

Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the meeting of January 29, 2002

Attending: Professors Boquet, Epstein, Hannafey, A. Hill, McSweeney, Phelan (chair), Rakowitz, Rosivach, Schlichting, Simon; Dean Snyder

Prof. Phelan called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

Approval of minutes:

On Prof. Boquet's motion, the minutes of the meeting of December 12, 2001 were approved as circulated.

Discussion with Prof. L. Newton concerning AE 265 and AE 383

On her own request Prof. L. Newton (Director of the Program in Applied Ethics) was invited to address the Committee in regard to the new course proposals for AE 265 (Ethics in Education and AE 383 (Seminar on the Environment I).

Prof. Newton began by explaining that AE 265 had been created to serve the interests of students who were thinking about careers in education but were not in the Teacher Certification program, which has its own set of state-mandated courses.

Prof. Rosivach pointed out that it was the committee's practice to defer to departmental or programmatic review on matters of a course's content, and that its principal concern was to be sure that that departmental/programmatic review had been carried out properly, most importantly that there had been adequate discussion by a department's faculty or a program's advisory committee at a regularly scheduled meeting. In reply to Prof. Epstein, Prof. Newton said that following the directions which it had received from former Dean Webber, an *ad hoc* curriculum committee was assembled from among faculty teaching in the Program to consider each new proposal. When Prof. Rakowitz noted the difference between the curriculum committee as described by Prof. Newton and the Program's advisory committee listed in the *Catalogue*, Prof. Newton said that all members of the Applied Ethics advisory committee were invited to attend the Program's curriculum committee meeting. Professors Hill, Phelan and others pointed out that it was the Curriculum Committee's practice to look to the advisory committees of programs to review new course proposals. Prof. Newton said this was not the practice in Applied Ethics, and repeated that the Program had been following the directions laid down by former Dean Webber.

Prof. Boquet pointed out that a standing advisory committee provides stability for a program; in particular, in reviewing new course proposals it is the standing advisory committee, which can take the larger view and determine whether a proposed course is consistent with the larger goals of the program. Prof. Newton said that the Applied Ethics program had been conceptualized rather to provide stability in the teaching of ethics across the professional schools by provide such instruction with a common content core and intellectual coherence.

Prof. Rosivach said that in the past new course proposals from Applied Ethics had run into trouble in the Curriculum Committee for two reasons, the problem of who was reviewing new course proposals, and the incompleteness of proposals, including questions on the form not answered and inadequate minutes. Prof. Newton said that if it was what the Curriculum Committee wanted she was prepared to route new course proposals through the Program's standing advisory committee rather than through *ad hoc* curriculum committees, as she had done up till now following former Dean Webber's instructions; she noted, however, the difficulties involved in calling together a meeting of such a large body drawn from across campus. Prof. Hannafey suggested that this problem could be addressed by forming a smaller core group within the advisory group, which would be more directly engaged with the direction of the Program. Prof. Simon wondered about the appropriateness of adjunct faculty on a program's advisory committee. Prof. Rakowitz did not see this as a problem as long as the most of the committee were full-time faculty members. The question was not pursued further. Prof. Phelan, as chair of the Curriculum Committee, directly requested Prof. Newton to have the standing advisory committee rather than *ad hoc* curriculum committees review new course proposals in the future.

Discussing the Ethics in Education course more directly, Professors Boquet and Epstein saw it potentially overlapping courses offered in Education. Prof. Newton answered that the course was addressed to a different constituency, viz. non-Education minors, while Education minors were taken different, state-mandated courses. Prof. Boquet said that this should have been addressed in question 10 of the new course proposal. Prof. Hill added that the Rationale and Procedures for new course proposals stresses the need for those reviewing a proposal to assess the value of the course in terms of a department or program's offerings as a whole. Prof. Epstein asked about coordination with those teaching Education courses; Prof. Newton answered that closer coordination was desirable.

Prof. Hannafey asked whether Prof. Newton thought the reading load in the course might be heavy, a question that he noticed had been raised in the *ad hoc* committee's review. Prof. Newton said that this was the first semester the professor was teaching the course, and she recognized that adjustments would probably have to be made; she added that it had been her own decision to leave the syllabus intact, to be sure that the Curriculum Committee had all the information it needed.

Turning to AE 383 (Seminar on the Environment I), Prof. Simon mentioned to Prof. Newton that the Committee regularly flagged courses where classroom participation counted for such a large percentage of the final grade. Professors Newton and Boquet pointed out that this was a seminar course, and that such a high percentage was appropriate for such a course. Dean Snyder said that particularly under these circumstances we should be especially clear about what is expected of students. Prof. Newton said that Prof. Webber, who taught this course, did this, but she could see how the syllabus could be tidied up on this account. Prof. Phelan noted that when such a large percentage of the final grade depended on classroom discussion, the Committee has in the past pointed out the need for feedback to let the students know how they are doing during the course of the semester. Prof. Newton also explained that the EV cross-listings were in the process of being phased out, and that the course would usually not be taken for core credit, but might in exceptional cases by transfer students. Prof. Phelan thanked Prof. Newton for taking the time to speak with the Committee.

Prof. Epstein said that he still did not understand how Applied Ethics decided what courses it would teach. Prof. Rosivach expressed his opinion that the scope of the Applied Ethics Program probably lies outside the purview of Curriculum Committee, and more properly belonged to the University's Educational Planning Committee, which had had the main faculty role in approving the Program in the first place.

There was a brief discussion on whether a formal motion was needed directing Applied Ethics to have its standing advisory committee review all new course proposals. Prof. Rosivach felt that such a motion was unnecessary since Prof. Newton had indicated her willingness to follow just this procedure. Prof. Hill and Prof. Boquet noted that it was too late in the day to take up such a motion anyhow, and Prof. Rosivach said that we will know whether or not such a motion is necessary when we see the next submission from Applied Ethics; if such a motion is necessary, it should be framed more generally to apply to all programs.

Prof. Rakowitz moved that both courses be returned with the request that they be reviewed by the Program's standing advisory committee, that all of the questions on the form be answered, that the issues raised by the possible overlap with Education be explored, and that the minutes make it clear that the program has consulted with educational professionals in regard to this course. The motion was approved unanimously.

CO 342 (Technoculture and the Information Society)

Prof. Rakowitz moved to approve. Prof. Epstein noted that the "reading responses and class participation" counted for 30% of the grade, and asked if this should be flagged. Prof. Boquet pointed out that the reading responses were in fact short themes. The course was approved unanimously.

CO 235 (Globalization, Communication and Culture)

Prof. Rakowitz moved to approve. Prof. Phelan informed the Committee that Prof. Kidd had written and e-mailed her that she would write a letter of support, but that the letter had not yet arrived. Prof. Rosivach pointed out that the request for a supporting letter for a course

contributing to an interdisciplinary program was part of the new form, which has yet to be approved, and so Prof. Kidd's letter is, in fact, unnecessary. There was also some concern that the discussion of this course in the Department's minutes was more concerned with whether the course had already been approved and not with its merits. Prof. Hill said that given that it was uncertain whether the course had been approved or not, that Prof. Crabtree was new to the faculty this year, and that she was trying to do everything by the book as far as the Committee was concerned, the Committee should cut her some slack on this point.

BI 382 (Principles of Aquaculture Seminar/Lab)

Prof. Rosivach moved to approve. After some jokes about who would get the fish the course was approved unanimously.

BI 95/PH 230 (Philosophy and Biology of Evolutionary Theory)

Prof. Epstein asked about the mechanics of cross-listing. Dean Snyder explained that students would register for the course under one or the other department's listings. Prof. Simon questioned the disparity in numbers (95 vs. 230). Prof. Hill explained that this was the consequence of different numbering schemes in the two departments. In response to another question from Prof. Simon she pointed out that first-year students almost never take core science requirements unless these are part of freshman clusters. Prof. Epstein moved to approve. The course was approved unanimously.

Concluding Business

Prof. Phelan informed the Committee that she had received a request from Prof. Naser for copies of the Committee's minutes to be posted in electronic form on the College's website, and asked if there were any objections to this. There were none.

Prof. Phelan informed the Committee that the revised course approval form will be taken up again at the next meeting of the College faculty (date still uncertain), and asked that as many members of the Committee as possible be at the meeting to answer questions about the form.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Vin Rosivach