

EPAG Minutes

March 28, 2013

3:00 - 4:30 Campus Center

Present: Zach Avre, Holly Barcus, Kendrick Brown, Terri Fishel, Ann Minnick, Kathy Murray, Jayne Niemi, Sonita Sarker (Chair), Jaine Strauss, Chad Topaz, Joelle Vitiello, Harry Waters, Jr.

1. Approval of minutes - approved as distributed.
2. Course Changes - Reviewed courses and Jayne explained course numbering and what was and wasn't allowed. Approved.
3. Curricular Visioning Report - Final copy. Discussion focused on the next steps and how to inform faculty. It was agreed that the summary of observations and trends was interesting and should be shared with faculty either in print or verbally. It was decided to provide a one-sheet summary to be distributed with the next faculty meeting agenda. In terms of next steps, Kathy found the report interesting and would like to reference this document in strategic planning discussions. She also suggested that although departments could update this if they desired, it would be optional and there would be a deadline. Departments could update or not, and departments that didn't submit may want to submit a report next year. Sonita will produce the short summary and deliver a verbal report at the next faculty meeting.
4. Athletics question - Laurie Hamre has responded to the original question regarding early departure before spring break by students in athletic programs. Laurie intends to have a discussion with Kim Chandler, Athletic Director to further address this issue. There was a brief discussion about athletic games that are scheduled at 2:30 again in conflict with classes. It was agreed that notification from coaches regarding students who needed to be released from classes for sports activities had not been as good as it has been in the past. It was decided that Kathy would follow up with Laurie regarding the sports issues. Discussion then turned to faculty requiring attendance at events scheduled outside of class time. Faculty members have raised concerns regarding conflicts that arise when faculty require students to attend an activity that isn't held during their class time which then affects other activities including sports practice and music ensembles. Another example of scheduling conflicts was presented based on faculty who will reschedule a course for a time that is outside of the approved time on file with the registrar. It was agreed that reminders of policies on class times and absences would be issued on a regular basis. The Provost will send a message each semester that will reiterate the policy regarding when classes may be offered, policy on absences, and policy on scheduling finals. That memo will be sent out once at the end of August and once in January.

5. QT motion and communication from Fine Arts - Discussion of the memo from Fine Arts revealed that they were mostly happy with the new QT

proposal. However, they reiterated their position regarding creative writing that currently counts as fulfilling the Fine Arts requirement. Fine Arts would like the Fine Arts requirement to be more narrowly defined. Discussion temporarily focused on who actually decides what courses count as a requirement for the general distribution requirements. Getting back to the QT issue, it was determined that the nature of the proposed changes was not changing the requirement. The report has been distributed and available for the past year. It has received feedback, been revised, and re-distributed. There were opportunities to respond via the open forum. It was reiterated that this process has been to clarify the requirement in terms of specific student outcomes based on the student learning goals that were approved last April, but it has not changed the requirement. The rationale to provide as background includes:

- Summarize and review the process - surveyed, gathered feedback, revised, and redistributed
- Emphasize the introduction of the Statement on Student Learning as it related to the goals of the QT requirement
- Reiterate that this is an ongoing process - continue to gather information, continue to review, and refine as needed

It was felt by the committee members that there had been significant time spent on collecting and sharing information and that the process had allowed for faculty to respond and be involved. It was agreed that this information would be presented to the faculty at the next meeting. Once open for discussion, members of EPAG were also reminded to speak at the faculty meeting as necessary. We did spend time on discussion of USID issues that concerned the nature of the changes and how they varied from the changes recommended in the QT report. We continued to discuss USID later in the meeting. We did not reach agreement on who decides what courses fulfill specific general education requirements.

6. Changing number of courses in a major (Faculty Handbook, Section 4, II, A, p.6) - Currently the handbook states that this change doesn't require EPAG approval. This statement was discovered during the review of edits that were discussed earlier in the year. Discussion focused on what constitutes a significant change by departments. Currently departments may decide the number of credits within a set range and share information with the Registrar. However, the issue was raised in terms of the impact on the student experience when departments change the number of courses required for a major. Course requirements for certain majors have an impact on study away. Further, certain departments have course pre-requisites but do not count those pre-requisites as part of the number of required courses. It was stated that because we have examples within the Handbook of the types of changes that need to be reviewed, to change the language so that EPAG approval would be required for changing the number of courses in a major, a motion before the faculty would be required. This issue is being brought to faculty now because

members of EPAG have been reading the Handbook carefully and were surprised to find this. Members felt this is a significant issue that needs to be addressed. It was decided that we would continue this discussion at the next meeting and reach a decision about how best to bring this change to the faculty.

7. US Multiculturalism Town Halls update - Sonita provided a summary of the two town halls. The nature of the conversation at both meetings was mostly positive. The change in language for this requirement is for clarity and precision. Questions were raised about the three student learning outcomes including language used in “expressive, cultural, and critical thinking skills” and “identity and differences.” Discussion focused on whether fine tuning of the language would address all the issues or whether there were more issues related to the internationalism requirement and the relationship between that requirement and multiculturalism. Currently one course cannot satisfy both the multiculturalism and internationalism requirement. Many members expressed concern that the US multiculturalism report has not have sufficient time for faculty review and that any motions should be postponed until the fall. The Internationalism report will be ready in the fall and may contribute to further insights. The next steps including working on the language and determining whether there should be another open forum or if this should lead to a motion in May. We will continue discussion at the next EPAG meeting.

Adjourned at 4:30

Respectfully submitted by Terri Fishel, Library Director