MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY

October 12, 2006

Present: D. Boutin, E. Kanipe, S. Major, S. Pellman (Chair), F. Sciacca, N. Strout

The meeting began at 4:10 p.m.

1. The Committee approved the minutes of Sept. 28, 2006.

2. The Committee welcomed Professor Sciacca to the Committee.

3. The Committee approved the appointment of Professor Sciacca as the liaison of CAP to the Oral Communications Program Taskforce.

4. The Committee welcomed Professor Ann Owen, and discussed two issues:
   a. The Committee approved the continuation of Economics 235: Policy, Poverty, and Practice.
   b. The Committee discussed a proposal from the Levitt Center to seek funding to establish a Program on Sustainability; the Program would include both Senior Visiting Scholars, and a new tenure track line in Economics. The Committee endorsed the general idea of the Center. The Committee noted that the new position would be fully donor funded; the Committee requested that, should the funds be raised for the new position, the Chair of the Economics Department visit the Committee to discuss how the new position will fit into the long term structure of the Department. The Committee supports the plan presented by Professor Owen.

5. The Committee welcomed Professor Catherine Phelan for a discussion of the new practice of publicizing information in reference to the Committee’s deliberations and decisions on faculty allocations. She was especially concerned that information relative to her department and grade distributions had been posted without any conversation with persons whom the details concerned, and that she had been surprised to find out about the new practice. The Committee decided that hereafter we will make clear that to all departments and programs that the documents will be available on the internet. The Committee will also urge the Dean to make this fact clear as he communicates with departments and programs.

6. The Committee approved a request from the Psychology Department for a new Course, Psychology 260 Pain.

7. The Committee discussed a proposal from the Environmental Studies Program that two of their courses, Environmental Studies 286 Environmental Justice and
Environmental Studies 2-- Nature and Technology, be made writing intensive and limited to 20 students each. The Committee discussed concerns about making writing intensive courses the work of adjuncts who might not understand the nature of our writing program. We also discussed whether in some cases the writing intensive designation is used as a way to limit courses. We decided that Environmental Studies could simply be granted a one year, one time, option to have both courses limited to 20 students without the writing intensive designation. However, the individual professor or the Program might want to make a course writing intensive. We ask that the Environmental Studies Program return to us before scheduling either course again, and discuss well in advance what they need in terms of limits and in terms of writing intensive courses. Meanwhile, the Committee will also give some thought to what is an appropriate limit(s) for adjuncts.

8. The Committee continued to discuss, separate from the needs of Environmental Studies, the larger issues of the writing program. The Committee decided to request that the Dean appoint a fourth curricular taskforce to consider the Writing Program. The Committee decided to reconsider issues of how we have approved Writing intensive courses, proper forms, etc.

9. The Committee approved a request from the Art Department for a new course, Art 310 Advanced Three Dimensional Studies.

10. The Committee approved a request from Professor Sharon Rivera that, due to special technological pedagogical methods, she be allowed to continue a limit of 30 for her section of Government 112.

11. The Committee discussed a proposal from Professor J. O’Neal that he change the designation of French 373 to a proseminar, and therefore change the enrollment limit from 40 to 16. While sympathetic to Professor O’Neal’s concerns about the necessary writing and speaking assignments for the course, the Committee pointed out that proseminars were created as small classes for first and second year students, and that it makes little sense to designate a proseminar which would be unavailable to almost all underclass students. The Committee recommended that Professor O’Neal call his course a seminar; he can still raise the enrollment limit of the seminar to 16.

12. The Committee discussed the specifics of an online survey to ascertain faculty opinion on the future of sophomore seminars.

13. The Committee appointed Professors Pellman and Sciacca to work with the Biology Department to complete the planning process, begun last year.

The meeting was adjourned at 6: 25.
Respectfully submitted,

Esther S. Kanipe