Committee on Academic Policy
Minutes for November 5, 2015

Attending: Karen Brewer (Chair), Lydia Hamessley, Tara McKee, Steve Orvis, Penny Yee

The meeting convened at 4:20pm

1) Because we did not have a quorum we could not approve the minutes of the 10/29 meeting. We will put approval of those minutes on the agenda for the next meeting, which will be November 19th because the Chair is out of town on November 12th.

2) Karen updated the committee on the discussions among the working group on diversity with regard to thoughts about a course requirement. What seems to be emerging from these discussions is a preference for each Department to formulate some requirement as part of their concentration related to diversity, inclusion, and/or identity (similar to what Departments do for the senior project). The plan is to start talking with Departments about this general idea to get a sense of reactions and thoughts about what that requirement might look like in different areas. Karen and Steve acknowledged that the working group has yet to define what they mean by diversity/inclusion/identity and that will be the focus of future meetings. Lydia talked about the possibility of having a pool of paid student TAs for these courses who could attend classes and facilitate discussions because there is a difference in hearing about these issues from one’s peer than from one’s professor. These positions could be an initiative of the DMC and students could get training as well.

3) Karen asked if anyone could go to the FYC dinner this coming Monday. Penny would like CAP representation to facilitate discussion among the professors in terms of how committed people are to the goals of the FY courses and to articulate what the added value of taking a FYC is for students. She also wanted someone there to listen to the conversation with an eye toward thinking about the assessment that will need to happen in the future, including what metrics should be assessed. Penny talked about ways to enhance the FYC including requiring meetings with reference librarians for research projects and oral communication tutors for oral presentations.

4) The committee discussed a concern raised by Margie Thickstun about first-year students taking 400-level courses. The committee agreed that there are no College rules governing who can take courses at various levels. Departments set general rules about restrictions and individual faculty can always make exceptions to allow students into courses. Karen will respond to Margie about her concerns.

5) The committee discussed what role CAP could have in the Writing Program Director search. We thought that we didn’t need to have a representative on the search committee, but we would be happy to review the job description and provide comments and to meet with the candidates (e.g., a 30-minute slot for coffee) if it would be helpful to the search committee.
6) The committee discussed revisions to the Department Review Guidelines including Karen’s changes to incorporate suggestions from Penny, Pat, and Gordon. The final document will be sent to Penny.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Tara E. McKee