

Educational Policy Committee's 1993-94 Mid-Year Report
February Faculty Meeting

Submitted by: Faculty: Chris Abelt, Jesse Bohl, Maryann Brink, John Charles (Fall), John Drew, Mark Fowler (chair), Colleen Kennedy, Ann Henderson (Spring), Hans Tiefel, and Eugene Tracy. **Ex-officio Members:** David Lutzer, Heather Macdonald, Nancy Marshall, William Savely, Ronald Wheeler, William Geary, and Bruce Nielsen. **Students:** Sam Ozeck, Bridget Pool, and Jon Trinidad.

If this report has a single overriding purpose it is to foster full faculty participation in the critical curricular decisions that must be made this year. To infuse as much participatory democracy into the deliberations as possible, EPC has enacted these policies: First, no EPC recommendation on a major curricular question will be voted on until it has been discussed at two Faculty Meetings. In addition, faculty comment via memos to the EPC chair, provided they are sent in a timely fashion, will be reviewed by the committee and replied to at the next Faculty Meeting. This will guarantee that no comments will go unheard owing to the brevity of the allotted discussion time at Faculty Meetings, and that the faculty as a whole will become aware of all comments and of EPC's response to them. Finally, special EPC reports on matters of broad educational policy will be issued in order to deepen the faculty's understanding of them. With these measures in force a faculty dialogue becomes possible in which every faculty view is weighed and no faculty view need be uninformed.

The report is divided into eight sections: 1) Curricular changes approved by EPC in Fall 1993; 2) Updated Progress Report on New Curriculum Implementation; 3) An EPC Request for Faculty Advice and Comment on a Motion for Standardizing Freshman Seminars at four credits; 4) An EPC Motion to Split Section Three of the New Curriculum Motion; 5) An EPC Motion on Criteria for Writing, Reading, and Discussion Intensity for Section Three of the New Curriculum Motion; 6) An EPC Motion on Criteria for Delinking Credit- and Contact Hours; 7) An EPC Request For Faculty Advice and Comment on a Scheduling Guidelines Proposal; and 8) A Report on the Increase of 4-credit Courses in the College Curriculum, and a Request for Faculty Advice and Comment on Guidelines for Approving Department Conversion Projects.

I Curricular Changes Approved in Fall 1993

A) New Courses were approved as follows:

- Biology 408- research course for 2 credits
- Biology 420-520- Genetic Analysis for 3 credits
- Biology 421-521- Genetic Analysis Laboratory for 1 credit
- Biology 445-535- Neurobiology for 3 credits
- Biology 448-548- Molecular Cell Biology for 3 credits
- Classics 150W- Freshman Seminar- W for 4 credits
- Economics 151- Microeconomic Topics- Freshman Seminar with 3 credits
- Economics 152- Macroeconomic Topics- Freshman Seminar with 3 credits
- Economics 300- Topics in Economics- 3 credits
- Kinesiology 250W- Freshman Seminar- W for 4 credits
- Psychology 486- The Psychology of Entrepreneurship- 3 credits (cross-listed with Business School as Business 492)
- Modern Languages:
 - Arabic 301- A/S 3 credits
 - Arabic 302- A/S 3 credits
 - Russian 411- Independent Study for variable credits
- Sociology 406- Cultural Diversity- 3 credits
- Sociology 498- Internship- variable credit
- Sociology 499- Internship- variable credit

B) Changes in Existing Courses were approved as follows:

Biology 403- Research in Biology - new course description
 Biology 412- Vascular Plant Systematics- new title and course description
 Economics 102- Principles of Economics- new prerequisite of Economics 101
 Economics 150W- Freshman Seminar: Topics in Economics- new title and course description, given W and raised from 3 to 4 credits
 Economics 322- Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, formerly Economics 422
 Economics 331- Introduction to Mathematical Economics- new number, formerly 431
 Economics 344- Economic Development of the South- new number, formerly 444
 Economics 362- Governmental Regulation of Business- new number, formerly 462
 Economics 382- Centrally Planned Economy-- new number, formerly 482
 Economics 383- Development Economics-- new number, formerly 483, and new course description
 Economics 400- Topics in Economics- new title
 Economics 403- Advanced Microeconomic Theory: Incentives- new title
 Economics 461- Industrial Organization- new number, formerly 361
 Music 150W- Freshman Seminar in Music- given Area designation
 Religion 305- Biblical Wisdom: Job and Proverbs- new title, new course description, and new prerequisite of Religion 301 or 302 or 304

C) Changes in Concentration and Minor Requirements were approved as follows:

Economics Department: For the Economics Concentration it is now specified that at least 9 semester hours must be taken in courses numbered 400 or above. For the Economics Minor, all 'tracks' for the Minor have been eliminated and it is specified that at least one course must be taken at the 400 level.

D) Changes in Concentration Writing Requirements were approved as follows:

Modern Languages: The Concentration Writing Requirement in French will now be satisfied by earning a grade of C or better in French 450 (Seminar).

E) New Departmental Honors was approved:

Kinesiology 495 and 496 were added to the Kinesiology Department's curriculum to enable it to offer a Department Honors program.

II Second Progress Report on Implementing the New Curriculum

Action in Fall 1993: Section 5 of the New Curriculum Motion, which states that a minimum of 15 credits in the concentration must be taken in residence at the College, was approved for implementation by the Faculty at the October Faculty Meeting. Section 1 of the New Curriculum Motion, which reduces the number of credits required for graduation from 124 to 120 and reduces the number of required physical activities courses or their equivalents from four to two, was approved for implementation by the Faculty at the November Faculty Meeting. At the December Faculty Meeting two EPC proposals regarding Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion were introduced as topics for Faculty comment and advice, one defining criteria relevant for Section 3 and the other proposing that the faculty vote separately on two main components of Section 3.

Planned Action for Spring 1994: As previously indicated, henceforth EPC will introduce all its implementation proposals first as topics for Faculty comment and advice and only at subsequent faculty meetings as motions to be voted on. This ensures that every department and program has ample opportunity to talk over each proposal with its own faculty and with EPC, and to raise questions about it to the faculty as a whole at least two Faculty Meetings. At the second Faculty Meeting, when normally an EPC motion(s) on the previously introduced topic will be made, EPC will also report on the faculty comments it has received so far and on whether they have prompted the committee to amend its earlier proposals. Given the headway the GER Working Groups and the Subcommittee on Computing Proficiency have made, we hope to be able to abide by this discuss-twice policy by

adopting the following schedule:

Tentative Implementation Schedule for the Remaining Sections of the New Curriculum Motion

February Faculty Meeting: EPC motion to approve 1) its proposal to split Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion and 2) its criteria for writing, reading and discussion intensity for Section 3. A proposed motion on EPC's interpretation of "Freshman Seminars should be standardized as four-credit courses".

March Faculty Meeting: 1) EPC presentation for Faculty comment and advice of a proposal for criteria for satisfying the Computing Proficiency requirement of Section 6 of the New Curriculum Motion. 2) Perhaps an EPC motion to implement Freshman Seminars of Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion and 3) EPC presentation as a topic for faculty comment and advice its proposed criteria for satisfying GER's.

April Faculty Meeting(s) (extra meetings may be called): 1) EPC motion to approve its proposal on criteria for satisfying the Computing Proficiency requirement; 2) EPC motion to approve its proposed GER criteria; 3) EPC presentation as a topic for faculty comment and advice of its proposal regarding Pass/Fail vs. Pass/No Pass courses or Section 4 of the New Curriculum Motion; and 4) EPC presentation as a topic for faculty comment and advice of a joint EPC Assessment Committee recommendation on the timing of the assessment of GER courses (this joint recommendation is required by the New Curriculum Motion document).

May Faculty Meeting: 1) EPC motion to approve its proposal on Pass/Fail etc.; and 2) EPC motion to approve its joint EPC Assessment Committee recommendation on the timing of the assessment of GER courses.

III EPC Motion on Standardizing Freshman Seminars at 4-Credits: EPC has discovered a disagreement among the faculty about the stipulation "Freshman Seminars should be standardized as four-credit courses." under Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion. Some faculty members read it as meaning that Freshman Seminars are required to have four credits; others as meaning that having four credits is merely highly desirable. Consulting the original Steering Committee about the issue is to no avail, since apparently they are also in disagreement. Under the circumstances EPC concludes that the only fair course to put the matter to faculty vote, and accordingly presents the motion below as a topic for faculty advice and comment. If no opportunity for comment affords itself at the Faculty Meeting, please send a memo to Mark Fowler by Feb. 8.

EPC Proposed Motion: Given the expected depth and breadth of Freshman Seminars, EPC anticipates that they will normally be taught for 4 credits. However, they may be taught as 3 or 4 credit courses provided the criteria for Freshman Seminars are met.

IV EPC Motion to Split Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion: At the December Faculty Meeting the possibility of splitting Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion was raised as a topic for faculty comment and advice. As currently formulated, Section 3 calls for establishing both Freshman Seminars and an Upper Level Individual or Small Group Learning Experience. At present the resources needed to implement the Upper Level Learning Experience are lacking; yet resources might be at hand for implementing the Freshman Seminars. Accordingly, in December EPC requested faculty advice as to whether implementing the Freshman Seminar requirement should be separated from implementing the Upper Level Learning Experience requirement.

Faculty Comment: None

EPC (unamended) Motion: Implementing the Freshman Seminar requirement under Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion should be split from implementing the Upper Level Learning Experience requirement under the same section, so that the faculty may vote on the two questions separately.

V EPC Motion for Faculty Adoption of the Following Definitions For Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion: At the December Faculty Meeting the definitions below of 'writing-, reading-, and discussion-intensity' and of 'significant opportunity for oral presentation' for application to Section 3 were presented as a topic for faculty comment and advice.

Summary of Faculty Comment: Several faculty members found the originally proposed guidelines for writing, reading and discussion intensity too strict. Others found them not strict enough and wondered if under them EPC would approve 'writing-intensive' Freshman Seminars which required no writing. Still others thought that we used misleadingly the words writing and reading.

EPC Response: Fears about overly strict guidelines have two principal bases. One is that the guidelines demanded too much discussion. To this we reply that affording students greater opportunity for class discussion was perhaps the single most important reason for requiring Freshman Seminars. Alumni surveys and current student opinion indicate that the college program is comparatively weak in cultivating oral communication skills. The second basis is that the guidelines would stifle experimentation. Our proposed guidelines seem flexible enough to allow for ample experimentation within Freshman Seminars without misleadingly suggesting that anything can substitute for traditional reading and writing.

Concern about writing largely prompts the call for stricter guidelines. To be emphasized in reply is that satisfying the Freshman Seminar requirement under Section 3 is not equivalent to satisfying the College writing requirement. Nor was it the intent of the original Steering Committee on the New Curriculum that it should be. Although simply defining Section 3 Freshman Seminars as fulfilling the writing requirement would have had advantages, the Committee set higher priority on leaving room for Freshman Seminars with alternatives to reading and writing in the traditional sense which encourage students' participation, independence, initiative, and creativity. Several such non-traditional Freshman Seminars are already being taught with immense success and, in the experimental spirit of the New Curriculum, we wish to encourage more. It seems reasonable that they should satisfy the Section 3 requirement even though they cannot meet the writing requirement, especially since students taking them must still fulfill the writing requirement and so may even have the double educational benefit of taking two Freshman Seminars.

On the other hand, to underscore our prohibition of inappropriate substitutes for traditional reading and writing, we have amended our guidelines to stipulate that the alternative activity must be central to the discipline offering the course (see the examples in Section Ab and Ac below).

Permitting such substitutions has the virtue of allowing artistic activities besides creative writing to qualify as fostering independent learning, whereas forbidding these substitutions would unjustifiably make creative writing uniquely qualify. Still another virtue of permitting them is that non-traditional Freshman Seminars, though not meeting the writing requirement, might meet other college requirements: for instance, an Art Freshman Seminar might satisfy the Creative and Performing Arts GER or a Geology Freshman Seminar might meet the Computing Proficiency requirement.

If the proposed guidelines are adopted, there will be two categories of Freshman Seminar: 1. Those satisfying the Freshman Seminar requirement under Section 3 of the New Curriculum Motion but not the college writing requirement; and 2. Those satisfying both the college writing requirement and the Section 3 Freshman Seminar requirement. Freshman Seminars in any category might also satisfy GERs or the computing proficiency requirement. EPC recognizes that some departments might offer entry level seminars which are not Freshman Seminars.

Finally, there is the objection that we are misleadingly applying the words 'writing' and 'reading' to activities such as painting, computer analysis, etc. We meet this objection by reminding you 1) of the above justification for substitutes for traditional writing and reading; 2) of the fact that very few Freshman Seminars are likely to have such substitutions; and 3) of the fact that even Freshman Seminars with substitute activities will still have some writing and reading in the traditional sense, which is why under Ab below we stipulate that a substitute form of expression for part of the writing requirement and make an analogous stipulation under Ac.

We hope that the foregoing makes clear why we believe our proposed definitions provide space for creative experimentation in Freshman Seminars within reasonable parameters.

EPC Amended Motion:

A) Freshman Seminars. Our chief concern is that these seminars foster independent learning. Therefore, we suggest the following guidelines (in bold, with brief explanations following). In defining these, we have tried to respect the variety of ways in which the faculty teaching these courses might encourage student participation. Consequently, while we see reading, writing, and discussion at the heart of the seminar experience, we do not wish to exclude seminars that might substitute alternate activities central to the discipline for some of the intensive reading or writing as we define them below.

a. Discussion. At least 1/2 of total weekly classtime should be devoted to student participation. Such participation might take a variety of forms, both spontaneous and prepared: discussion, group work, individual or panel presentations, debates, etc. This guideline allows for about 1 1/2 hours of lecture in a standard 3-hour course; it fosters students' responsibility for what goes on in class without interfering with highly successful models for seminars already in place (e.g., the Honors model of 2 weekly discussion periods with a lecture in between).

b. Writing. A writing-intensive course should require at least 5000 words, or 20 pages, of writing. All of this need not be formal writing, but students should receive timely feedback from instructors on their performances in written work. We also recognize that special seminars--in Art, for example, or in other courses that might be proposed to satisfy GER 6--might substitute another form of expression (painting or theatrical performance, for example) for part of the writing requirement. Whether a proposed substitution is defensible will be judged on a case by case basis. We stipulate, however, that the substitute activities must be central to the discipline offering the course or at least to one of those disciplines in the case of multi-discipline courses. For example, painting may legitimately substitute for writing in Art Freshman Seminars but substituting painting would be illegitimate in courses offered by disciplines where painting is not central.

c. Reading. We do not want to suggest any guidelines for amounts of reading, recognizing that courses in which a small number of texts are read closely and repeatedly (e.g., a literature course in poetry or in critical approaches) are as valuable and intense as courses (like Honors) requiring 100+ pages per week. We also recognize that film and art history courses, for example, require intensive reading of non-print forms. EPC will judge on a case by case basis whether substituting the reading of these non-print forms for traditional reading satisfies part of the reading requirement. However, the substitute is acceptable only if it is central to the discipline offering the course, or at least to one of those disciplines in the case of multi-discipline courses.

B) Upper-division seminars. We define "significant opportunity for oral presentation" to include the definition of "discussion-intensive" from above; in addition, we would require of every student at least one prepared oral presentation of at least eight minutes, with the opportunity for defense. Instructors should evaluate the student's ability to present material to an audience. Those departments and programs that allow students to satisfy this requirement through Honors and/or Independent Studies will have to provide each student the opportunity to give oral presentations to an audience of other students and/or faculty. (For example, departments might ask students to include an oral presentation with the proposal for such projects; later in the semester, they might require all students in the department who are taking Honors and/or Independent Studies to attend a forum in which students present the results of their research and defend their conclusions.)

VI EPC Motion for Faculty Adoption of the Following Rationale and Criteria for Approving 4-Credit Courses with Fewer than 4 Contact Hours: At the December Faculty Meeting EPC presented as a topic for faculty comment and advice a basic rationale and application criteria to elaborate this earlier EPC statement: "additional credit may be assigned for significant academic exchange between student and instructor outside the classroom during the semester. ... Proposals for 4-credit courses that will meet three times per week must be accompanied by a

course syllabus that makes it clear what the significant academic exchange will entail."

Summary of Faculty Comment: As with our Freshman Seminar proposal, the guidelines for delinking contact- and credit-hours came under fire by some for being too stringent and by others for being too lax.

Besides the general worry about hampering experimentation, critics in the first category had essentially two concerns: One was the worry about EPC misguidedly using the link between credit- and contact hour for safeguarding educational quality and erecting too many hurdles to justifying delinking. Wouldn't it be easier, it was argued, for the instructor merely to meet four times per week rather than to schedule individual student conferences? And if EPC makes its criteria for legitimate delinking too demanding, wouldn't faculty simply follow this easier path at a cost to educational quality? Better to loosen the standards for delinking and place more trust in faculty. The second concern in effect questioned why written comments alone on term papers should not normally qualify as 'the significant academic exchange between instructor and student' which warrants delinking? Why, that is, must there be instructor-student conferences under Condition 1 of the guidelines?

Critics who thought the guidelines too lax were chiefly concerned about the potential 'dilution of the education provided' as a result of delinking. This dilution, it was argued, cannot be avoided simply by requiring instructor-student interaction outside the classroom, since such interaction is already expected where no delinking exists.

EPC Response: To the criticism concerning excessive stringency we reply that our guidelines allow for such a wide variety of special projects, fora etc. that it is hard to imagine a substitute for classtime of at least comparable educational value which the guidelines would rule out. Accordingly, we do not believe that these guidelines will be viewed as forbidding obstacles to instructors interested in improving their courses by employing delinking in pedagogically creative and positive ways. Moreover, it is because we do believe that delinking sometimes enhances education that we make our delinking proposal. Even with complete trust in the faculty, however, the faculty must still agree as a matter of policy on when delinking is likely to be beneficial to students and when it is not, and EPC's guidelines are intended to codify that agreement. Finally, we see these guidelines as effecting the balance most likely to avoid the peril discussed here of discouraging desirable delinking and the peril discussed below of encouraging undesirable delinking.

As for replacing with written comments on papers the instructor-student conferences referred to under Condition 1, we do not absolutely forbid this replacement but strongly discourage it. Students themselves claim that conferences seem by far the best way to increase the quality of their educational experience. They enable students to clarify, elaborate, and defend their work and to ask follow-up questions-- i.e., to interact with their teachers-- in a way that merely receiving written feedback on a paper rarely matches. Our guidelines, however, do say that 'normally' requiring additional term papers without conferences will not suffice; we still will consider carefully the merits of any specific proposal for delinking based solely on extensive comments on additional essays etc.

Finally, regarding the fear that delinking will dilute the quality of education at the college: EPC too is very concerned about this danger. But we believe that the strictness of our standards for legitimate delinking adequately guard against it. Under Condition 1, for example, we require that course proposals for delinking spell out in detail the special projects intended to substitute for classtime and announce our expectation that faculty will have conferences with individual students several times over the semester. It is understood that these conferences are instructor-student exchanges over and above those out-of-class exchanges which normally occur in an analogous three-credit course. Likewise, under Condition 2, the minimum of two hours outside class spent by students at fora, labs, etc. are understood to be time beyond that normally expected in a three-credit version of the course. Our guidelines then permit delinking only where additional and appropriate instructor-student interaction is clearly defined in a course proposal.

EPC (slightly amended) Motion:

Rationale: The basic rationale for permitting 4-credit courses with fewer than 4 class hours is the idea that instructor-student interaction outside the traditional classroom structures can be educationally valuable. However, departures from such structures must have clear justification.

Application Criteria: Basically, an acceptable course proposal for 4-credits with fewer than 4 contact hours must show a) that instructor-student interaction outside the classroom will be an integral part of the proposed course and have sufficient educational value to substitute for class time; or b) that the special nature of the skills to be taught in the proposed course is such that students will clearly benefit from augmenting traditional classtime with alternative instructor-student interaction. Normally, merely adding more reading or term papers will not meet this standard. On the other hand, EPC has granted requests for, and proposes to continue to grant requests for, the addition of a fourth credit-hour to a course that meets for only three traditional class hours a week where one of these two conditions is met:

1) Four credit courses with fewer than four lecture hours will normally be approved when there are significant additional projects over and above those assignments generally used in a 3-credit version of the course. Course proposals should contain draft syllabi with, for example, the number and types of projects students will undertake and the way these will be evaluated. Faculty should generally expect to confer formally with individual students several times as needed over the course of the semester to assess their progress.

2) Four credit courses with fewer than four lecture hours will normally be approved when there is a requirement for the entire class outside class lectures: for example, required labs, service projects, or attendance at fora (including, for instance, film showings or music performances). Such requirements must be in addition to standard requirements for a 3-credit hour course, and generally students will be expected to submit written reports of the lab, fora, etc. for evaluation by the instructor. Generally, the outside time required of students must equal at least 2 hours per week in addition to the outside time normally required in a 3-credit version of the course.

As these criteria indicate, the burden of proving the pedagogical efficacy of the 'extra hour' falls on the instructor. While department chairs may submit packages of course proposals which include proposals for 4-credit courses with fewer than 4 contact hours, EPC will decide on the appropriate number of contact hours on a case by case basis. Department chairs interested in submitting such course proposals should make sure that instructors submit a completed syllabus with the course approval request.

VII Transitional Scheduling Guidelines: The EPC proposes as a topic for faculty comment and advice our recommended scheduling guidelines below. They are meant to accommodate the greater number of 4 hours now in the college curriculum without radically changing our current scheduling system. We believe them to be workable even if a few larger departments are ultimately approved by the faculty for conversion to all 4-credit courses; if in the more distant future many departments convert they may no longer suffice. Guidelines for 3-credit courses will remain unchanged; but to enable faculty to see how the two sets of guidelines interlock, both sets are presented. If time limits at the Faculty Meeting prohibit your commenting, please send a memo to Mark Fowler, Philosophy Department by Feb 8.

Current Guidelines for 3-Credit Courses:

1. At least 30% of each department's classes should be offered outside the time block 9 am to 3 pm.
2. In the remaining time slots, no more than 15% of a department's classes should be offered in any one time slot.
3. At least 40% of each department's classes should be offered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and at least 40% of each department's classes should be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
4. Courses which do not require a classroom for regular meetings (such as honors courses, reading courses, and independent study courses) shall play no part in the computation of the above percentages.

5. Multiple sections of a course should not be offered in the same time block unless all other time blocks are being used for the course.

6. Non-standard time blocks are permitted in the following instances: Education, the resident M.B.A. program, and at or after 3:00 pm. Because use of non-standard time blocks adversely affect the maximum use of available classroom space, this guideline applies to graduate as well as undergraduate courses. ("Non-standard time block" refers to time blocks that overlap two 50-minute time blocks on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, or two 75-minute time blocks on Tuesdays and Thursdays.)

EPC proposes that the following Guidelines for 4-Hour Courses be recommended for adoption to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences:

The scheduling model below allows for 13 time blocks. They are diagrammed for your convenience in the appendix to this report.

Allow: Two hour blocks only on days M-W-F 8-10 am, 2-4 pm or 4-6 pm (eg M-W 8-10 or M-F 8-10, or W-F 2-4)

Allow: One hour periods on any four days M-T-W-R-F beginning on the hour with the exception of 9 am, 12 noon and 3 pm. No course may overlap 3 time blocks. (Labs are excepted.)

Allow: Regular 90 minute periods on T-R with one additional hour on M or W or F subject to same overlap restrictions as above.

Warning: Late classes (4-6 pm) may be required.

VIII EPC Report on Increasing 4-Credit Courses in the College Curriculum:

A) **Toward an Informed Faculty Consensus:** Recent changes at William and Mary make likely a significant increase in 4-credit courses in the college curriculum over the next few years. Last fall several faculty members, including the members of the Dean's Advisory Council, expressed their concern to EPC about this prospect. Their greatest fear is that such an increase will slide into place before the faculty appreciates its probable ramifications or reaches a consensus about its desirability. This report aims to remove that peril and to move toward an informed consensus. It reviews 1) college actions and policies in the recent past that have encouraged the expansion of 4-credit courses; 2) the basic rationale for this recent encouragement; 3) current concerns about the wisdom of this encouragement; 4) EPC's strategy for dealing with these concerns; and 5) EPC motion for faculty comment and advice. The report is placed before the faculty for its critical assessment. EPC urges faculty, whether as individuals, departments or college committees, to comment and advise us about the report's accuracy, fairness and, above all, the cogency of its suggested strategy and motion. These faculty comments will be reported to the faculty as a whole at a future date together with EPC's responses to them. Should time constraints prevent your commenting at the Faculty Meeting, please send a memo to Mark Fowler, Philosophy Department by Feb. 8.

B) **Encouraging Words for Adopting 4-Credit Courses: A Brief History of a Policy and its Curricular Impact:** In the last three years departments have been repeatedly encouraged to experiment with offering 4-credit courses. This encouragement sprang from several directions, with former President Verkuil, former Provost Schiavelli and other Administrators being one principal and persistent source, and various faculty committees being another. EPC itself, for instance, officially joined in the chorus of encouragement in its 1992-3 Mid-Year Report: "The Committee (EPC) generally encourages departments to consider the option of developing four-credit-hour courses." The most influential of faculty encouragers, however, was the Subcommittee on Student and Faculty Course Loads. Acting as a subcommittee of the Curriculum Review Steering

Committee, it was charged in January 1991 with the task of examining among other questions: 1) "What should teaching loads be for faculty members?" and 2) "What type of course loads for students best helps achieve our educational objectives?" In its final report the course-load subcommittee made these recommendations:

The subcommittee encourages departments to consider a flexible system of courses with the typical teaching load being two four-credit courses or their equivalents each semester. Such a system should help alleviate some the pressures on faculty, particularly tenure eligible faculty, created by the current system. Additionally, the subcommittee believes that for many departments the possibility of rotating course offerings over a two year period, the possibility of linear two-credit courses, and the potential for greater depth and/or breadth in four-credit courses ensure students a wide variety of courses from which to choose.

The Course-Load Subcommittee did recommend injecting more 'flexibility' in the college curriculum by creating, not merely 4-credit courses, but a mix of 2-, 3-, and 4-credit ones. But its emphasis was on the virtues of expanding 4-credit courses and it noted that the Music Department was proposing a full-scale conversion to 4-credit courses, referring other faculty to Music for advice if considering such a change for their own departments. Copies of the subcommittee's report were distributed to all department chairs for dissemination.

The cumulative impact of all this encouragement was that several departments seriously considered full- or large-scale conversions to 4-credit courses. In some cases their deliberations led to a rejection of the conversion option, while in others departments opted to postpone a decision about converting until after the New Curriculum is fully implemented. But there was undeniably significant movement toward increasing 4-credit courses: Two years ago Music's proposal for a full-conversion was approved with the EPC proviso that its new program be accepted as a pilot project for two years subject to EPC review. Art and Art History made a large-scale conversion last year with the same EPC proviso. The English Department has over the last year hammered out a plan for full-conversion which EPC has begun to evaluate; and the French section within Modern Languages is in the process of developing a similar plan. Plus the new curriculum will increase the number of 4-credit Freshman Seminars to serve all freshmen and permits GER courses to be assigned four credits.

The upshot is that the number of 4-credit courses in the college curriculum might increase substantially.

C) The 'Everybody Benefits' Rationale: The Course-Load Subcommittee advanced a basic rationale for moving to more 4-credit courses which has more or less been echoed in the conversion proposals submitted to EPC thus far. Essentially, it claims that students, faculty and the college as a whole all stand to gain from this move:

Students will benefit educationally by being able to concentrate on fewer courses at a time. Evidence indicates that they themselves prefer to obtain this advantage by taking fewer courses during the regular semesters even if this means having to make up credits in summer sessions. They will profit still further by being taught by professors with more time for the research that can have the educational pay-off of enabling those professors to introduce 'cutting-edge' material into the classroom. More time spent on research, it is argued, normally makes for better teaching, not worse.

Faculty will benefit professionally as having fewer course preparations leaves more time to contribute to their disciplines through increased scholarly and/or artistic productivity, and to improve the quality of the smaller number of courses they will then teach.

William and Mary as a whole will benefit as a reduction in teaching loads renders it more competitive in attracting and keeping top-notch new faculty. The fact that currently its average teaching load is markedly heavier than those in most of its peer institutions places it at a disadvantage in faculty recruitment.

D) The 1993-94 Question: Whether to Continue the Experimentation?: Doubts about the claims of the above rationale have been registered from the start, especially regarding whether, all things considered, increasing the number of 4-credit courses available would be an educational plus for students. Many early advocates of the increase conceded the reasonableness of these doubts to the extent of recommending that a period of

experimenting with 4-credit courses transpire before committing the college to a curriculum where 4-credit courses might preponderate. Regrettably, however, the call for experimentation was unaccompanied by a clear and agreed upon definition of the experimentation's allowable limits; accordingly, when individual departments began large- or full-scale conversions to 4-credit courses, many faculty became apprehensive that the experimentation was too unrestricted to guard against its causing us to drift into unforeseen and perhaps undesirable changes in the college curriculum.

This apprehension found expression last October in a resolution passed the Dean's Advisory Council requesting that the EPC temporarily suspend all department 4-credit conversions until fuller faculty discussion of the issues involved had taken place. On several grounds EPC respectfully denied the Council's request. We recognized the need, however, not only to reassure the faculty about its full participation in critical curricular decisions, but to pin down more precisely what the most current diverse views and concerns are among faculty and administrators about expanding 4-credit courses. To this end, EPC or its representatives had various meetings and conversations with Provost Cell, Dean Lutzer, Clyde Haulman (former Undergraduate Dean and former Chair of the Curriculum Review Steering Committee), Will Hausman and Linda Reilly (co-chairs of the Advisory Council), Tom Finn (as a representative of the Advisory Council), the entire Advisory Council, and other faculty members. The principal positions and concerns that emerged will be presented shortly. After listening to all these voices, though, it seems premature to ban, even temporarily, major experimentation with 4-credit courses provided that a strategy like the one below is followed:

E) **An EPC Strategy for Combining Curricular Experimentation with Curricular Responsibility:** Although scarcely proven, the case for the 'everybody benefits' rationale is compelling enough to warrant encouraging continued experimentation with 4-credit courses; on the other hand, the doubts about that rationale are sufficiently compelling to warrant constraining this experimentation in various ways. This has been generally recognized from the beginning. However, the chief defect in the past policy of encouraging experimentation was that the limits of acceptable experimentation were never adequately defined by either the Course-Load Subcommittee or EPC. As mentioned, large- and full-scale department conversions were treated as pilot projects subject to EPC scrutiny for two years. But, although the potential impact of these projects on the entire college curriculum was to be scrutinized, the accent was on the project's educational consequences for the converted department's own concentrators. More important, no restrictions were placed on how many pilot conversions could run simultaneously and in principle every department at the college could experimentally convert before a single pilot project had been fully reviewed. Most important, large-sized departments, whose curriculum policies may have college-wide ramifications, were not forbidden to convert until the preliminary results of conversions by small-sized departments were known. Concretely, this meant that the English Department could permissibly convert before the faculty learned the results of even Music's conversion, a relatively small department. Worries about this fact were implicit in the call for a general suspension of conversions and sometimes in the oft-heard criticism that a 'piecemeal' approach was being taken in enlarging the portion the college's 4-credit offerings.

EPC proposes these rules to remedy the aforementioned defect: The first rule is that, for the present, EPC will approve large- or full-scale conversions only with the proviso that they operate as pilot projects for two years and be reviewed by EPC and re-submitted for faculty approval as permanent conversions at the end of the two year trial period. This has been our practice hitherto but it was never previously codified. It ensures that any unforeseen problems arising from conversions are reported to the faculty for corrective action before they do more widespread harm to the college curriculum. Next EPC will henceforth follow the rule of reviewing at least one department conversion before recommending a large department's conversion. What justifies this rule is the tremendous impact conversions by large departments might have the college curriculum as a whole. Applying it means that the committee will not recommend approval of any pilot conversions by large departments until it has reported to the faculty in April or May the preliminary results of pilot conversions in Music. Taken together, these rules permit experimental conversions, then, while simultaneously limiting the pace of experimentation so as to allow for continual faculty oversight.

F) **The Limits of EPC's Strategy and Responsibilities:** Given the complexity of the 4-credit course issue, it is not surprising that, although certain specific concerns and doubts about increasing them are

largely addressed by the above strategy, others are much less so, and still others are not at all. So as to inform the faculty of the variety of their colleagues' concerns, these need to be and briefly rehearsed and responded to by EPC:

1) **Serving Students:** When departments convert they generally teach fewer courses, and even fervent conversion advocates worry about students being deprived of needed courses in converted departments and about burdening other departments with the students a converted department turns away. Provost Cell, for example, states that "I strongly endorse the move to four-credit courses, provided that the change will not cause difficulties for our students getting the courses they need". The same insistence that conversions not shortchange students on needed courses is made by Dean Lutzer, whose policy is that, at least initially, converted departments should expect to have roughly the same number of available seats for students under their new programs as they did under their pre-conversion ones. (To clarify Dean Lutzer's policy further, it will not suffice for converted departments merely to generate the same number of FTE's as they did before their conversions; at least for a time, they must make available approximately the same number of seats.) EPC reports on pilot conversions will discuss any declines in overall departmental enrollments and their probable causes.

2) **Impact on the New Curriculum:** Conceivably conversions may hinder New Curriculum goals. Dean Lutzer has emphasized his concern about this: "...when considering a conversion proposal, should we determine the impact the proposal will have upon implementing the new GER curriculum? For example, if a departmental conversion proposal decreases the number of courses, or number of student places in courses, that are available to fulfill a given GER, would not that conversion have the effect of postponing the new curriculum?" EPC's proposed guidelines for assessing conversion proposals includes the stipulation that the probable impact of such proposals on New Curriculum goals be assessed and reported to the faculty. (See VIII below)

3) **Scheduling:** Combining 2-, 3- and 4-hour courses can obviously create scheduling havoc. In Section VI of this Mid-Year Report EPC has proposed a scheduling guidelines for handling the known scheduling difficulties at least during a transition period. Future EPC reports on pilot conversions will highlight any newly detected scheduling problems and propose remedies.

4) **The Educational Effect of Delinking Contact- and Credit-Hours:** As more 4-credit courses are offered, the number of courses with 4-credits but fewer than 4 contact hours is likely to increase. How this increase in delinkage will affect overall educational excellence at the College is plainly a matter of legitimate faculty concern. In Section V of this Mid-Year report EPC has proposed criteria for evaluating the acceptability of such courses which it considers sufficiently stringent. Provided the faculty approves them, EPC will employ these criteria to evaluate any such courses in pilot conversions both as they were initially proposed and as they are after the two year trial period, and relay its findings to the faculty in its pilot conversion reports.

5) **Expanding Concentration Requirements and Reconsidering the 48 Hour Rule?:** Concern has been expressed about increases in the number of hours required in the concentration as a result of conversions. The Dean's Advisory Council correctly pointed out that the two departments undergoing conversions have increased the hours required in the concentration. (Both Music and Art and Art History moved from requiring 36 hrs to requiring 40 hrs in converting.) This too is a matter for serious faculty reflection, and also one which individual EPC reports on conversions will address only minimally. But it is important to realize that it is a serious issue regardless of whether conversions become common. At present only the 48 Hour Rule limits the number of hours required in the concentration, and several unconverted departments already require the same or nearly the same number of hours in their concentrations as do Music and Art and Art History. Possibly it is desirable to lower the 48 hour ceiling, or to keep that ceiling on the number of hours students may take in their concentrations but set a different ceiling on the number of hours departments may require in their concentrations. Deciding this fairly and soundly, however, would involve carefully reviewing the rationales for the programs of all departments requiring, say, approximately 38 hours in their concentrations, whether or not they are 'converted'. In its discussions last year EPC acknowledged that this is a necessary task. In light of our burdens this year, it is also one we gleefully pass on to our successors.

6) **Diminishing Student Electives:** As the previous concern already underscores, many faculty are concerned about the impact of increasing 4-credit courses on student electives. Generally, the more 4-credit courses students take, the fewer courses they take. More department conversions, more 4-credit Freshman Seminars, and more 4-credit GER courses, all add up to a decline in electives and possibly a general diminution in the breadth of students' education.

In response to this concern several points could be made besides those contained in the aforementioned "Everybody Benefits" rationale: 1) GER's will be almost certainly be a combination of 3- and 4- credit courses, with a large portion of them 3-credit; 2) One course may satisfy two GER's as well as a concentration requirement; 3) The Freshman Seminars, although required under the New Curriculum, are virtually electives since students are allowed to take them in any department or program; and 4) Taking fewer 3-credit courses does not necessarily mean a reduction in breadth, because each 4 credit may cover a broader range of material and 4 credit-courses might be supplemented with a variety of 2-credit courses.

However, increasing 4-credit courses will inevitably effect an overall reduction in electives. Whether on balance students will be harmed educationally as a result is impossible to tell at this time. We do not know the specific criteria for satisfying each GER, how many GER's will do double duty in meeting multiple requirements, the amount of breadth in future 4-credit courses or the number of 2-credit courses that will be created, how AP credit will affect the number and variety of courses students will take, etc. For now concern about diminishing electives can only help guide assessments of changes in the college curriculum as they unfold.

7) **Everybody Benefits only if Everybody Converts?:** Universal conversion at William and Mary seems remote. For the foreseeable future only a small percentage of departments is likely to have predominantly 4-credit courses, and accordingly for now the college system will be a hybrid of converted and unconverted departments rather than a pure-bred of either type. How sound is the everybody benefits rationale applied to such a hybrid system of 'piecemeal' conversion? It has been argued that, although teaching loads will perhaps be reduced in the converted departments, students generally will not enjoy an educational gain and in some cases might actually be saddled with heavier course loads as they continue to take five courses only now with more of them requiring four credits worth of work. This is so even allowing that concentrators in converted departments may have smaller overall course loads and an opportunity for more focused study.

This argument reminds us of the fallacy of assuming that a hybrid system will necessarily have whatever advantages ensue from universal conversion. But it ignores two considerations: First, the college curriculum is already 'piecemeal' in the sense that students commonly take a mix of 3- and 4-credit courses now, especially with the increase in Honors courses and freshman seminars over the past years. Second, outlawing 'piecemeal' conversion on the grounds that some students might suffer disadvantages would preclude all possibility of experimentation with conversions to see their overall educational effects in actual practice. The faculty cannot coherently both consent to individual department conversion experiments and decry 'piecemeal' conversion. All in all, risking limited experimentation on a pilot program basis with faculty oversight seems wisest the course.

8) **Fewer Faculty for Honors and Experimental Courses?:** If department conversions result in reduced teaching loads, might not a side-effect be significantly reduced availability of faculty for participation in the Honors and Interdisciplinary courses sponsored by the Charles Center? EPC can partially answer this question by pointing out that the Dean allows departments with freshman seminars obligations to satisfy those obligations in Honors and Interdisciplinary freshman seminars; those obligations will not decrease in converted departments. EPC does not know the full answer, however. We note that this concern has been expressed by both faculty members and the Provost, and announce that the committee will report to the faculty any observable impact department conversions have on college programs like the Charles Center's.

9) **Second-Class Citizenship for the Unconverted?:** Fear about the effects of widespread conversions on departments wishing to remain unconverted 3-credit departments has also been voiced. Might not the unconverted be forced to convert 'for defensive reasons'? Presumably this fear stems from the belief that students will favor 4- over 3-credit courses because the former give more credit for the course. This may or may not be true. Students, after all, must work harder in 4-credit courses and they usually choose courses primarily on the basis of content, not merely on the amount of credit. Here again, though, it is impossible to know in advance exactly what will happen when and if several large departments convert. All EPC can do at present is indicate the uncertainties involved and remind the faculty both of the rules for limiting conversion experimentation described above, and of the fact that periodic assessment is built into the New Curriculum motion so that presumably periodic checking of the 'coercive' effects of conversions on 3-credit departments could be an element of the ongoing assessment process.

10) **Questionable Motives?:** While the motives for wanting to increase 4-credit courses have been questioned, EPC does not allow speculations about motives to influence its deliberations on course proposals.

It concentrates solely on justifications. If a proposed change will enhance an educational program, or at least preserve its present quality, EPC will recommend its approval. So long as proposals are justifiable in these terms the motives of their authors are irrelevant.

11) Inequities in Teaching Loads?: Finally, because conversions usually mean switching from 3/3 teaching loads to 2/2 or at least 2/3 teaching loads, concern has arisen about the converted being favored with unfairly light teaching duties. Faculty teaching loads already vary greatly under the present system and of course faculty concern about this has preceded any worries about the possibility of numerous conversions. At most, then, worries about that possibility will exacerbate the pre-existing indignation of those perceiving an inequity. From EPC's vantage point, what needs emphasis is that this is a concern which falls outside its special responsibilities. We do not now reject conversion proposals on the grounds that, for instance, they would make some departments' teaching duties lighter than others; nor do we recommend this becoming an EPC practice. Nevertheless, like all college committees and individual faculty members we recognize the legitimacy of the concern for teaching-load equity and would willingly join in a faculty discussion of it.

G) An EPC Recommendation: Departments seriously considering conversions should have their chairs meet with the Dean and the EPC Chair to become better acquainted with the specific policies and issues involved.

H) Proposed EPC Motion on Department Conversion Experiments as a Topic for Faculty Comment and Advice: We invite faculty comment on the guidelines below approving department conversion pilot projects. If time constraints prohibit your commenting at the February Faculty Meeting, please send a memo to Mark Fowler (Philosophy Department).

1. No large- and full-scale conversions will be approved by EPC until it has reviewed the entire department proposal, including a sufficiently detailed review of every course in the department. 2. For the present, all large- and full-scale conversion proposals will be initially approved only on a two year trial basis. 3. EPC will assess experimental conversion proposals and bring its assessment before the faculty before the experiments may proceed; this assessment will include an appraisal of the probable impact of implementing such proposals on New Curriculum goals. 4. While conversion experiments are underway, EPC will report annually on each of them to the faculty, and in its second or final faculty report will make a recommendation as to whether the experimental department conversion should become permanent, at which time the faculty will vote on that question. 5. EPC will recommend no additional experimental conversions until the faculty has heard its report on the first experimental conversion in the Music Department.

More Information?: EPC looks upon the foregoing report as a means for equipping the entire faculty for making informed and balanced decisions about some of the major educational policy issues now facing the college. With it everyone should have a clear understanding of the history of, and the diverse perspectives on, the central issues involved. However, there are public documents explicitly and implicitly alluded to in the report, such as the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Faculty and Student Loads, which individual faculty members may wish to peruse for themselves. For information about these contact Mark Fowler, Philosophy Department.