

## EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE

January 13, 2009

4:30 – 5:30 PM

Hellstedt Room

### MINUTES

**Members Present:** Jeff Abernathy, John Cairns, Ann Ericson, Liesl Fowler, Katie Hanson, Stephanie Hortsman, Rick Jaeschke, Taddy Kalas, Adam Kaul, Mary Koski, Josh Morgan, Sven Steen, Ritva Williams, Michael Wolf

**Guests Present:** Jon Clauss, Heidi Storl

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

#### AGENDA ITEM I – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of December 9, 2008 Educational Policies Committee meeting were accepted.

#### AGENDA ITEM II – NEW BUSINESS

##### A. New Course Requests

It was asked if a function of the Educational Policies Committee is to evaluate the rigorousness of new course proposals. For instance, it was felt that while some new course proposals are very thorough and rigorous, others (i.e., LSFY 103) were not. Should EPC be evaluating these, asking for modifications, etc. Jeff replied that, for instance, LSFY 103 falls under the General Education Committee's domain, and they would be the governing body to make recommendations for these proposals. It is the prerogative of the EPC committee to ask Ged Ed to look more closely at proposals should they desire.

New course agenda items #1 and #3 were only considered. #3 (RELG 325) was removed from consideration until the next meeting.

**Motion-Ericson, Second-Jaeschke APPROVED**

**“To approve the following new course requests as presented pending Gen Ed approval:**

- 1) LSFY 103: East Meets West: Japanese Visual Culture and Modern National Identity**
- 2) RELG 379: Islamic Mysticism for a PP and a G.”**

##### B. Learning Community Requests

A concern was raised that the “The Art of Teaching Language Arts” learning community proposal is composed of two courses that potentially “feed” off one another. It was felt they may be too closely related to each other, especially since only education majors would be

taking the learning community. It was recalled that years ago a similar proposal came before EPC from geology/geography and EPC did not approve it as a learning community. Katie Hanson replied that she feels it is a good intersection of two disciplines, that the writing class is a “how to write” class....not a how-to-*teach*-writing class. Both instructors revised the syllabi so that they conformed to a learning community.

**Motion-Morgan, Second-Hortsman APPROVED**

**“To approve the following Learning Community proposals as presented pending approval by the General Education Committee:**

- 1. Native American Ethnography and History**  
**HIST 336: American Indians and their Interpreters**  
**ANTH 250: Cultural Anthropology Through Ethnography**
  
- 2. The Art of Teaching Language Arts**  
**ENGL 406: Composition Theory and Practice**  
**EDUC 382: Secondary Methods: English.”**

C. Asian Studies Senior Inquiry Proposal

This item was removed from consideration until the next meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM III – OLD BUSINESS**

A. Honors Program as a Learning Community

Jon Clauss and Heidi Storl met briefly with the committee in support of the Honors Program as a learning community. There has been a long-held perception that the Honors Program was admissions-driven. The Honors program is no longer needed to recruit top-notch students. Of the 28 students not invited into the Honors program this year, all but one matriculated at Augustana anyway. Jon’s belief is that the Honors program provides a service to a self-selected group, those who are already convinced of the value of a liberal arts education. Because any student is able to apply to the program, he does not see it as an “elitist” program. By scanning the list of learning outcomes for a learning community, it becomes clear that the Honors Program meets these objectives; they are almost tailor-made for what is done in the first two years of Honors. It was asked if the second-year honors class would keep the PH designation if it were a learning community. Jon indicated that yes, it would; however he recommends that whenever a new team comes on board to lead honors, that they have to make a case for the perspectives based on these objectives.

In response, an argument against this proposal stemmed from the fact that there are not two distinct disciplines in the proposed Honors learning community....it's hard to see how making connections across disciplines is achieved. Jon replied that they work together as a community throughout those two years, and come together as a super community in their second year. Heidi Storl commented that this proposal for honors as a learning community comes out of work done at Evergreen. One of the lessons learned at Evergreen was that if learning communities are to become viable, we have to become flexible in defining what they are. While it is true that this might not be a traditional learning community, it is nevertheless a community which meets those objectives. She personally engages students in tying themes they learned in their first year in Honors, into their second year course. Jon reinforced that thought...that one of the most valuable things Honors offers is to see how faculty from a variety of academic fields also become co-learners in a world of interconnected ideas.

Another argument was the feeling that there is a growing isolation on the Honors students from the rest of the student body. It was felt that some of the honors students feel privileged and are allowed to abstain from functions that the other students are required to participate in (i.e., convocations). Jon replied that honors students should participate in all college functions, and while he cannot force another professor in charge of honors students to abide by that, he does require the honors students he is in charge of to participate. In addition, a representative involved in the honors program has been attending the Convocation Committee meetings so there is collaboration. He does, however, acknowledge that students in honors are not as integrated into general education as much as he would like. However, this is another discussion completely, and should take place at a general education committee meeting.

It was also argued that previously the whole concept of learning communities was that they didn't occur in the first year, that faculty believed it was hard for first-year students to learn integration. In response, a faculty member who attended the Evergreen workshops said that the Evergreen proposal is based on the need to broaden the definition of a learning community and look at the spirit of a learning community and allow for flexibility. Evergreen also supports the idea that these experiences are better early on, to start the students thinking in terms of integrating, instead of waiting.

**Motion-Wolf, Second-Steen APPROVED**

**"To approve that the completion of the Honors Program through the 200-level course, HONR 220, be counted as a Learning Community."**

#### B. Holden Proposal as Learning Community

This item was removed from the agenda and will be addressed at the next meeting.

C. Proposal "G" and "D" Suffixes New Definitions

This item was removed from the agenda and will be addressed at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski