

Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Tuesday, April 9, 2013, 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Chesapeake A, Sadler Center

Dean Kate Conley called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm.

Attendance at the start of the meeting: 75

I. Minutes of special FAS meeting of March 26 were approved.
<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20130326.pdf>

II. Presentation on EPC revised Domain descriptions.

Kim Wheatley reported the following:

- the EPC working group revised the descriptions of Domains 2 and 3 in accord with the faculty discussion of April 02, and those revisions were approved by the EPC just before today's meeting.
- at last Friday's meeting (April 5), the EPC approved the revisions of COLL 300. These revisions have been posted to the Curriculum Review BB site.
- at the next Friday meeting of the EPC, the committee plan to turn to the revised language submitted by the COLL 400 working group (in addition, of course, to their regular committee work of approving new courses, etc.: 72 this time!).
- the EPC still hope/expect to approve the revised language of the Additional Departmental Credits/Proficiencies working group by the April 30 meeting
- the EPC still hope that the entire proposal will be available by that April 30 meeting.
- a reminder to circulate substantial amendments before hand.
- whereas Robert's Rules of Order may allow documents to be sent back to committee, discussing and amending these documents at faculty meetings allows for more faculty to participate.
- the revised language of Domains 2 and 3 represent no radical revision or rethinking of the Domains, but merely some adjusted language.

Arthur Knight (American Studies, English): calls the question.

Discussion:

- George Rublein (Mathematics): still unclear if it is the intent of the EPC that courses in NQR be owned by science departments.
- Mark Sher (Physics): some courses taught by philosophy professors fit under this domain (NQR).
- Bob Archibald (Economics): point of order. What about the amendment?
- Arthur Knight (American Studies, English): moves to accept these amendments to the wording of the EPC domain descriptions.
- the motion passes.

III: New Amendment by substitution:

- Matthew Haug (philosophy): moves to amend by substitution a framework that divides the current three Domains into two sub-domains each. First, he thanked the members of

the Educational Policy Committee and working groups for their many months of hard and thoughtful work on the curriculum review, and also colleagues in several other departments for their very helpful comments and suggestions as he worked on putting together this amendment and its rationale. He explained that his amendment adopts much of the existing proposed language for the domains in descriptions of the subdomains. His proposal seeks to increase the breadth of the curriculum without increasing the number of credits required, as reflected in principles 3 (critical and creative thinking, etc.) and 4 (methodologies and epistemologies of the various academic disciplines), already provisionally approved. He shared an anecdote walking past a student-led tour group a few days ago: “W&M is a liberal arts university, because of that students take a range of courses in all sorts of stuff.” As many have pointed out in previous meetings, the curriculum proposed by EPC makes it much less likely that this would continue to be the case. Under the curriculum proposed by EPC, although having many strengths, it is less likely that this sort of breadth will continue in the future. This amendment is also intended to address concerns about the places of certain areas of study in the Domains.

- Three further points about breadth:
- (1) The goal of a liberal arts education, according to the Provost’s 2012 memo, is to “educate students with an eye towards citizenship in the 21st century.” Surely it is not a good idea to graduate students who have not taken courses in all areas. As it stands, the areas are narrow. It is more likely that students, with greater exposure, will discover or stumble upon new areas of interest, new talents, and make these interdisciplinary connections for themselves within a more established, formal framework.
- (2) Requiring students to take a wide variety of courses makes it more likely that they will stumble upon a talent or area of interest that they never suspected they had, and it makes it more likely that students will discover unexpected connections with, and applications to, their known talents and areas of interest.
- (3) The goal of breadth is already expressed in what was called the “rounding out the liberal arts” in the CRSC’s year end report and is now called the “additional departmental credits in the knowledge domains” requirement. If adopted, this amendment would establish a framework for these additional courses to come from *different subdomains (not necessarily different departments) than those in which a student’s COLL 200 course was taking*). This would encourage *our students to be genuinely well-rounded individuals, with both exposure to a wide variety of intellectual fields and some insight into how those fields overlap with, and productively interact, with others Domains*.
- Leisa Meyer (History): speaks in opposition of the proposal. The Domains are about courses, not departments and programs, and this continues to be a sticking point. There seems to be some misunderstanding about what the Domains are. This curriculum is about students, but also about faculty, this means that we’ll have to do some new work. We can’t plug in somewhere the courses we’ve taught for the past 20 years. We’ll have to create new classes, to actually talk to each other about the cross-disciplinary connections, to think about what the Liberal Arts mean, to create new courses for students and for ourselves. And that’s exciting. She is befuddled by the interpretation of the Domains as narrow. They are incredibly broad in terms of possibilities, and there are a range of ways to offer courses that cross departments. For example, looking at gender as an overarching category: history, biology, anthropology, philosophy. There is a whole range of ways to offer courses that cross departments, and then bring students into thinking, not just in a

narrow, traditional way, but in a different way. Students can then learn to think in interdisciplinary and new ways. And this is about breadth. Regarding the diversity discussion of the last meeting, diversity is a key element that needs to be incorporated, and it is frightening to give up a little tiny piece of diversity as in the 4B requirement, because we're not sure what will come. But Diversity is to be covered in a variety of Domains. We are trading one little piece for a whole range of possibilities. The proposed amendment actually takes us back to the previous curriculum.

- Bob Pike (Chemistry): speaks in favor of the bifurcation of the Domains because it forces greater breadth, not necessarily just back into departmental modes. The proposal encourages students to encounter different methodologies in academics (performance/criticism-values; experimental/theoretical) – both approaches are valuable. So students then take up a couple of different areas of what we call the Humanities. This approach helps students understand how we approach problems in a multi-faceted way.
- Mark Sher (Physics): when he first read the proposal, steam came out of his ears because it seemed to undo all the hard work that was done last June culminating in the circulation of a petition (signed by 80 faculty members within six days) to address a serious concern among Natural Science faculty that students could graduate with not a single natural science course. The 'final' EPC version included a Natural Science component in response to that petition. In this proposed amendment, a student could take math/comp sci to fulfill COLL 200, and then only two credits in a course that involves the Natural Sciences. This seems to undermine all the work done last summer, where Natural Sciences could be down to two credits.
- Bob Archibald (Economics): favors the proposal. The Domains were initially based on methodologies, and this was rejected by the science faculty because they did not see their fields represented. Here we have recognition of both methodologies and fields and their combinations, allowing distinctions between methodology and fields to work in a natural way.
- Rachel DiNitto (MLL, Global Studies, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies): The curriculum steering review committee have moved us to a more integrative, creative and interdisciplinary approach. The three Domains, conceptually, encourage us to do interdisciplinary work. This amendment splits us into separate units again. Practically, what if we have a course that covers both parts of a given Domain? Does that count twice, do students still have to take another course in that Domain? with a second round in each (sub)area, these could be filled by AP credit. It seems like we are implying that some that some Domains/approaches/courses are more worthy than others.
- Arthur Knight (American Studies, English): opposes the amendment for reasons already articulated. We should avoid the notion that things naturally divide. We should want to encourage space for robust discussions and to work across fields and methods concerning how we go about producing knowledge. Sometimes it is important to force people to be upset and figure out why, and then to work that through, sometimes even in front of and with our students. This is the gist of the Liberal Arts, having to work across fields and methods, and talk to one another. And rather than say, here are some natural divisions, we should use these COLL 200 courses to say why do we think these divisions are natural? In the rest of the curriculum, rounding out the Liberal Arts where more specialized courses are available. This amendment replicates our urges as academics

towards specialization and fields of expertise rather than experimentation and intellectual adventure. This is what the Liberal Arts core should be about.

- Matthew Haug (philosophy): COLL 200 courses are still to come from the three Domains, and allows for inclusivity. It is the intent to keep the interdisciplinary spirit of the COLL 200 and the other components intact. The proposal is meant to round out the Liberal Arts experience successfully.
- Paul Manna (Government): Does this take us back? COLL 200 are not the only new courses in the proposed curriculum. If some COLL 200 veer a little bit away from interdisciplinarity, it will not be the entirety of a student's experience. Matt's proposal does not undermine the principles we agreed to. We value disciplinary knowledge and interdisciplinary approaches, according to the principles we adopted. With the GER system, students are forced into a lot of different departments (a strength). Matt splits the difference between a completely interdisciplinary approach and being grounded in a bit more disciplinary way. The proposal preserves the integrity of the principles. Those who are most vocal on interdisciplinary approaches are not reading the rest of the principles, or the rest of the documents that sit behind this entire discussion.
- Brian Hulse (Music): uses the example of his eleven year old who is learning geometry and calculus online on his iPad. We have different students coming up, who already have an articulation of the hierarchical model of dividing things up. What we should want to do for our students (and Brian's son) is to show or try to find ways in which things connect underneath these divisions. Including more striations prohibits the faculty from being more creative in coming up with new ways of thinking. Liberal Arts is not something that just happened, and is now fixed, is dead, it continues to happen in context with a lot of sedentary, institutionalized modes. The concept of the Liberal Arts is itself evolving, and we need to evolve with it.
- Josh Gert (Philosophy): tries to clarify misunderstandings especially regarding subdomains. There are exactly the same three Domains, but they are subdivided in such a way that students will be required to take at least one course from each subdomain. This proposal cannot possibly change whether students are required to take something in the Natural Sciences, for example. Every course that could in the original proposal have counted as fulfilling the requirements of a Domain, now still counts. There is no new introduction of courses counting as the last subdomain. There is no change. This proposal takes the EPC document and enforces a certain amount of breadth in what students take in each Domain. There is no reason not to allow courses that meet criteria of several subdomains to count thusly, as long as they really do meet the criteria of the subdomains. This proposal keeps the same Domains. There was also a concern about faculty interaction, this proposal keeps the same three Domains. All it does is to require students to take classes in each subdomain so students cannot graduate from W&M without any history at all, or any sociology at all, or other major areas of knowledge, including the Natural Sciences.
- Greg Hancock (Geology): this may create more breadth but the subdomains still remain loosely defined; we may actually lose diversity in adopting this amendment. A Domain could be fulfilled in a single department and even under a single professor—and this does lend itself to increasing breadth or diversity. We are going in the right direction, but have not gone quite far enough.

- Silvia Tandeciarz (Modern Languages and Literatures): there are different philosophies about how students learn and what they need from us to ensure breadth in a Liberal Arts education. Students don't learn simply because they are made to check a box, which is what she sees the current GER system doing, and the shortcuts of that system. If we were to accept the subdivision of these Domains, it would perhaps force us to micromanage the way our students go through our curriculum, and make sure they've checked the appropriate boxes, as if that was some kind of guarantee that they would be achieving breadth in their education. Given our past experience with GERs, that approach does not work. Why these criteria for subdivisions (e.g. performance and criticism)? Are these really the natural subdivisions that we've come to accept? What about other criteria? Historical depth, diversity, for example? Does this not replicate the state of higher education in the past, and don't we want to move forward, rather than take a step back?
- John Riofrio (Modern Languages and Literatures): would it not be wonderful if Brian's son – this new kind of learner – could come here on a tuition discount (agreement from the faculty). For a relatively new faculty member, this process has been incredibly frustrating, painful, and even a privilege to observe. This provides an opportunity to really think about teaching, in ways that we usually get to in our day to day business. He expresses appreciation to the curriculum review committee and to Matt for insightful dialogue. Yet these proposed subdomains are very traditional divisions. He agrees with those who would oppose the amendment in part because these EPC Domains seem to be asking us as Professors to think beyond our state of comfort. Work has already been done by scholars in the Humanities to cross these fields, to design classes to bridge distinct subdomains. There is work being done, i.e., on wage and equality that greatly inform the kind of work he does on a cultural basis. And it is his intention to do the hard work to design courses to bridge these distinct subdomains. This is an opportunity to rethink classes, and to work through subjects by integrating knowledge.
- Barbette Spaeth (Classical Studies): the current discussion seems to focus on courses we currently have and how they can fit into the new curriculum. What new courses could we create to bridge the Domains? Humanities and the Social Sciences, or Classical Studies and Anthropology. My original understanding of COLL 200 is that those courses are supposed to be interdisciplinary. Now we seem to be backing off; some of the old courses could count. What COLL 200 should be about creating new courses that bridge these interdisciplinary Domains.
- Elizabeth Radcliffe (Philosophy): to Leisa's comment, under Matt's proposal, it is still possible to design such courses as women in gender studies from different perspectives. If a course fits two subdomains, then it would fill both requirements. This proposed amendment addresses the concern that the proposal lacks breadth, but it preserves the three Domains as proposed, adding subdomains to suggest what students might consider next.
- Heather McDonald (Geology): there seem to be a difference in what we are thinking of as the Liberal Arts. Part of the Liberal Arts is breadth, but also the serendipitous discovery of areas of study that a student might not otherwise take. This requires creativity in the classroom, e.g., teaching to students who take geology because they know they don't want to take chemistry or physics and don't really know what geology is. Teaching such courses to students who are not particularly interested in the topic requires creativity, and this can be a lot of fun. Breadth is valuable, and we should promote student experience

that results a breadth of experiences in many different ways, across fields of interdisciplinary studies.

- Sarah Stafford (Economics): supporting the amendment. This proposal does not change COLL 200. It gives structure to those additional departmental requirements. What is missing from the proposal, whereas it does a wonderful job of integrating the college curriculum across the four years, what it doesn't address, is breadth – the hallmark of a Liberal Arts education. The philosophy behind the combined program with St Andrews is to meld the breadth of W&M experience with the depth of the St Andrews experience. If we adopt the proposal, we are undermining that breadth. It is important that the students get the breadth allowed for under the amendment. Her step-daughter in the VA public school system is receiving a very focused education, but not a great deal of breadth. What is important is exposure to fundamental ways of thinking and ways of doing.
- Josh Erlich (Physics): this amendment is a compromise between the GER system and the proposed curriculum, providing for breadth at the expense of the possibility of depth. What if a student takes Russian History and doesn't like it, and then goes on to Economics? How is this student served in comparison with a student who takes Russian History, and loves it, and wants to take more? Is the student better served with this forced breadth than opposed to the possibility of a student delving more deeply into a subject area? He also expresses concern over the partitioning of AP credit amongst the subdomains. Students many end up taking courses over a more narrow subset rather than a broader sampling.
- Paul Davies (Philosophy): arguments against the proposed amendment are just as good arguments against the proposal as it now stands. If six subdomains turn students into box checkers, then why wouldn't three lead to box checking? If these six subdomains are arbitrary, then why are the three divisions not arbitrary? Taking this logic to the extreme, seems to be an argument against requiring anything at all, including a major. The kind of breadth required in the six subdomains does not change at all the description of the three Domains, but it just ensures a little bit of breadth within each Domain. This does not propose a radical return to the GERs.
- Gul Ozyegin (Sociology): opposes the proposed amendment. It is a sophisticated but slight revision of the GER system, and it undermines the motivating force behind the Curriculum Proposal. She describes a component of a course that she is teaching on the Muslim diaspora, explaining how material is presented from integrated knowledge, drawing on Spinoza, etc., and expresses how much richer the course might be with expert input from other faculty in related fields. It is important to think about how we are providing breadth and depth, and, echoing Barbette's comments, we seem to be loyal to courses we've already been teaching, but we need to think outside the box in terms of creating new courses.
- Laurie Koloski (History): The terms of the debate seem to me to be too stark. The real issue is not *being in favor of* vs. *being opposed to* "breadth," or whether we're pursuing "interdisciplinary" or "disciplinary" work. I'm very much in favor of breadth, though I'm opposed to the amendment, and I'm in favor of both interdisciplinary and disciplinary work. The real issue is that we have different notions of what we mean by and how we want to pursue "breadth." The new curriculum, as I see it, encourages an exploratory rather than subject-driven or "topical" approach, and that's something that I find very exciting. The proposed amendment seems to push us back to a topical approach.

- Rob Leventhal (Germanic Studies, MLL): speaks in support of the proposal. Lacking from the original proposal is a certain sense of the *universitas* of what we do. We are doing our students a great disservice if we deny the disciplinary-based aspects of research, teaching. This proposed amendment is a supplementary, synthetic extension of what we have already done, a complement to what is already proposed.
- Berhanu Abegaz (Economics): speaks in support of the proposal and against the big, broader, more “flexible” categories, which will have the effect of producing a narrow education, as students gravitate to the familiar. Disciplinary knowledge presupposes interdisciplinarity. One is a complement of the other. Matt’s proposal enables students to get more out of COLL 200, this is a happy medium between the GER system and the Proposed Curriculum.
- Deborah Morse (English): speaks to the interdisciplinarity of her field (Victorian studies), a time when biologists wrote art criticism, artists wrote on ethics. The proposed curriculum inspired her current new course on Representations of Rural England, cross-listed with Environmental Studies and Cultural and Literary Studies. Students think as literary critics, philosophers, historians, activists (privatization of land), etc. This proposal stands as a vulcanization of what was originally done in the New Curriculum. There seems to be a non-belief that students can transgress different ways of thinking. I think they can, and they have a better chance of doing that if we do not subdivide the Domains.
- Sibel Zandi-Sayek (Art and Art History, Global Studies, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies): not convinced that this amendment encourages greater breadth. E.g., the subdivision of performance and criticism. Many courses already cross two Domains (GER 4 and 5). She cannot begin to imagine how to separate those kinds of analytic activities, without destroying entirely the integrity of a course that one might teach. How can art be described without critical examination or interpretive evaluation? The current GER system is not even this restrictive. The proposed curriculum allows for a more integrated approach without fragmentation. How intellectually desirable is it to uncouple something like description and explanation, on the one hand, from interpretation and critical analysis on the other? Is this really the kind of intellectual thinking that we want to impart on our students? What we would lose is far more than we would gain.
- Bill Hutton (Classical Studies): First: There are a lot of ways to construct a General Education Curriculum. One way is to think of all the different topics that you can’t imagine an educated college student being without. If we had a requirement for each of those topics, we’d have far more than six requirements. There was a list with over 21 different topics necessary for a Liberal Arts education. The debate will not be stopped by dividing three into six, the process will go on and on. Secondly: The Curriculum Review Committee looked carefully at the current system regarding the resources (courses, personnel) required to maintain the 7 divisions of the GER system. The Curriculum Review Committee decided that this was not a good way to spend our resources. The resources that are devoted to maintaining the current system could be devoted to strengthening the courses that students do take. This amendment radically alters the framework and principles that we voted on in February. If you prefer this framework, wait until the discussion has been worked out and then vote against the framework we are currently debating.

- Bill Fisher (Anthropology): still on the fence and is alarmed at how easy it is to predict what people will say based on their department affiliations. He would find this less disturbing if the affiliations were sprinkled randomly throughout the sciences and humanities, but, by and large, it seems that faculty in the humanities profess admiration for the current practice of interdisciplinarianism and those in the sciences are concerned with developing specific topics. There must be something deeper going on: a concern over what will be the curriculum will teach. We are trying to make a difficult decision, but we lack the specifics about the sorts of things that might actually be offered. Some conceptual pieces seem to be missing. His *apologia*: a sociological observation without taking a stand.
- Matthew Allar (Theater, Speech, and Dance): detects short term fears and long term goals: first thought the proposed amendment was a good idea. Creative Expression and the Performing Arts (CPA) protects many of the courses currently taught. His sense is that the new curriculum is trying to guard against this. We are (I am) comfortable being siloed, and we are looking for ways to protect what we currently teach; and this speaks against the whole idea of why we'd be excited about the new curriculum in the first place. Supporting this amendment detracts from the potential to support a new and innovative curriculum over the long term.
- Gene Tracy (Physics): this discussion is getting at important and substantive issues, which is a very good thing. He admits to being perhaps the only (one of a very few) Natural Scientist who did not sign the petition of last June, since he does not want to see arbitrary divisions between branches of knowledge (natural and social sciences). This just reinforces a bias that students have when they arrive on campus that humans are not part of nature (laughter). Whereas it might be possible to teach climate science without reference to human impact. You can model climate as a physical system, but how can you teach climate science for our students in the form of a Liberal Arts education, when you are trying to model that human impact the environment at a level that we are now concerned about, that's being able to change the environment itself. We all try to do such things. These artificial boundaries make it more difficult to move flexibly between areas of knowledge, and this undermines the goals of Liberal Arts. Regarding the "magic" of the three Domains: why not two? five? Some of the best Liberal Arts schools across the country have a range of requirements, from practically no curriculum guidelines (Brown, Reed), to rigorous curriculum guidelines (the great books curriculum at St Johns), yet they are all successful in getting their students into the best graduate programs. We need to take ownership of the new curriculum and we need to design it such a way that it reflects our values and what we want to achieve for our students. best philosophy of what the Liberal Arts are. There is a variety of ways to do this. What matters is that you have excellent students taught by excellent faculty. We need to anticipate what's coming down the pipeline, and how our courses can be retooled as COLL 100 or COLL 200. This is all about what we want to be. What we are really talking about is what type of Liberal Arts institution WE want to be.
- Lily Panoussi (Classical Studies): One of the exciting things about the (original) proposal is that the breadth is built-in. It is precisely the spirit of COLL 200 to encourage students who are taking a cosmology class, for example, perhaps how it might be interesting to think about philosophy while taking such a course. This is built into the system: the fact that a student might come into a course on history, but then hear about Roman religion,

which might lead to an interest in the Classics. Economics could inspire work in ethics or religion. Interdisciplinary teaching provides the depth we want for our students. Our perfectly smart students can find these courses on their own in a way that makes sense for them, as opposed to us telling them what they should take. We need to trust the students to do this. Currently they venture off the GER requirements. They already do a lot more than the GERs require, for example in music, certainly in Classical Studies. Some won't, but the vast majority will do this, and we should support them.

- Kitty Preston (Music): this is by far the most interesting conversation that we've had to date. We are talking about ideas, not wordsmithing. She expresses concern that the proposal was distributed only the day before and that we've not had the time to think about it. It proposes a radical change. She moves to continue the conversation at the next meeting and to adjourn.
- the motion was seconded.

The secretary again thanks Steve Otto for compiling the list of faculty who addressed today's special A&S Curriculum Review meeting. She also thanks Trina Garrison for audio recordings, and Professors Gert, Haug, Koloski, Tracy, and Wheatley for sharing written versions of their meeting comments – all of which have contributed to the accuracy of these minutes,

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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<http://www.endbearfarming.org/en/>
<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/986/064/112/vietnam-stop-the-illegal-trade-in-pangolins/?z00m=20540579>
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