

Curriculum Committee 2018-2019 Annual Report

The Curriculum Committee (CC) reviews college curricular matters, ranging from approval of individual, new courses to working with CEPP to oversee the implementation of new General Education requirements. The CC met on a weekly basis during the past academic year, eleven meetings in the fall and ten meetings in the spring.

courses. This academic year, the work of refining the definition, guidelines, and criteria of the new General Education courses continued under the auspices of small task forces established by CEPP with members from the CC and the general faculty. The task forces focused on the new “Bridge” courses and the Senior Coda requirement. By spring break, these working groups had developed effective criteria. Following the recommendation of the chairs of the CC and CEPP, at the end of the semester the Dean of the Faculty appointed a faculty coordinator to oversee the development of “Bridge” courses, in a role analogous to the curricular responsibilities of the FYE director. Dean Orr named Eric Morser, associate professor of History, to this position.

A much larger working group was established to develop a new approach to the World Language requirement for English Language Learners that would give these students the option to study English further as an alternative means to fulfill this requirement. Recognizing that the underlying motivation for such an option was to provide ELL students with focused English language instruction, the working group ultimately proposed to CEPP that the College create an English language class that would parallel an intermediate level World Language course (see Appendix A). Although this approach varies from the proposal sketched out in the new General Education proposal, CEPP accepted this plan, and work will continue in this area in the fall.

Idea Lab and Pop-up Courses

The introduction of IdeaLab and Pop-up courses into the curriculum posed problems for the CC last year, as these innovative approaches to academic courses were not fully defined, thus making proposals hard to evaluate. This year, the Curriculum Committee met with the leaders of the IdeaLab Steering Committee, Sarah Sweeney (Art) and Jess Sullivan (Psychology), to clarify these exciting but confounding new types of courses. Sweeney and Sullivan offered the following proposal, which the CC accepted:

IdeaLab Courses

- x must fulfill at least one requirement:
 - o different/re-imagined student/professor dynamics
 - o new temporal course structure
 - o between disciplinary boundaries (co-teaching, industry/community/scholar, maker/scholar)
 - o new or emerging fields; time sensitive subject – pop-up courses only
- x must meet all of the following requirements
 - o mandated contact hours
 - o objectives/schedule
 - o approved by the IdeaLab Steering Committee
 - o approved by the applicant’s chair
 - o secured appropriate resources (including funding and classroom space);
- x must provide substantial pedagogical value to students involved; no prerequisites

IdeaLab and Pop-up courses will initially be offered as special topics courses at the 100-, 200-, or 300- levels under the IL designation. Faculty will then decide if they will discontinue the class or

if they would like to have their IdeaLab courses housed in an existing academic department or program, where it would be subject to CC approval.

Physical Activity Credit for Varsity Athletic Participation

Last academic year, Gail Cummings-Danson, Director of Athletics--with the endorsement of the Athletic Council and CEPP—submitted a proposal to allow varsity athletes to receive Physical Activity credit for their participation on varsity sports teams. The CC approved the proposal at the end of the fall semester and, upon recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty, announced this new credit option for student athletes to the faculty in a letter to the faculty (see Appendix B).

2019-2020 Agenda

In addition to its ongoing oversight of the college curriculum, the CC anticipates that the 2019-2020 academic year will be particularly busy as faculty begin to submit new and revised courses to fulfill the new General Education requirements. In addition, the CC plans to examine the role of free-standing minors within the curriculum, whether such minors always follow a pathway to a major, their status within the curriculum

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Robert ParkeHarrison (Studio Art)
TBA, Student Representative

Ron Seyb, Associate Dean of the Faculty (ex officio)
Dave Deconno, Registrar (ex officio)
Sharon Clemmey, Registrar's Office (ex officio)
Shanon Philips, Registrar's Office (ex officio)

Appendix A: Proposed Memo to CEPP on Revisions to the Language Study Requirement

course and which need a fuller program of ELL support. We propose that non-native English speakers take a placement examination in English. WebCape, which is used by WLL to place students in the languages in which they offer instruction, has an English placement exam that we may be able to use to determine which students will be eligible to take an English language course to fulfill their language study requirement. We also think that paths into the English language course other than the English placement exam should be available to students once they arrive on campus. Students, for example, who enroll in GN 151 might be recommended to enroll in an English language course to fulfill their Language Study requirement.

(3) The CEPP legislation does not state where this English language course will “live.” If the plan is to place it in WLL, then it does not appear that WLL currently has the staff to deliver such a course. The college may hence need to create a new position, one that will include the delivery of English language courses as part of its job description.

The staffing question is one that we will need to bring to the Dean’s Office. The more critical question, however, is, if CEPP agrees with the rationale we have provided above for modifying CEPP’s Language Study legislation, do we need to bring our revision of the Language Study Requirement back to the faculty for its endorsement, or can we treat our proposed changes as “implementation decisions”?

29 March 2019

