

EPC Minutes 3/23/06

Present: Perry Marker (Chair), Steve Bittner, Sharon Cabaniss, Lynne Morrow, Vincent Richman, Rich Robison, Marci Sanchez, Thaine Stearns, Carmen Works, Elaine Sundberg, Lindsay Simoncic, Art Wormoth, Mary Halavais

Guests: Dr. Sascha Von Meier, FYE Planning Coordinator; Dr. Paul Draper, GE Subcommittee Chair

Announcement: Second reading for FYE Pilot Program Proposal will be held in Schulz 3001 on April 6th.

Corrections to the minutes:

2nd page, Freshman Composition ratio max should be 22:1, not 25:1

1st page, Andy Wallace from Philosophy

Spelling correction: Helmut Wautischer

Minutes approved as amended.

Sascha Von Meier will bring copies of the most recent FYE addendum.

Reports:

Chair of EPC: We must leave the room by 12:45 PM. PM will stop the meeting at 12:45 PM.

Refer to packet materials. All documents are also on the GE web site:

www.sonoma.edu/ge_initiative.

Memo from AW distributed RE: Analysis of Proposed funding for the FYE program

Progress Report from SVM and FYE distributed in the meeting.

1. First Reading of FYE Pilot Program

Chair will keep a speaker's list to hear as many voices as possible. Speakers: Please put your name on a slip of paper and place next to the Chair to be added to the list. Everyone will have a chance to speak before speakers are addressed for a second time. Please identify yourself when you speak for the accuracy of the minutes.

No motions or voting today. Comments from everyone will be considered for the second reading on April 6th.

Opening Statements:

Sascha Von Meier – FYE Pilot Program Faculty Planning Committee Coordinator

Faculty team working on FYE pilot feels that we are ready to go with the pilot for the Fall 06. Interesting developmental process. Both more difficult and better than expected. Students are different than they used to be. Some lack academic preparation and come in with feelings of entitlement. How would we implement a program based on the outline provided by GE Subcommittee? Faculty in the planning process have different approaches and different insecurities about the teaching process. This is the richest discussion of pedagogy with colleagues. SVM feels she will be a better teacher having just gone through the planning process. The syllabus is still a work in progress and demonstrates the thought process and work gone into producing it. (The Pilot) is a heuristic tool for finding something out. We will attempt to assess and evaluate how it works and doesn't work. Some results can't be expected to be seen until the first cohort graduates. Please refer to the accompanying memo regarding the success of the pilot not being fully understood until 2011 for scale-up. Difficult to make decision about

second year with only one semester of data. Believes second year is a good idea. Decide the 2 years now, rather than during the first year. Gives new team an opportunity to work with bugs from the first year. Distinction between pilot and scale-up. Not a slippery slope to scale-up. It is an organic, slower process. Idea came from faculty. Does the process sustain and increase enthusiasm, or not? Good science involves the possibility of being surprised in learning the outcome of the hypothesis. Enter the experiment without fear of failure or fear of success.

Mary Halavais (MH) – Beautiful document, faculty excited about syllabus. Team deserves a round of applause.

Paul Draper - Chair of GE Subcommittee

This is a process that the GE Subcommittee has followed since April 2005. Initially, PD was disappointed by the EPC decision to delay implantation for one year. However, he now supports the process. GE Subcommittee solicited names for participation and coordination in the pilot program planning and teaching team. The committee then made recommendations to the Provost, and the team was formed. Good strong pool of applicants. 10 team members and 2 alternates. Marci Sanchez - SSP added to the planning team to work on the Student Development component. GE subcommittee backed off from planning at that point, as it should have. SVM reported to the GE Subcommittee 3-4 times to update them, and to ask for guidance and clarification when appropriate. Some important questions like Area E inclusion were brought up, and determined not to be included. Overall, a positive reaction to syllabus from the GE Subcommittee. Held two meetings with the Provost about the budget. GE Subcommittee is comfortable with the state of the pilot. They do not recommend proceeding without assessment. Recommend a 2-year pilot. Learning outcomes seem appropriate. Assessment plan can be fully determined after the learning outcomes are established and the syllabus is confirmed. Resources: Accept the transparent budget from Provost's office. Ask that one year from now, the budget is reported with actual revenues and expenses. We still have 5 months before the first meeting of class, and there is more work to be done. PM is optimistic that it'll be a great starting place experience for 150 students, and learning experience for the faculty and the coordinator.

Provost Ochoa

Prof. Von Meier and Prof. Draper have made appropriate comments. Reaffirms that this is a pilot, not a change in our permanent curriculum. This experience is a chance to find out how new ideas will work, and will inform future GE reform. This is not a slippery slope or done deal. This is an active inquiry. We have to test the experiment against some empirical reality.

Discussion:

Dr. VM walks through the syllabus. Removal of the title "First Class". Create academic pressure cooker to encourage the students to want to think for themselves. RE: Course description. Contextualize student development to the academic setting.

First semester: Identity in context of family, children growing up, language, and language to music. How has humankind tried to express itself to another entity, race, gender, cultural identity? What am I as a human being? How do I know what I am as a human being? Perspectives from various disciplines. Create comfort level with written and oral communication. First semester will involve individual presentations to the smaller seminar groups.

Second semester: How can I use the academic background and apply that to the larger world? How do I relate to the world around me? Information and numeral literacy. Self responsibility of processing news articles, statistics. Includes advertising, globalization, and theatrical topics. More international themes. Bring it back to life on campus, life as a first year student, how does that relate to my immediate life? How does that inform my life as a student here? The seminar team of 15 will present to entire 150 student cohort in the second semester.

Themes and activities are cross-referenced to the alpha-numeric learning outcomes (B1), (A2), etc.

Still working out how the writing assignments will connect to the learning outcomes.

Assessment Plan: Team: 2 members of the FYE planning committee, 4 outside members (including one external reviewer to be determined). How well within this course are we achieving what we set out to do? How would we improve it? How is this different from other freshman courses? Assessing critical thinking and writing skills. How do we assess the synergistic outcomes? Will students have a better attitude, and embrace their education. Working with other campuses for instruments. Develop and encourage student involvement, a sense of responsibility and passion for learning. There is a limitation of how many surveys we can give and questions we can ask. SVM feels confident to look at the pilot objectively with representative samples within and outside of FYE. How are they performing and feeling about themselves? Are we seeing earlier major declaration, and higher retention and graduation rates. We intend to use open ended questions and interviews. How does this work for faculty? What is the time investment and what are the rewards received from doing this?

Thaine Stearns (TS): Concerns about the budget for a 2 year pilot. Budget is contingent upon the faculty participating in both years from the Provost's office. Any informal poll about faculty participation in the second year? Get that by second reading if possible. TS will ask English department if there are other faculty members interested in replacing first year team members. Are there articulation agreements for transferring the GE credit? Referred to the ED Policy document 2004. Development of lower division GE has to be accounted for in transfer. Will the GE substitution for A2 and A3 be brought back to English and Philosophy departments for sign-off per the current petition process?

SVM: No decision made about second year involvement. She can ask the faculty at the next planning meeting. More desire to teach than there is ability to work out the logistics. There could be as many people interested for second year unless it bombs. The hope is that a small number of initial team will stay, and open up space to others.

Paul Draper (PD): Response to TS questions. Other campuses teach A3 in different departments. We take Ethnic Studies from different areas from different campuses. We're getting input from English and Philosophy about how to offer writing and critical thinking. The course is not a direct one-to-one correspondence to Engl 101 and Phil 101, and not EMT U102.

Provost: We are asking English and Philosophy to approve the course substitution for A2 and A3. With active participation, real problems should have come up by now.

MH: Provide all supporting documentation, plus sign-offs. Delay 1st reading until other documentation provided.

PM: Absolutely not.

Lindsay Simoncic (LS): Positive response from student reps. Suggested to move campus resource introductions to earlier in the semester.

Art Warmoth (AW): Role of APC - Provides recommendations and perspective, not approval. There will be a hearing in the Social Science Conf. 2011 at APC 8:30-10 AM on 3/30/06. Formal recommendations may come from that meeting. Well thought out syllabus. Investment in experiment is worthwhile. Areas laid out to be addressed in the assessment process look thorough. Let APC review final assessment protocol.

Steve Bittner (SB): What do you intend to do about student attrition? How do you carry that attrition rate over the Spring semester? Budget for 2007-08 looks similar to 2006-07?

SVM: Look at the average attrition rate and over enroll the pilot slightly. 16 students/section or 17 students/section.

Provost: In response to the budget question from SB: Yes similar budget in 2007-08, slightly lower if some of the same faculty are continuing into the second year.

SB: To PD, reading PD's questions from last year's meeting. What do you see EPC doing with the pilot now?

PD: Reattribute those questions to now (they were originally asked when the pilot was to start in Fall 2005), to apply to a year from now. Meant in context of seeing pilot in process.

Audience:

Roger Bell, Philosophy: Philosophy department needs more information. Series of concerns: Difficulties need to be addressed, one faculty member resigned, the other (from Philosophy) felt there needed to be some level of technical language (admits that this is hearsay). Pilot level has some consequences to the Philosophy program. Currently the department offers a ratio of 3:1 GE:Major courses. They are currently replacing two other faculty. Advertising for specialties in major and in teaching interdisciplinary courses like FYE. Tieg Rockwell (sp?) expressed concerns last year about academic freedom – what will the \$70 reader contain, will it be different for each section? Can instructors customize the reader? What is the ease and ability of teaching composition and critical thinking among faculty? Looking at CSU campus requirements for Area G, they are much more technical than he remembered. Concern about that for all faculty. Is it only being addressed in assessment? Is there money for faculty training?

SVM: The syllabus represents the most coherent and unified that the course is going to get. Readings shared only represent one area of sameness. Each instructor is free to introduce other readings and activities. 10 sections can diverge some, dependent upon instructor's choice. To what extent do I want to replace the suggested materials? The two Philosophy instructors have deeply informed the critical thinking learning objectives. We can teach a more thorough offering than the Chancellor's document.

EPC members or Perry Marker can forward questions in writing to appropriate people if they were not able to be on the speaker's list or ran out of time to comment.

Andy Wallace, Philosophy: He has an interdisciplinary background. FYE could be a great program in principle. Faculty decided to offer critical thinking in the Philosophy department. When hired, the department had a much larger faculty. Four faculty have gone on to “better” universities. There are funding implications for the Philosophy department. EPC should think about the future hiring implications. AW was on EPC and GE Subcommittee. Mandatory for sign-offs and EPC to discuss budget implications for GE substitution. Has not come to English and Philosophy for sign-off. Or EPC makes exception in this case for points X, Y, Z. EPC should make decision about needing sign-offs or not. Curriculum issues: Take into account the needs of faculty of having autonomy over critical thinking and writing assignments if this is part of a look at the larger curricular change. Is there a mechanism in place to communicate changes that can occur in the future. Would want to see some changes if deciding to teach the course later. Release time/funding to effect changes if teaching in it.

Dan Karner, Geology: Very exciting curriculum. Title: Global change is an official technical area in physical sciences. Suggests change in title to reflect A2 and A3 appropriateness. Budget: SFR is below what campuses are supposed to sustain. How will that be made up?

Provost: Anything that we manage to scale up should conform to the average.

Margi Percer: This is the first reading. Workload issues: Potential for hidden workload, like service learning courses. Will units be redesigned for faculty over time? Concerned about those that don’t yet have tenure. Assessments are important to track faculty impact. Watch with RTP process. “Slaves” to target enrollment figures. Build into pilot explicit amnesty for departments like English and Philosophy.

Sarah Statler: Student Senator for Arts & Humanities for ASI. Currently the AS representative to the GE Subcommittee. Was not originally in support of the FYE concept. Now feels that this will be an amazing program for SSU. There’s a hole in GE, something is missing. Every student suffers from the wide variety of academic skills in each classroom. People want to hold on, and don’t want to move forward. There’s not a culture of change on this campus (from WASC report). Commends those that have the spirit and enthusiasm to make something work. Maybe this will be a model for the CSU system.

Tim Wandling: Glad to do this again in 07-08. Doesn’t want to hog the experience. Struggled with the tension between getting writing and critical thinking done and maintain academic freedom. Mechanistically, take Tuesdays, make those skill building days. Every other Tuesday, instructors have similar or different reading. Has experience with successful and not successful programs that blend both writing and critical thinking. Look at learning outcomes and replicate those.

Sandra Feldman: Can you address the process for this course? Process is experimental class? Sign-off of department, school curriculum committees, another area. Loves the syllabus.

Myrna Goodman: How will students be selected for the program?

SVM: Students will be informed of this option at SOAR and will self-select. First come, first serve enrollment process. Will have coordinates for control group from the waiting list of students that would have selected this program?

SB: Can we address Sandra Feldman’s question about the process this course will take?

PM: We are not clarifying this process at this meeting today.

Steve Wilson: Displacement of faculty. Will faculty lose their jobs?

PM: We don't know if this will be scaled up.

Sharon Cabaniss: Majors in science encouraged to take Phil 102 – Logic. Not seeing that addressed in U150 syllabus. Not comfortable voting on this without clarifying the procedure.

Please forward comments from the outside to EPC members and Chair.

Adjourned 12:45 PM