

EPC – Minutes
October 30, 2003

Attendance: Carolyn Boggs, John Charles, Cindy Hahamovitch, Evelyn Hall, Phil Kearns, Arthur Knight, Mike Finn, Amy Firestone, John Gibney, Larry Leemis, Laurie McManus, Edward Pratt, Tamara Sonn, Jenny Taylor, Debbie Eck (recorder)

Meeting called to order at 3:30 pm in the University Center James Room.

There will be an extra meeting this month to discuss outstanding issues. Meeting will take place on November 6, 2003 in the University Center, Tidewater Room B from 3:30 pm to 5 pm.

The following courses and curriculum change were voted on or tabled:

GOVT 498: Internship—New Course—Approved

Biochemistry—Add BIOL 440—Curriculum Change Application--Approved

Proposed Chinese Major Curriculum—Tabled

The Committee first discussed the proposal that students in the new College Scholars Program be allowed flexibility in how they fulfill their GER's. Tolly Taylor, co-director of the College Scholars Program, was present at the meeting in order to present the proposal and field questions from EPC members. Professor Taylor argued that allowing the College Scholars flexibility in their GER's would make it much easier to recruit the top students to the program, especially since the college is only able to offer 50 percent of tuition fees. Both Taylor and his co-director, Tamara Sonn, insisted that these students will have strong guidance and mentoring throughout their academic career at the College, and that they would in fact follow the spirit if not the letter of the GER requirements.

The committee was split in its opinion of the flexibility proposal. Some pointed to the unfairness of allowing some students flexibility in GER's while others have to follow the letter of the law. If, for instance, a College Scholar and another student both read in the same tutorial in Oxford, the College Scholar might be able to receive GER credit for said course while the other student would not. As it is now, students may petition the Committee on Degrees to receive GER credit for non-William and Mary courses, but this permission is very rarely granted. On the other hand, other committee members felt that flexibility was a good idea and could be extended to major requirements and residency credits as well. In fact, some EPC members felt that these College Scholars should be allowed complete freedom to pursue their intellectual interests.

In the end, the proposal was amended to: allow the College Scholars flexibility in their GER requirements for a trial period of two years. After those two years, the EPC would revisit the issue.

The vote was a tie (5 in favor, 5 opposed, one abstention). It was next moved, and passed, to bring the same issue to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for deliberation and a vote at its November meeting.

The working group assessment report for GER 2, the Natural Sciences, was discussed next. The main issue of contention concerns the extent to which GER 2 courses should be discipline-specific and the extent to which they should address broader issues, such as historical context. A subcommittee will meet to discuss these issues and bring back revised criteria to EPC for further discussion. The sub-committee will consist of Mike Finn, John Gibney, Amy Firestone, Jenny Taylor, and Edward Pratt.

The following issues were tabled until the next meeting:

DIL (Digital Information Literacy) Project

Proposed Chinese Language Major

Meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.