A&S&E Committee on Educational Policy

Following is a summary of the items considered by the Committee on Educational Policy (EPC) during the 2005–2006 academic year.

Change in Committee Domain

Given the effort of the Executive Committee to consolidate committees and pare down the committee structure, the Advising and Counseling Committee was disbanded. EPC voted to incorporate advising into its domain. This change in the bylaws was accepted with an affirmative vote by the full faculty.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

A subgroup of EPC formulated an academic dishonesty policy that requires all faculty members to notify the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs of any instance of dishonesty or any case in which it is deeply suspected. The subcommittee also put together a set of guidelines to advise faculty as they grade students who have violated rules. This policy and guidelines will provide the administration with a more comprehensive list of students who have problems (allowing us to track their behavior more closely). It also will lead to greater consistency in how faculty deal with such issues, making the process fairer and less vulnerable to legal challenges. The policy was passed by the committee and accepted by the full faculty without a vote.

Turn-it-in.com

In tandem with the academic dishonesty policy, the committee also approved the use of Turn-it-in.com, a web-based service that allows faculty members and administrators to identify plagiarism and prohibited student collaboration more easily. The committee, in tandem with the university’s legal counsel, examined several issues relating to the use of this service, including the intellectual property issues, and gave its blessing. The full faculty accepted this decision without a vote.

Online Add/Drop

The committee affirmed a change in the registration process. Students will now be able to add and drop courses via the web. Signatures on forms from advisers and instructors will no longer be necessary before the add/drop deadlines. After those deadlines, the forms will still be required. Registration will now operate with an initial period that allows all students to sign up for their preferred courses. Once this period is over, registration will open up again and remain open until the add/drop deadline. This change will lead to a process that is much more convenient for students and faculty. It also will make waitlists meaningful. The resolution was accepted with an affirmative vote by the full faculty.

Online Evaluations

EPC voted to allow the Registrar's Office to provide quantitative evaluations of courses to the student government to post on the web. Previously, the student government had to rely on the cooperation of departmental assistants, and that cooperation was spotty. Under the new process, departments that wish to keep their evaluations off the web may do so by informing the dean of
undergraduate education, but the student government will no longer have to plead for cooperation. Student comments will not be posted on the web. The full faculty accepted this resolution without a vote.

Film Courses and the Arts Requirement

In a quirk of the requirement structure, only one film course was allowed to count toward the arts requirement. Given the greater acceptance of film as an art form, this caveat was removed from the requirement language by a vote of the committee and of the full A&S faculty.

Change in the Probation/Withdrawal Structure

The probation/withdrawal structure used by the academic deans and the Academic Standing Committee was revamped for both A&S and Engineering. The new structure allows for clearer messages to be sent to students regarding their academic status (making academic warning clearer by linking it to Probation I; allowing for the deans to keep students at a probation level for multiple semesters instead of having to advance them "down the probation steps" even when they were making some progress). The new structure also allows for permanent academic withdrawal for students who have been withdrawn from school several prior times.

While this mechanism will be used sparingly, it will allow the university to help these students move on to alternatives. The new policy was accepted with an affirmative vote by the full faculty.

Interdisciplinary Program Reviews

Dean Glaser advised the EPC of the intention of the administration to initiate comprehensive external reviews of the various interdisciplinary programs. The committee expressed approval of this plan without a formal vote.

Meeting with the Dean

Dean Sternberg met with the EPC to present his initiatives for the School of Arts and Sciences. These included a three-tiered leadership minor, an admissions initiative to augment standardized tests with measures of the creative and practical, and the implementation of a new program via the Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning to help faculty learn how to teach students with diverse learning styles.

Samuel Kounaves, chemistry (chair)
Cristelle Baskins, art and art history
Jason Bauer, A06
Drusilla Brown, economics
Alva Couch, computer science
Neil DiBiase, A09
Robyn Gittleman, Experimental College
James Glaser, dean of undergraduate education
Rafi Goldberg, A06
Jean Herbert, associate dean of undergraduate education
Ikumi Kaminishi, art and art history
David Proctor, G07
Chloe Snider, A06

Joseph Walser, comparative religion
Richard Weiss, mathematics