MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY

Sept. 21, 2006

Present: D. Boutin, E. Kanipe, S. Major, S. Pellman (Chair), N. Strout, P. Klinkner (ex officio) and J. Urgo (ex officio).

The meeting began at 4:10 p.m.

1. The minutes of Sept. 14 were corrected and approved.

2. The Committee discussed and approved, with revisions, the Chair’s draft of an addendum to the minutes of our meeting of August 29.

3. The Academic Council has requested the CAP report to the faculty at our October meeting. The Committee discussed the content of the Chair’s report.

4. The Committee considered suggestions from Professor Strout and from students that we consider modifications in the College catalogue in order to clarify the structure and work expectations of courses. Such modifications would include noting whether a course was lecture or discussion based, whether it had oral presentations, how many exam and paper, etc. Prof. Strout referred to the catalogue at Williams College, which does include such detailed expectations. The Committee decided that this would be another issue to raise with the “catalogue summit,” planned by C & D.

5. The Committee approved three course changes in the English Department:

   English 310 will be unbracketed for spring 2007
   English 334 will be bracketed for spring 2007
   English 366 will have a new description for spring 2007.

6. The Committee discussed a course proposal from Professor Scott MacDonald, for a spring 2007 course Art History 215/Africana Studies 215: African Americans in Film. The Committee raised some questions about the course, and asked the Chair to talk with Professor MacDonald. We left final approval to the Chair.
7. The Committee returned to our continuing discussion of Sophomore Seminars, and decided to submit a motion to the faculty for the October meeting.

Moved that, effective with the class of 2010, each student will be encouraged, but not required, to take at least one course offered by the Sophomore Program.

The Committee discussed the rationale to accompany the motion, the issue of what happens to resources designated for sophomore seminars, the possibility of First-Year Seminars, and how this motion might influence the future of Proseminars.

8. The Committee discussed an initiative from the Dean to establish two task forces to examine important curricular issues. One group will work on the Oral Communication Program, and the other will focus on the possibilities of First-year Seminars. The Dean will also ask the Quantitative Literacy Committee to consider how that requirement might be remodeled. The Committee made some recommendations for possible members of the three groups. Members of CAP will serve as ex officio members of each group, but the actual research and recommendations will come from the appointed faculty. The CAP will select liaisons to these subcommittees at its next meeting. The three groups are asked to submit their recommendations early in spring term, 2007.

The Committee discussed the quantitative data about enrollment patterns supplied by the Registrar. We were gratified to see how successful the Writing Program is, since 90% of the students appear to take at least 4 writing intensive courses, and thus exceed the requirement. We discussed possibilities for the simplification of various enrollment limits. We discussed the meaning (or, perhaps the lack of meaning) in the proseminar designation, and how we might change it, or reallocate those resources. We discussed in general the importance of small courses, and the various schema to identify, staff, and support them. The Committee decided to return to this issue after the task forces and the Quantitative Literacy Committee have finished their work and submitted recommendations.

9. The Committee discussed a possible change in the Faculty Handbook to specify that the Committee on Academic Policy could not include more than one elected person from any one department.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther Kanipe