

Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Tuesday, May 08, 2013, 12:00 – 2:00 pm
Commonwealth Auditorium, Sadler Center

Dean Kate Conley called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm.

Attendance at the start of the meeting: 45.

I. Opening remarks by Dean Conley

- a welcome and summary of the past year:
 - Curriculum Review Steering Committee pioneered the content of the Curriculum.
 - The EPC, through the working groups, has been vetting and polishing the documents in response to faculty concerns.
 - The Deans are serving as the stewards of the process: listening to faculty and providing the context.
 - The curriculum belongs to the A&S faculty, and our conversations have been strengthening the process and the content as well as our understanding of what the new curriculum means to us in structuring our teaching lives.

II. Review of current status of document on proposed new General Education curriculum.

Kim Wheatley reported the following:

- all the documents approved by EPC are posted on the Curriculum Review BB site.
- thanks to those faculty members (Professors Lockwood, Manna, and Pickering) who have circulated their amendments in advance.
- she looks forward to discussing these amendments either this year or the next (laughter).
- some corrigenda to the April 30 minutes:
 - she had meant to say “Also, since our last faculty of Arts & Sciences meeting, EPC has revised its description of COLL 200 to clarify that COLL 200 courses in the NQR domain will be **grounded** in the natural sciences.”
 - she misspoke regarding how courses would be labeled on a transcript “cross-listing of COLL courses. What was intended was “designation” along the lines of the GERs.
- at the last meeting, we moved from the discussion of the Domains and their descriptions, set aside the issue of using nouns instead of abbreviations, and began our discussion of COLL 100. She hopes that these courses, designed especially for freshmen, would be memorable, that students would be excited to take them and we, the faculty, would be excited to teach them.

III. Continued Discussion of COLL 100

- Joshua Gert (Philosophy): queries if the topics for COLL 100 are to be proposed by the faculty who design them.
- *KW: the idea of overarching themes (a la DaVinci) has been dropped.*
- John Gilmore (Government and Public Policy): although he likes what COLL 100 is trying to achieve, he has deep reservations about the size (25-50 or higher) and the additional demands on the course (writing and additional communication skills), which are likely to be labor intensive. He moves that we reduce the class size of COLL 100 to 25 students.
- the motion is seconded.
- Teresa Longo (Modern Languages and Literatures, Dean for Curriculum Review): given current resources, the larger class size is feasible..
- Bill Cooke (Physics): suggests that a better goal would be to move to a smaller class size, on the assumption that we won't be restricted by current resources.
- John Gilmore (Government): concerned that we'll not find sufficient faculty willing to teach such a complex and important course at so large a size.
- Matthew Allar (Theater Speech and Dance): what happens if faculty don't want to teach these courses? What happens to the curriculum?
- Ron Rapoport (Government): With the freshman seminar system, the last time we asked departments to teach non-departmental courses, 23 new positions were added. He laments that we cannot even replace current vacant positions. With 10 to 20 new positions required to cover these new courses, this kind of proposal will not work without the resources. Having sufficient resources was crucial to selling the idea of the Freshman Seminars when they were introduced.
- *KC: the Provost and the Deans are aware of the need for more/new resources. The Provost has pledged additional resources and is confident that he will be able to identify new/ additional resources for the new curriculum. We already have in hand a gift for first year students, given to the College in installments, and are just now thinking about what we might do with it. This gift is not meant for current needs but is intended for aspirational plans. And a new curriculum that involves new ideas about teaching first year students is indeed aspirational. The Provost also has ideas for Foundation support for the new curriculum.*
- John Riofrio (Modern Languages and Literatures): questions the premise of a dearth of faculty willing to teach COLL 100. This is a buy-in issue. If departments are committed to the concept of the course and what it offers to the students, then the will is there. In our discussions, a number of faculty also seem committed to the new curriculum and probably also to performing the tasks mandated by the new curriculum.
- Sarah Stafford (Economics): respectfully disagrees with her colleague Professor Gilmore. She also questioned the projected size, but suggests that if new resources are found, they should be applied first where most needed (e.g., COLL 400 will be resource intensive as many departments currently do not have capstone experiences). We should not underestimate the role that the large class sizes play in making these work in terms of the model. Some COLL 100 will be larger to allow for team taught courses, and some COLL 100 are meant to be team taught – to discuss

the big ideas from a variety of different disciplines. We cannot afford to have team taught courses with an enrollment cap of 25 students.

- Mark Sher (Physics): agreeing with Ron, COLL 100 represents the addition of 60 to 70 new courses, one for every five faculty members. When the freshman seminars were instituted, we knew that the resources would be coming in. If we reduce the class size to 25, the resources just might not be there.
- John Delos (the department of Old Age/Physics): moves that COLL 100 be removed from the required curriculum. (1) observes that of the entire proposed curriculum, the stated ideas and goals of COLL 100 are by far the most remote from the traditions of universities, and the most out of touch with the common experiences of faculty members. The Curriculum Review Steering Committee (CRSC) and EPC have repeatedly emphasized the desire for students “to think big” in COLL 100, almost as if they have never graded a college paper. By way of illustration, he recounted a story of a student charged with writing a 500 word essay. She chose the topic “the United States”. Her professor worked with her to narrow the scope (Bozeman, the main street, a building front on the main street, the Opera House, “start with the upper left hand brick”). The student then produced a 5,000 word essay. The problem is not getting the students to “think big” but rather to notice the details in front of them and to see with their own eyes (e.g., the dogwoods). Trying to teach students to “think big” will render essays like RNC speeches, full of grandiose phrases but also full of factual errors. The freshman year is a formative experience, and we should not foster misconceptions. (2) The CRSC have also insisted on interdisciplinarity by which many people apparently think “broad and deep”, but at the freshman level is actually synonymous for “narrow and shallow”. To succeed at interdisciplinary work, it is essential to master in depth two or more fields (chemistry and physics and math, and physiology). The goal of such courses is not teach students to uncover “truths” but to instill in students an appreciation for diversity of perceptions and opinions. Some might be pleased, others consider this approach to be intellectual laziness. And we do not serve our students who pay \$150,000 for a college education to learn how to say “whatever” in a large complex sentence. (3) the makeup and trajectory of such courses remains vague. (4) introductory courses have evolved into courses that are already on the largest scale that beginners can master: First year Physics – the fundamental laws that govern the natural world; Introduction to Philosophy – we can’t get bigger than those. As we expand the scope of these introductory courses we sacrifice more in depth than we gain in breadth. (5) Professor Delos moves that COLL 100 be removed from the required curriculum.
- the motion is seconded.
- Will Hausmann (Economics): in support of the substitute motion. COLL 100 is the weakest segment of the proposed curriculum. It is ill-defined and will force students into another class with too many others and that tries to do too much. He is increasingly disturbed about the lack of true attempts to estimate the cost. It is irresponsibility for us simply to be told that there will be resources down the road or for the Provost to say not to worry about it. We cannot do everything, nor can we go through this process without any notion of how much each segment will cost. The

Dean's office has all summer to figure it out. The Dean and Provost should cost it out – every part of the curriculum – so we can make informed trade-offs. Dodging the resource question is irresponsible.

- Paul Manna (Government and Public Policy): suggests that we teach all of the proposed COLL courses on a pilot basis and that we require none of them until we really know which ones work, which ones we want to teach, and how much they will cost.
- Leisa Meyer (History and American Studies): first wants to know what the male faculty member was wearing when he was advising the girl with the strong-lensed glasses. She emphasizes that, whereas some colleagues assert that several (several is three, presumably) of faculty in several departments are enthusiastic, there is a far larger number of enthusiastic faculty than that. She suggests that COLL 100 is critical to the new curriculum which is envisioned as encompassing commonalities across the board, to introduce students to approaches and resources.
- Diane Shakes (Biology): COLL 200 and 400 have a lot more enthusiasm from the faculty. COLL 100 will be a problem for pre-meds in particular, many will need to sample an entry-level course into another major. If they are locked into a Freshman Seminar one semester and COLL 100 the next, it will be challenging as a good percentage of students in their sophomore year have no idea what their major is.
- Bill Cooke (Physics): (1) If we eliminate COLL 100, there will not be much left of general education requirements. There will remain a major and a bunch of choices that students make, but nothing that represents what we might think of as general W&M education. (2) He is tired of hearing people talk/complain about resources. A&S receives one out of every nine dollars that comes into the College. We've been meek for way too long. You tell us what the numbers are and we will grovel. Instead we should be saying that this is supposed to be about education, and we should get the resources to do the education. The resources are coming in here, they're just not being spent in A&S. He makes a call to arms: stop complaining about not having resources. We need to complain that we want the resources: at the Faculty Assembly, at the BoV, everywhere we can, because one dollar out of nine is not enough to run A&S. (applause).
- Paul Manna (Government): yes we are shortchanged, but what do we say when they come back to you and say "how much does that cost?" or "why is that better than doubling the freshman seminar requirement"?
- Bill Cooke (Physics): instead of them saying "how much does it cost?" we need to say "how much it requires to get an education." The ENG per student is about the same as the in-state tuition before it goes up next year. All the rest goes elsewhere. It's time we say that has to stop.
- Ron Rapoport (Government): Where does the rest of this money go?
- *KC: clearly it costs more to run A&S than we are given, otherwise we wouldn't be in deficit mode. We make do with what we are given. Monies go to support the University as a whole. How and where, I cannot tell you. At the last BoV meeting, there was a ppt presentation giving the most complete accounting of how our budget works that I've seen so far. My job is to lobby for more money, but I do not attend those budget meetings.*

- Bob Scholnick (English and American Studies): the descriptions of the proposed DaVinci course doesn't make much sense to me. We should not commit our resources until we know that the courses will work. Regarding the question of interdisciplinary work, our students are ahead of us. They know what they need to get an education that makes sense to them, and they are able to do it by putting together courses in various fields. E.g. Public Health Minor, students on their own take and integrate courses in biology, the social dimensions of health, and the history of health, and they then use that information in their volunteer programs and research. We should support those efforts. If I were applying for my job today with the same understanding of the discipline that I had back in the day, I would be locked out. English has transformed, absorbing new fields: sociology, women studies. A Rip van Winkle coming of age in any of our fields today after 20-30-40 years would say, "where am I?" Disciplines themselves are transforming day in and day out, and they absorb new kinds of knowledge. We do not need to impose artificially a kind of knowledge on our students.
- Laurie Koloski (History): finds it odd that we are engaging in a substantive debate on what resources are/are not available before we come to any real conclusion on what we are trying to do. We should vote on/decide on a curriculum first, and then we can have serious and substantive discussions about the resource implications. On not understanding what courses are about, I don't know what most Physics course are about (perhaps because I skipped it in HS), but I don't have trouble envisioning an interdisciplinary course on DaVinci (though I would not teach it). At the last meeting (April 30), I described several courses at Stanford that might work very well in our context: (see <https://explorecourses.stanford.edu/search?q=THINK&view=catalog&page=0&academicYear=&filter-term-Autumn=on&filter-term-Winter=on&filter-term-Spring=on&collapse=&filter-coursestatus-Active=on&filter-catalognumber-THINK=on>). E.g., sustainability and collapse, taught by faculty in comparative literature and Geophysics, exploring what people in different places and times have envisioned as successful ways of living with nature and how such ways of life have come under pressure. One can approach that course in many different ways: as a scholar of literature, as a scientist, historian, philosopher. There is plenty of room in COLL 100 for us to do what we are good at and to inspire and get our students excited in the process.
- Deborah Morse (English): speaking against the amendment. The best essays, instead of looking at one brick, are elicited by broaching the large questions. In my interdisciplinary course on Rural England, I posed some very broad questions and am getting some brilliant answers: Who will inherit England? (interdisciplinary approach); describe the imperial colonial impulse as figured in these novels.
- KW: *COLL 100 is not required to be interdisciplinary, nor did the EPC prescribe that COLL 100 be taught within or across departments. We also did not say that it must be team taught, only that it **may** be team taught. The language simply allows for the possibility. Big ideas can be studied through small examples. The idea of the curriculum is to give students a common experience across the four years, and some classes will be taken at certain times within their tenure here. Now students take their*

GERs a.s.a.p. "to get them out of the way" early on. The proposed curriculum is perceived as building across the four years, and this reflects a trend at other Liberal Arts institutions.

- Lu Ann Homza (History, Dean for Educational Policy): calls the question.
- the voice vote to close discussion is close and so a hand vote is called for (where's Arthur [Knight], our hand counter?)
- discussion is closed.
- Will Hausmann (Economics): requests a paper ballot.
- John Delos' motion to remove COLL 100 from the **required** curriculum is rejected: 48 to 22.
- John Gilmore (Government): repeats his motion regarding limiting the class size of COLL 100 to 25 students (unless team-taught – "not what I said before", a friendly amendment to his own amendment).
- George Rublein (Mathematics): opposes the amendment, and notes that Professors Wheatley and Delos surprisingly agree. COLL 100 does not have to be interdisciplinary, as long as it probes into deep ideas, and Professor Delos has just explained that Physics 101 does precisely this. Professor Rublein suggests that many courses already on the books fulfill COLL 100 (by addressing "big questions") and so they obviate the class size problem: e.g., PHYSICS 101 is about "big ideas" but enrolls 8,000 students because everyone takes it – a narrow course that probes into important ideas.
- Lily Panoussi (Classics): the motion under consideration does not even concern what we are voting on, but just "additional information".
- John Gilmore (Government): the intention is to move the clause from additional information to the course description.
- Barbetta Spaeth (Classical Studies): suggests that we focus on the pedagogical soundness of COLL 100 rather than the resource question. If the faculty feel that it is problematic (from a pedagogical standpoint) to bundle the communication aspect in COLL 100 because it is so large, then we should limit the course to 25 and demand that the administration find the resources to support our decision. The duty of the faculty is to determine what is pedagogically sound. The duty of the administration is to find the resources to make it work.
- *KW: The description of COLL 100 does seem to leave the door open for PHYSICS 101 to count as COLL 100. But COLL 100 is envisaged as a course designed for non-majors.*
- Gina Hoatson (Physics): we do provide Physics courses that fulfill the spirit of COLL 100 (Physics 101 is not one of them, it is not sufficiently general): Astronomy for non-majors, Great Ideas in Physics (for non-majors); How things work (including a lab for non-majors).
- Josh Erlich (Physics): Physics 101 does not satisfy the communication goals of COLL 100, it might satisfy some of the pedagogical goals but not all of them. Great Ideas in Physics – the subject matter might make for an appropriate basis of a wonderful COLL 100. To reiterate: interdisciplinarity is not the focus/requirement of COLL 100 nor of the curriculum in general. The curriculum makes a conscious effort to allow for interdisciplinarity, but does not **mandate** any interdisciplinarity. The question of resources is a catch 22, or better, a "chicken and the egg" analogy. It is a difficult

thing to ask for resources before there is something on which to use those resources. Paul Manna's pilot program is an interesting suggestion. We can discuss this later. Our final vote (next semester, hopefully) will not mark the end of the discussion. Curricula are dynamic by nature, and the purview of the EPC is to make changes as we move forward to adjust for perceived flaws. If COLL 100 seems not to work, then the EPC can bring to this body a motion to eliminate COLL 100 from the curriculum and substitute something in its place. We should understand the curriculum as being dynamic and that should give us more a feeling of flexibility in trying daring new possibilities, experimental new possibilities like COLL 100. COLL 100 satisfies a number of goals including the SCHEV mandated DIL requirement. The world today is very different than when I was a child. An enormous amount of research went into the formation of this curriculum. We interviewed employers, the career center, to ascertain what employers are looking for. And they want, not only writing skills, but also skills in communication, skill at speaking in front of a crowd (something I'm obviously not fantastic at, at least not in front of this crowd).

- Ron Rapoport (Government): in support of the amendment?
- Josh Erlich (Physics): Just making points, neither for nor against.
- Ron Rapoport (Government): In a class of 50 students, what percentage of time can conceivably be spent in covering big ideas and what percentage will be taken up by students talking in class? In a class of 25, then it is possible to cover big ideas and have students engage with communication exercises, and for faculty to take individual time with the each of the students?
- John Oakley (Classical Studies): calls the question.
- seconded.
- John Gilmore's motion to limit COLL 100 to 25 students (unless co-taught) passes (almost unanimously).

IV. **Discussion of COLL 150**

- *KW: reviews the parameters of COLL 150.*
- Rowan Lockwood (Geology, Faculty Director of Academic Advising): proposes that COLL 150 be required of transfer students; be renamed "First Year" or "University" Seminars; be writing-intensive; and include a required orientation to the student support services offered by the Writing Resources Center, Tribe TutorZone, and Swem Library. She suggests that transfer seminars be reinstated, restructured, offered according to two models of seminars (Transfer students only; Freshmen and transfer students), and that their effectiveness be assessed over three years: The results of this assessment would allow us to determine which of these approaches (if either) serves our freshmen and transfer students best.
 - After working closely with transfer students during the past 13 years, I feel strongly that our current curriculum fails to provide the majority of these students with a small seminar-style learning experience in their first year or a writing-intensive course. As a result, many of these students do not develop a close rapport with faculty, they do not engage fully with W&M and continue to identify themselves as transfer students until they graduate, they do not become familiar with the academic support services available to them, and

they do not hone their writing skills, in the same way as W&M freshmen do. In an attempt to solve these problems, W&M instituted a university seminar requirement from 2007-2009, which required transfer students to take a transfer student based seminar. Although these seminars were considered successful by many students and faculty (7 of 8 faculty who taught those courses were strongly in favor of reviving the program, the 8th agreed the courses were good but that they were difficult to teach), others voiced concerns that these courses quickly devolved into "remedial" courses and that they continued to distance transfer students from the rest of the student population. University seminars were discontinued due to budget restrictions.

- Sarah Stafford (Economics): requests clarification that COLL 150 can be waived for transfer students who have already had an equivalent experience. *RL: Yes.*
- Mark Sher (Physics): notes that transfer students think that they are "A" students until they arrive and get hit with the sledge hammer – "transfer shock" (A students are now earning Cs). There are two problems: (1) there are more freshmen than transfer students, and transfer students may feel that the freshman seminar experience is insulting, or demeaning, or remedial, and thus feel even more isolated. The solution may be in offering **some** mixed seminars; (2) there is also the issue of satisfying SCHEV requirements without mixing the question of Domains and Majors.
- *RL: transfer only seminars may be considered remedial and demeaning by transfer students (we agree). Hence the need for the pilot. Regarding SCHEV, SCHEV limits the number of credits we can require of transfer students. If we add COLL 150 to transfer curriculum, then we have to give up something else, be it COLL 200 or COLL 300. We generally admit 210 transfer students every Fall, 90 every Spring (300 total, a fairly significant number). We don't have a transfer curriculum as part of the proposed motions, and we'll need to dedicate serious thought and debate to transfer orientations and curricula.*
- Teresa Longo (Modern Languages and Literatures, Dean for Curriculum Review): this amendment is in accord with the CRSC intentions. We were requiring COLL 200/300 of transfer students to bring them into the community, but that can be done in COLL 150 and that may be a better place for it. The plan is to discuss transfer student issues after the Proficiencies and Departmental Requirements.
- Silvia Tandeciarz (Modern Languages and Literatures): observes that the amendment is well articulated and calls the question.
- seconded.
- Josh Erlich (Physics): asks if the amendment allows for either implementation. *RL: yes, vague enough to allow for both models.*
- the motion to require transfer students to take COLL 150 passes unanimously.
- motion to adjourn.
- seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm.

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 and Jeff Herrick for audio recordings.

Respectfully Submitted,

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<http://www.endbearfarming.org/en/>

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/magazine/who-would-kill-a-monk-seal.html?utm_source=Monk+Seal+Alert+-](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/magazine/who-would-kill-a-monk-seal.html?utm_source=Monk+Seal+Alert+-+May+2013&utm_campaign=MonkSealMay2013&utm_medium=email&r=0)

[+May+2013&utm_campaign=MonkSealMay2013&utm_medium=email&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/magazine/who-would-kill-a-monk-seal.html?utm_source=Monk+Seal+Alert+-+May+2013&utm_campaign=MonkSealMay2013&utm_medium=email&r=0)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/science/earth/algae-bloom-in-florida-kills-record-number-of-manatees.html>