COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair: Jani Benoit
Members: Kirk Anderson, John Bevis-Selfa, Brad Bishop (Spring), Laura Ekstrom, Alana Franklin ’19 (Fall), Dennis Hanno (President), Caroline Heistand ’20 (Spring), James Mancall (Recording Secretary), Javier Trevino (Fall), Julia Walsh ’20, Renee White (Provost).

The committee met 26 times during the academic year.

ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Courses
The Committee approved twenty-two new course proposals: 1 Arabic, 2 Art History, 1 Education, 4 English, 1 Film and New Media Studies, 1 Hispanic Studies, 1 History, 1 INT, 1 Music, 1 Philosophy, 2 Political Science, 1 Religion, 2 Sociology, 1 Theatre and Dance, 2 Women and Gender Studies.

The Committee approved Beyond the West (BTW) designation for one experimental course: Rel 198: Introduction to Chinese Religions. It also approved retroactive BTW designation for several courses taught by a visiting professor in the History department.

The Committee considered how to best deal with students enrolling in INT 095 Summer Internship Experience more than once for credit. It was suggested that three different iterations be created with three different course numbers.

The Committee approved applying the SS Divisional and Area designations to Education 040 Senior Preceptor Leadership.

2. Minors
The committee approved the creation of a new minor in Digital Humanities.

A representative of the Business and Management program inquired if Business majors who wish to minor in Economics could count both ECON 101 and 102 towards the minor. Since those courses are part of the Business and Management major, that practice would be inconsistent with Faculty Legislation, which states that only one course can overlap between major and minor. It was determined that Business majors minoring in economics will need to take an additional course to fulfill the Economics minor.

3. Majors
The committee approved changes to the Music, English, Political Science, and Creative Writing and Literature majors.

The committee approved the creation of new major Public Health majors (integrated in Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology) to be considered at the May 17th 2018 Faculty Meeting.

4. Student Petitions
The committee approved nine petitions for late submission of student-initiated Connections and three petitions to waive the Natural Science requirement (1 course in each division).

One student inquired whether FYS could be included in a student-initiated Connection. Since the FYS also existed as a 200-level departmental course, the Committee approved going forward with the proposal. The Committee stipulated that this exceptional case did not set a precedent.

Another student requested approval to count a course taken during a Wheaton-approved study abroad program in place of a Wheaton course in an existing Connection. Although approval was denied, the Committee suggested that the student could petition to include a previously completed Wheaton course in a student-initiated Connection.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

The committee met with members of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Steering Committee (CSC) three times in the fall semester and four times in the spring semester. In the fall, we discussed roles and interactions between the two committees, formats for revised proposals and guidelines, who would convert proposal into legislation, and an overall timeline. We determined that Ed Pol would draft the legislation and CSC would provide guidelines.

In the spring, we discussed outcomes of the Jan 22 Curriculum Retreat and the process for bringing the legislation forward. We determined that the proposals would be voted on individually and then the full, revised curriculum would be voted on the following month. Draft legislation and associated guidelines went out to the faculty in time for the voting on individual proposals at the April 6th Faculty Meeting.

During the April meeting, a straw poll of the faculty indicated that the majority preferred to re-initiate the curriculum review process, rather than vote on the proposed curriculum legislation. As a result, the proposed legislation was withdrawn by the Committee. Subsequently, the Committee was asked to bring an individual proposal forward at the next faculty meeting, but the Committee declined until a more comprehensive curriculum has been developed.

In order to move the curriculum review forward, the Committee asked two questions of the faculty at the May 4th Faculty Meeting: 1) How should an organizing body be chosen to lead the review, and with what should that organizing body be tasked? 2) Given that the Monday of May
Workshop Week will be devoted to the curriculum review, what should that day look like? The ensuing discussion marked the beginning of the next phase of the curriculum review.

DISCUSSIONS

The Committee met with Registrar Sally Buckley to discuss two matters that arose during the year, the possibility of “temporary course” designations and the protocols for giving courses cross-listed or programmatic designations.

The Committee suggested creating a temporary designation for courses that are offered more than once, but that will not become permanent offerings. This designation would allow the Committee to review and approve a course that is taught for a few years (for example, by visiting faculty), without having to give permanent designation to a course that will not be taught in the long term. Ms. Buckley agreed to consult with the Registrar’s Office and get back to the Committee on this issue.

Registrar Buckley reported that courses that are cross listed or given program designation are usually determined by the proposing faculty member or the home department, although this is not a uniform practice. The Committee agreed to further discuss this matter in order to develop consistent mechanisms for how programs are created and program courses are designated.

Registrar Buckley brought the issue of Wheaton’s Academic Standing policy to the Committee. She pointed out inconsistencies between the policy stated on the Academic Advising website and the practice of evaluating a student’s academic standing by the Committee on Academic Standing (CAS). Specifically, the policy states that overall GPA, GPA in the major and normal progress toward the degree must be assessed, whereas typically only GPA is considered by CAS. The latter practice is consistent with Faculty Legislation. The Committee asked CAS to meet and create a proposal to reconcile the posted policy, Faculty Legislation and practice around this issue.

Registrar Buckley also asked for advice around compliance with NEASC Standard 9.22, which states that an institution should not list as current any courses not taught for three consecutive years. It was determined that the Office of the Registrar will create a list of such courses for the Committee to review, so it can determine next steps and an on-going process for compliance.

Respectfully submitted,
Janina Benoit, Chair
On behalf of the Educational Policy Committee