

**Educational Policy Committee
Report to the Faculty
October Faculty Meeting
October 4, 1994**

Outline:

1. Introductory comments/scheduling considerations
2. Progress on major issues
 - A. New curriculum update
 - B. Assessment: freshman seminar assessment discussion item
3. Action Items
 - A. Course Limbo
 - B. "Arts and Sciences elective credits" for transfer students with associate degrees from Virginia community colleges or Richard Bland College.

Appendices: Proposed Freshman Seminar Assessment Questionnaires

- A. Faculty Questionnaire
- B. Student Questionnaire

1. Introductory comments/scheduling considerations

In addition to routine business, the EPC's schedule this year is driven by three major goals: keeping the new curriculum on track; setting up new procedures for the self-assessment program; and evaluating the pilot projects in Music and Art/Art History. The EPC plans to make its report to the faculty on the Music pilot project this fall, and the Art/Art History pilot project in the spring. We intend to follow last year's pattern of bringing each major policy item before the faculty as a discussion item first, followed by a vote at the faculty meeting the following month.

2. Progress on major issues

2A. Keeping the new curriculum on track:

The target for full implementation of the new curriculum is Fall 1996. In the coming months, departments should submit for GER certification as many of their courses as possible, even though we'll be operating under the old curriculum in the 1995-96 academic year. We encourage departments to include both currently offered courses as well as those being developed to satisfy the new GERs. This will help the EPC carry out a realistic estimation of resource needs, which must be done before the new curriculum can be implemented. Because the budget cycle requires the College to put forward its request for resources early in 1995, to get a reasonable estimate of our resource needs we must have GER course requests submitted to the relevant Working Groups by November 15, and earlier if possible. Departments can, of course, begin submitting courses for GER designation at any time. Later in the semester we will also poll departments to estimate how many GER course requests they anticipate submitting in the future.

2B. New assessment procedure:

As part of the new curriculum the College is changing some of its procedures for assessing general education. As one part of assessment, we need to determine how effective the new GER curriculum is in leading students to meet the College's general education goals. We need to evaluate the GER curriculum (not the faculty) with as little demand on faculty and class time as possible, while still collecting the necessary information. The EPC, in its oversight role, is one important consumer of this information. The EPC will continue to work with the Assessment Office on the academic aspects of assessment and will help design the freshman seminar and GER

assessment instruments.

A long-range Assessment Plan that includes freshman seminar and GER assessments is under review and will be brought before the faculty for consideration later this semester. The procedure for assessing freshman seminars, however, is ready for faculty consideration and can serve as a model for what the GER assessment will look like. We introduce this freshman seminar assessment proposal here for faculty discussion and consideration, and will ask for a vote at the November meeting. Faculty approval would allow the questionnaires to be distributed this fall. This initial distribution will be used to improve the questionnaires and the analysis procedure.

Item for discussion:

In summary, we propose the following procedure: Initial implementation of the freshman seminar assessment will include two phases. The first phase will be a pilot study in 1995/96 and the second phase will be the formal freshman seminar assessment in 1997/98, and periodically thereafter. The EPC strongly encourages the faculty to carry out voluntary self-assessment every semester.

1. Two weeks before the semester ends, the student and faculty questionnaires (see appendices) should be filled out. This is to keep curricular assessment separate and distinct from student evaluations of the instructor/course. These completed questionnaires should be treated in a fashion similar to student evaluations (not available for review until after grades are submitted) and will be collected by the Office of Student Assessment. They will be returned to the faculty member after submission of final grades.
2. During the designated assessment period for freshman seminars, a random sample of questionnaires will be analyzed by the Office of Student Assessment. Assessment will also be done the first time an instructor teaches a freshman seminar.
3. Summaries of this analysis will then be forwarded to the EPC, who will forward them to department chairs and the Charles Center.

Comments and suggestions on this proposed procedure are welcome and should be forwarded by October 15 to Gene Tracy (1-3527, tracy@physics.wm.edu). The EPC will ask for a vote on the procedure at the November faculty meeting.

3. Action Items

3A. Course limbo

It has come to the EPC's attention that a significant number of courses (approximately 60) which appear in the catalog have not been offered for at least five years. This raises the issue of truth in advertising. If a course is listed in the catalog, it is reasonable that it should be offered at least once during a student's stay at the college.

EPC makes the following motion:

"Any course which is not offered in a four-year period will be dropped from the catalog. For the following two years, the registrar will designate such courses as inactive. During this period, any inactive course may be reactivated, offered, and listed in the catalog providing that the relevant department chair certifies to the EPC that the course remains substantially the same. Any course that is not offered during

the two-year inactive period cannot be offered subsequently until it is re-approved as a new course by the EPC."

3B. "Arts and Sciences elective credit" for transfer students with associate degrees in a baccalaureate-oriented program

A new state policy mandates that students who transfer to any Virginia Senior Institution (including William and Mary) from Virginia community colleges or Richard Bland College with an Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Sciences (A.S.), or Associate of Arts and Sciences (A.A.&S.) degree in a baccalaureate-oriented program must be granted junior status (which at William and Mary is 54 credits) upon matriculation. Such students will be considered to have met all general education requirements except for foreign language and our sequence requirements.

We currently award transfer credit in one of the following two ways. We grant equivalent credit for those courses taken elsewhere that are comparable to a course offered for academic credit at William and Mary, and in which the student has received a grade of at least C. Courses given equivalent credit may be used to satisfy the proficiency, area-sequence, minor, or concentration requirements. We grant elective credit for those courses taken elsewhere that are not similar to an existing course, but are recommended for credit by an existing academic program or department, and in which the student has received a grade of at least C. Courses given elective credit in a department or program may not be used to satisfy foreign language, area-sequence, minor, or concentration requirements.

For a few of the students admitted with associate degrees from Virginia community colleges, the number of credits awarded under our current system was not sufficient to grant them junior status (which we are required to do).

This leads to a proposed new category of transfer credits, called "Arts and Sciences elective credit". These would apply only to a transfer student who has an A.A., A.S., or A.A.&S. degree in a baccalaureate-oriented program whose previous record at a Virginia community college or Richard Bland College did not generate 54 hours of equivalent and elective credit. The A&S elective credits may not count towards foreign language, sequence, minor, or concentration requirements. And unlike equivalent or elective credits, the A&S elective credit would award credit for courses that are not similar to those that we offer, those that are not recommended for credit by an existing academic program or department, or those in which a grade of "D" had been earned, providing those courses are necessary to reach to required total of 54 credits.

EPC makes the following motion:

"Students transferring with A.A., A.S. or A.A.&S. degrees in baccalaureate-oriented programs from Virginia community colleges or Richard Bland College who are awarded less than 54 elective and equivalent transfer credits shall be granted sufficient Arts and Sciences elective credits to raise their total transfer credits to 54. These Arts and Sciences elective credits will be granted only to students transferring from Virginia community colleges and Richard Bland, and they will not count towards the fulfillment of foreign language, sequence, minor, or concentration requirements."