

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 27, 2009
4:30 – 5:30 PM
Hellstedt Room

Members present: Adam Kaul, Bill Hammer, Mark Vincent, Jeff Abernathy, Taddy Kalas, Ritva Williams, Kristen Douglas, Ann Erickson, Rick Jaeschke, Katie Hanson, Liesl Fowler

I. MINUTES: Approval of minutes from October 20, 2009 meeting. The chair inadvertently skipped this agenda item. We will approve this minutes at the November 4th meeting.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Clarifying process for approval of new majors/programs.

The chair, Mark Vincent, opened the meeting by saying there has been some interest in clarifying what happened in terms of the program approval process and the e-vote. Vincent explained how EPC revised the process, after Kent Barnds commented at the end of the October 21st meeting that there was no big hurry to approve these new programs to assist admissions in their recruiting efforts since they are already well into that process for the 2010 incoming class. The administration has clarified that there is some need to keep the process moving along. There are interviews taking place on October 29th for a position in one of the new majors in flux. The administration has decided to move ahead with three of the new majors being considered. Vincent suggested that if there are three that the administration has decided they need and are interested in funding, which is within their right, then EPC ought to vet those three first, so we should move International Business, Engineering physics and Graphic Design up on the list, and look at those first.

Hammer asked how many we expect next week, i.e. how many more than those three. Vincent suspects not many more, but no matter how many we have come to EPC, the funds are committed for three of them, so we do need to take a look at those three first and scrutinize them in terms of the merits of the programs—are they academically rigorous and do they fit within the mission of the college. It has never been in our purview to determine budgets and funding for anything, faculty lines, labs, etc. so it seems we can go ahead and look at those in a timely fashion.

Ritva Williams pointed out that the proposals that have gone through divisional approval should be considered, since that is within our regular process. Ann Erickson asked if these three in the pipeline are approved by us, what will happen to the other three in the pipeline—creative writing, neuroscience and music composition. Are they going to be left out? Vincent said the committee has to decide that.

Jeff Abernathy suggested that the question the committee might ask about the other three in the pipeline is how many of these are genuinely new. Engineering, international business and music composition are not altogether new, just a different emphasis.

Adam Kaul said it seemed like there is no reason to limit our approval to a particular number. Vincent stated that the college probably wouldn't want to bring on 12 new majors in one year, as it smacks of desperation.

Kristin Douglas, who represents Gen Ed on EPC, said it matters hugely where the money comes from to fund these new majors. Departments such as education have been asking for more lines for a long time and don't get it. Some departments have had failed searches and have not been allowed to run another search due to lack of budget. If EPC doesn't like the way the program looks, wouldn't it go back to the department before it goes on to senate and if it has to go back, does that give other departments with a proposal a chance to catch up.

Vincent said that EPC still has to carefully vet these programs. Assuming they do, they go on to Senate in a timely fashion. Hammer said that a few of the other proposals, like music comp and neuroscience, don't need new hires or big budget. They are another kind of animal. Williams suggested all of the divisionally approved proposals be considered at one sitting.

Abernathy suggested that it would be useful next week for EPC to ask any questions about the programs in advance. EPC members should email Vincent so that authors of proposals can prepare answers, come to the meeting on November 4th, and move the process along.

There was a discussion about the budget and how funds are allocated for new programming. Vincent pointed out it's not EPC's role to scrutinize the budget. Erickson said it's not faculty senate's role either. Vincent said EPC would ask administration any budget questions. Hanson suggested that EPC doesn't approve funding, it makes academic recommendations. Rick Jaeschke asked if something isn't approved, then it won't get funded by administration? He was told that was correct.

Jaeschke asked if anyone was questioning the process of acting on three proposals first. Vincent said yes. Douglas suggested that EPC should communicate to faculty about the process to clear up misunderstandings.

Hammer suggested waiting until after we approve the new programs, since this is an internal thing we are talking about here. If there are questions about our process after we do this, then we can explain it later.

Kaul suggested EPC might communicate to the "non first three" that they should keep working. Vincent wants those proposers to know that they are being considered. Williams said that the ones that are ready to be evaluated will be evaluated first. Vincent agreed but wondered what we should do if we get six proposals that have all come through division. These three that have funding and hires in process.

Kaul said EPC is ready to evaluate, since we have valid criteria for vetting them. Erickson pointed out if we say we can only add two or three programs, then later proposals are at a disadvantage. Kaul asked how many we can approve. Abernathy said there isn't any other body to vet how many programs to add to campus. If EPC determines there are five or six, then approve them. It is EPC's decision. No other group on campus can do this.

Douglas said that in the past people submitted programs on no particular timeline. This time we asked people to submit proposals on our time line so we have multiple programs to compare to each other. Since some programs require new hires, is EPC making staffing decisions?

Abernathy said that the charge of EPC does in fact include advising him on staffing issues. So that means, if the committee has concerns about how the administration is planning to fund programs and positions, it is the charge of EPC to advise him.

There are departments with unmet needs in terms of faculty lines. We don't have the funds to add a line in education or in classics, so the funding isn't there for everything. Hammer noted that these programs are totally dependent on new positions and increase of students that they might bring in. Are they tenure track? If so, these people would need to be told that the success of the program determines their job. That's not the way it's been in the past.

Abernathy said that is exactly what they did with MJMC.

Hammer noted if a new program doesn't bring in enough people, then the person's job is in jeopardy; it's a crap shoot. It's hard to guess how many students will actually come of these new programs.

Douglas asked Abernathy which existing programs have asked for more faculty. Abernathy said that faculty welfare looks at this issue at their retreat each year. Education was approved for two, but hired for one. They need one more because of curriculum decisions they have made. Supervision of student teachers by faculty is very time consuming. Classics was funded a fellow one year only.

Williams noted that if a search was approved, but not successful, it was put on hold by the administration, such as religion and psychology.

Kaul pointed out that one way to bring in money to fund these faculty positions might be to bring in new programs such as these that will bring in more money.

Abernathy said these new programs will be funded by the Initiatives fund—most of the money will be ongoing, even though the fund is not. His 1.1 million cut in academics, PMA, etc., plus donor money, is funding this new initiative.

Vincent has to miss the November 4th meeting, so Taddy Kalas will chair.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Hanson, substitute secretary for the meeting