the various options. Some feel that the Faculty is not qualified to make this decision, partly because of relationships across the college, and partly because they don't necessarily have the institutional perspective that is required. There was further discussion of shared governance principles. Kathy described some processes that other colleges use. We agree staged opportunities for discussion being built in at various points over a longer period (academic year) is wise, no matter which process is adopted. The provost should be engaged in the allocations process so that differences of opinion are no surprise as decisions are made. We decided that we should eliminate the status quo as an option, and that we should solicit input and opinions from the faculty. We'll return to this discussion next week, so think about the various proposals and how we want to solicit feedback.
6. Faculty Meeting: Tom asked for some input for his report at the faculty meeting. He'll talk about FACT and the deadline, the CDP and the second round call for proposals, and external reviews that we will be working on.

Adjourned at 1:00

Respectfully submitted,
Jayne Niemi, Registrar