

Minutes, Educational Policy Committee, February 19, 2016

In Attendance: Chandos Michael Brown, Peter Vishton, Jack Martin, Bill Hutton (Chair), Ryan Corcoran, Marc Sher, Jennifer Taylor, Paul Blossom, Weizhen Mao, Cory Springer, Sally Marchello, Hiroshi Kitamura, Martha Higgins, Susan Bosworth Denise Ridley-Johnston, Heather Macdonald.

Convened: 9:05AM

Approval of the Minutes for February 12, 2016

Chair's Announcements: A Coll. 100 survey form is in the works.

Agenda for this day's meeting: Active Learning Requirement and Coll. 150Ws in a language other than English.

Discussion: Discussion commenced with a consideration of **the Active Learning (ACTV) requirement** established by the adoption of the new College Curriculum.

It was, one member asserted, "a GER6 in a wolf's clothing." The ensuing discussion constellated around a few key questions and issues. Various members of the EPC wondered how the ACTV requirement reflected the College's commitment to the "arts," broadly speaking: music, dance, performance, the spoken arts, and so on, which under the GER system had employed relatively high standards for exemption. Among the goals of the GER6 was the acquisition of creative "proficiency" in the student's chosen subject. The present ACTV requirement is vague in its assertion of such goals, and the State Council on Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) will soon demand that the ACTV requirement demonstrate some measurement of its achievement of this proficiency. Under the Coll. System, Dance, for instance, does not view prior experience in the subject an adequate measure of proficiency, yet it does not at the present time possess the resources to provide this within the structure of the ACTV requirement. Yet Math and the laboratory science do possess the resources to satisfy the ACTV; this creates an asymmetrical system that reduces the significance of the performing arts as an integral component of the liberal arts education.

Question raised: "how do we measure proficiency?" All acknowledged that this was a critical issue. Moreover, presently the ACTV also encompasses the undergraduate Computer Proficiency (CPR) requirement. Must we embrace, then, the "two domain" model (arts/sciences)? The ACTV also draws lab work within its ambit. Much confusion abounds. What, exactly, does the ACTV hope to achieve? The EPC expressed a general belief that, given the formlessness of the current ACTV requirements, the faculty can justly claim that "we do it everywhere." In the end, this is all a matter of definition, which the current curriculum distressingly avoids.

The EPC rejected the notion of "two domains," arguing that the determination of their

boundaries would inevitably require the EPC set policy that was better left in the hands of the Faculty.

The EPC moved to close the discussion and to forward to the Faculty of A&S a **motion to abolish the ACTV and establish in its place a Creative and Performing Arts Proficiency requirement** (See Appendix C). The EPC passed this motion unanimously.

Freshman 150s in a language other than English.

This issue has bedeviled the EPC since the launching of the Ark, which is to say that the discussion long precedes this humble reporter's presence on the EPC.

Discussion commenced with a consideration of the motion by Jack Martin (included here as Appendix A), which effectively invoked the doctrine of *stare decisis* ("let the matter stand"). The Coll. 150 is a critical element to instruct incoming students in expository and analytical writing skills, in English, that are essential goals of the College Curriculum. The counter motion, which took shape during the ensuing discussion, advanced a long-standing request from the Department of Modern Languages that the requirement be extended to allow a limited number of highly selective 150Ws in languages other than English to fulfill the writing requirement.

Bill Hutton (Chair) laid out three options, given the choices confronting the EPC (See Appendix B)

In contemplating these matters, several issues surfaced. Who, for instance, can take these courses, native speakers of the language in which the course is conducted? Doesn't this, then, afford privilege to such students in allowing them to avoid any English language requirements?

Martin opposed the prospect of 150Ws in languages other than English (LOTE) and moved that, if the EPC were to approve such things, then MLL must require that the writing component of such courses be in English. This motion failed. A motion to state plainly in the College Curriculum that all 150Ws must be conducted entirely in English also failed. **The motion to offer 150Ws in LOTE, without restriction, carried** (See Appendix C). The EPC voted to forward this motion, together with the motion abolishing the ACTV requirement and establishing the Creative and Performing Arts Proficiency Requirement, to the Faculty of Arts & Sciences.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chandos Michael Brown

Appendix A: Jack Martin's motion regarding Coll. 150Ws

COLL 150

COLL 150 courses are Freshman Seminars that challenge students to think deeply about a particular topic. COLL 150 works to strengthen written and oral communication. Students engage in in-depth study, with group discussion and deep readings of texts, data, or methods of inquiry from the discipline. These 4-credit courses fulfill the lower-division writing requirement. One COLL 150 is required of each freshman. COLL 150 is required for transfer students.

Addenda:

- A student must obtain a grade of at least C- to obtain COLL 150 credit for a COLL 150 course. (Approved by FAS September 2, 2014)
- COLL 150 must be taught by a TE or continuing NTE faculty member. Whether TE or NTE, the faculty member will have least one semester of teaching experience at the College of William & Mary. (Approved by FAS September 2, 2014)
- COLL 150 sharpens skills in writing and research that are crucial to success in all subsequent courses. COLL 150's should require an English language grammar and style handbook that covers the process of writing, grammar rules, and documentation forms (MLA, APA, CMS). Courses should integrate discussion of writing into the class and provide at least one opportunity for feedback and revision. They should include specific strategies to help non-traditional students, speakers of other dialects and languages, and students who lack strong grammar training. Writing assignments must be in English. At least half of the assignments should cover formal academic writing.

Appendix B: 150 options

I. NO FL 150's, unless all the writing assignments are in English

II. YES FL 150's

A. Without restrictions

B. With restriction

- i. In French and Spanish, other languages must apply to the Writing Committee/EPC
- ii. limit to students who wouldn't have needed the W in the old system
- iii. limit to students from high schools that have English as the primary language of instruction
- iv. Require that some of the writing assignments be in English
- v. Require that all* writing assignments be in English (Jack's motion)
*or enough to satisfy the minimum writing requirements for 150's
- vi. Require that a majority of the writing assignments are in English

Appendix C: Motions to be presented to the A&S Faculty

EPC voted to present the following 3 motions to the A&S Faculty at the next A&S meeting, Tuesday, March 1 2016:

EPC Motions to the A&S Faculty

The Educational Policy Committee submits the following motions for consideration at the Arts & Sciences faculty meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. These motions all deal with general education requirements, and in brief their effect would be as follows:

1. To establish a new Creative and Performing Arts Proficiency requirement for all students (similar to GER 6)
2. To abolish the current Active Learning Experience requirement
3. To make it clear that COLL 150s may be offered in languages other than English

I. Motion to create a Creative and Performing Arts Proficiency. This would become one of the general education requirements for all students beginning with the entering class of Fall 2016.

Creative and Performing Arts Proficiency. Satisfied by two credits in the same creative or performing art.

The purpose of this proficiency is to understand the artistic process. Accordingly, by actively involving students in exercises that require artistic choices, these courses aim for an experience-based understanding of how the artist communicates. A course that satisfies this proficiency requires a student to begin to understand an art at the foundation level through artistic activities involving each of the following: developing their artistic skills; and applying the principles of the art through projects and/or exercises.

As with GER 6, we would accept exemptions based on high school experience (two years of art, creative writing, etc.).

II. Motion to abolish the Active Learning Experience requirement, effective beginning with the entering class of Fall 2016.

Rationale for motions I and II: "Active learning" is poorly defined and quickly expands to encompass almost all courses. We believe the creative and performing arts merit special attention, and that all students will benefit from the expressive aspects of these courses.

III. Motion to add an addendum to the curriculum language for COLL 150 authorizing the teaching of COLL 150s in languages other than English

Here is the current language with the proposed addendum underlined:

COLL 150

COLL 150 courses are Freshman Seminars that challenge students to think deeply about a particular topic. COLL 150 works to strengthen written and oral communication. Students engage in in-depth study, with group discussion and deep readings of texts, data, or methods of inquiry from the discipline. These 4-credit courses fulfill the lower-division writing requirement. One COLL 150 is required of each freshman. COLL 150 is required for transfer students.

Addenda:

- A student must obtain a grade of at least C- to obtain COLL 150 credit for a COLL 150 course. (Approved by FAS September 2, 2014)
- COLL 150 must be taught by a TE or continuing NTE faculty member. Whether TE or NTE, the faculty member will have least one semester of teaching experience at the College of William & Mary. (Approved by FAS September 2, 2014)
- COLL 150s may be offered to qualified students in languages other than English.

[NB: After the 2/19 meeting, EPC voted electronically to add the following 3 sentences to this addendum: These courses must contain the language of instruction in the title. Faculty seeking to teach COLL 150s in languages other than English should first seek EPC approval. Over the course of the Spring semester 2016, EPC will work with the Writing Committee, Modern Languages faculty, and other interested parties to develop appropriate criteria for approving such courses.]

Rationale: EPC believes that writing-intensive freshman seminars in languages other than English can, for a small number of students who have demonstrated advanced language skills, provide a very worthwhile first-year experience. The purpose of stating the language of instruction in the course title is to make it clear on transcripts that such courses do not satisfy English language requirements for medical school and other post-graduate professional programs.