

EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE
REPORT TO THE FACULTY
DECEMBER FACULTY MEETING
(December 6, 1994)

Outline:

I. Summary of progress on major issues:

- A. New curriculum: GER course proposal evaluations
- B. New assessment procedures for GERs
- C. Evaluation of Pilot Projects

Appendix: Report of the EPC regarding the Music Department's pilot project

I. Summary of progress on major issues

IA. New curriculum: GER course proposal evaluations

The deadline for submission of courses for GER designation this calendar year was November 15. Courses submitted after this deadline will be dealt with as early as possible next year. The relevant working groups, the unsung heroes of the GER review process, will forward their recommendations to the Subcommittee on General Education in mid-December, which will pass on its recommendations to the EPC early in the New Year.

IB. New assessment procedure for GERs

As part of the new curriculum, the College is changing some of its procedures for assessing general education. Last month, at the November meeting, the Faculty approved an assessment procedure for freshman seminars. The assessment of the GERs will be part of a comprehensive long-range Assessment Plan which has been developed by the Office of Assessment, in collaboration with the EPC, the Director of Academic Advising, the Dean's Office, Office of Student Affairs and the Director of the Charles Center. The full assessment plan is now ready for faculty consideration, and will be introduced as a discussion item at this meeting by Prof. Gary Kreps, Chair of the Assessment Steering Committee. The EPC fully endorses those aspects of the plan that fall within its purview (i.e. the curricular aspects), and urges the faculty to vote to approve the plan.

IC. Evaluation of Pilot Projects

The pilot projects in Music and Art/Art History are scheduled for evaluation this year. The Art/Art History pilot project will be considered in the Spring. This month's major topic concerns our evaluation and recommendations regarding the disposition of the Music Department pilot project. Copies of the Music Department's report have been circulated to each department. Further copies are available upon request from the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The report (without graphs or figures) is also available on WAMI.

As our evaluation of the Music Department's report proceeded, two points became clear. First, the complete overhaul of a departmental curriculum is a large undertaking with repercussions that are difficult or impossible to predict ahead of time. It is our conviction that the EPC can play a constructive role during this process. And second, two years is not sufficient time to carry out a realistic evaluation. These conclusions have led us to recommend changes in the length of the pilot project period (from two years to four) and in how the EPC carries out its oversight of pilot projects (as we are required to do by Faculty policy). In addition, we have specific recommendations regarding the disposition of the Music pilot project. These recommendations appear at the end of our report (Section VIII, p.9). At this time, we present the report, including the recommendations, for discussion. We will ask the Faculty for a vote to endorse the report, and thereby endorse our recommendations, at the February meeting.

We urge the Faculty to read our report, and the Music Department's report, carefully. Decisions regarding the curriculum are among the most important that we can make as faculty members. It is critical that these decisions be informed and deliberate. Comments should be forwarded, by January 16 to Gene Tracy, Physics Department, 1-3527, tracy@physics.wm.edu, or Mark Fowler, Philosophy Department, 1-2725, mcfowl@mail.wm.edu.

Respectfully submitted,

The Educational Policy Committee