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MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
September 12, 1991

The meeting was held at 2:00 p.m. on September 12, 1991, Arcola/Tuscola Room, MLK Union.

Members present: Dr. Gholson, Dr. Hawker, Dr. McAlister, Dr. Sutton, Ms. Krueger, Dr. Shonk, Dr. Shank, Dr. Monippallil, Ms. Elliott, Dr. Higelmire, Dr. Baumgardner, Vice President Kindrick.

Members absent: One student member.

Staff present: Dr. Whitley, Academic Affairs.

Staff absent: Ms. McDaniel, Academic Affairs.

Visitors: Dr. Quivey, Dr. Sylvia, Dr. J. Nilsen, Dr. Richard Funk, Dr. Hild, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Pierce, Daily Eastern News.

I. Minutes.

The Minutes of September 12, 1991, were approved with the following amendment to agenda item 91-11-B, New Course Proposal, PSY 2999.

II. Communications.

1. College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee Minutes.
2. Council on Graduate Studies Minutes.
3. Letter from Dr. Frank McCormick, Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Association, announcing that Dr. Marilyn R. Waldman, Professor of History and Director of the Center for Comparative Studies in the Humanities, Ohio State University will conduct a lecture, "Religion and Politics in the Middle East: A Historian's Perspective," Thursday, September 19, 1991, 7:30 p.m., in Coleman Auditorium, Coleman Hall.
4. Revised Course Proposal, PSY 2999, Psychological Forum, (91-11-B-R).

III. Proposal Regarding Student Absence Policy, (91-34).

Dr. McAlister moved and Dr. Shonk seconded the motion to approve the proposal. Voting will be later.

VI. Proposal to Create a Subcommittee of the CAA Specific to General Education Assessment, (91-33).

The motion passed unanimously. The following people were appointed to the Subcommittee to Create a General Education Assessment Subcommittee: Dr. Shank - Chair, Dr. Hawker, and Ms. Elliott.

V. Appointments:

By consensus of the Council, the following people were appointed to a Subcommittee to develop a list of courses appropriate to satisfy the requirement of a course which emphasizes cultural diversity: Dr. Shonk - Chair, Dr. Higelmire, Dr. Monippallil.

VI. Proposal to Add Section 0054 Harp to the List of Courses under Music Applied Study, (91-35).

Dr. McAlister moved and Dr. Baumgardner seconded the motion to approve the proposal. Voting will be later.

Note: Vice President Kindrick joined the meeting at this point.

VIII. Undergraduate Education Study of Eastern Illinois University, (88-99).
The Council began discussion of the Major, pages 32-35 of the SUE document.

Beginning October 1, 1991 CAA will begin consideration of the SUE recommendations regarding the Major (PP. 32-35). Faculty and Administrators are encouraged to communicate in writing or in oral response before the CAA any affirmations, revisions, substitutions, or criticisms of those recommendations.

THE MAJOR

Historically, academic majors have developed out of the sense that one can achieve mastery of material from the study of a sequence of courses in a particular field and that such study in depth gives practical purpose to an undergraduate program that otherwise might consist of a seemingly unfocused, "old-fashioned" purely liberal "general education." At one time study within a major was justified by a feeling that the subject was defined and worth knowing about that area. With time and experience, however, has come the realization that complete coverage of any particular subject is no longer possible. Consequently, faculty at Eastern, like those nationwide, disagree on the methods of teaching the material to be learned for a major, on the exact sequence of topics to be covered--in short, on what topics are the most important for their students to know. Hence we are at a point where there is a need for a critical review and reevaluation of the purpose of traditional majors.

Particularly in state-supported schools, new kinds of career-oriented majors also have developed to meet social needs. These usually highly specialized majors are designed for the personal, social, and economic development of broad segments of the population. It is tempting for these kinds of majors to attempt to teach students every bit of information thought to be needed to prepare them for a particular occupation. Students majoring in professional programs, such as business, engineering, and health studies, specialize early and spend more and more of their undergraduate experience in courses in their major, often to the detriment of their general education. Pressures from prospective employers (who often demand both specific training and a broad general education); from parents who have invested in their child's education and expect an immediate payoff; and from students themselves, facing a highly competitive job market and parental expectations, tend to obscure the real meaning of a university education. As a result, students become frustrated with university demands of General Education, education that in their view merely impedes efforts to attain "useful" knowledge. Many of the faculty teaching these students are of the same attitude, more loyal to their own disciplines than to the university as a whole. As a result, the students not only are frustrated, but confused as well, by a faculty that sends conflicting signals about the significance of the Major versus General Education.

We at Eastern must resist the temptation, however tangible we think the results might be, to orient our teaching toward the training of individuals in narrow, highly specialized majors. Courses, faculty and majors should not be consumed by, nor judged by, their attempts to keep up with the knowledge explosion. Faculty, whether in traditional or new fields, who pride themselves on doing so are taking a very short-sighted approach. Career preparation should mean more than narrow training for a specific kind of occupation. Most graduates will make at least one career change, often as many as five; many will find themselves employed in occupations that do not exist currently.

The experience in the major must be broad enough so that individuals can adapt to changing employment opportunities or personal goals. Students should experience, in their majors, an intellectual environment that demands disciplined inquiry and whose outcomes are the abilities to analyze, interpret, and criticize, rather than massive coverage of currently fashionable material. These basic understandings and skills will help them in any career they may enter. We should remember that both careerism and more liberal learning are supposed to work toward the same objective--the enlargement of the vision of the student and the preparation of the individual for a productive work through a personally and socially productive life. Only in this way does knowledge become useful.

We believe that there should be at least three aspects to quality in-depth study in any major. First, the study should involve a sequential learning experience, concentrated to the extent that the student learns the complex structure of knowledge and theory of that discipline and the kinds of questions it asks and how one attempts to answer these questions. Second, it should relate that particular discipline to other disciplines. Third, it should teach the historical and philosophical roots of the discipline, its social implications, and its values and ethics. The latter aspects of study are embodied in Boyer's concept of the "enriched major." It is in these ways that study in depth in a major differs from the mere accumulation of specialized knowledge. Perhaps most importantly, from such study in depth, students learn the power and limitations of this method of inquiry into the world around them. Effective study in depth should not be designed merely to acquaint students with more and more of a particular subject matter; it should not leave students with a feeling of mastery of subject matter. Instead the end result should be students who have come to the realization that they cannot know everything.

Professional and preprofessional programs often are criticized for their specialized knowledge approach to educating their students. Such a philosophy is not a necessary consequence of being a professional program, however. A major in a professional or vocational field can provide just as strong an experience of study in depth as can traditional majors in arts and sciences or in education. The key is the educational experiences in these majors that provide the outcomes of analysis, interpretation and criticism, and informed judgement. The Deans of the more professionally oriented Colleges at Eastern suggested that such educational experiences are just as important to students in the professional majors as to those in the more traditional ones.

We recommend that each programs in each of the six Colleges, analyze its expectations for the undergraduate learning experience. Programs should avoid courses that merely provide training. Majors should be encouraged to include courses that teach the history of the discipline, its methods of inquiry, its

theory, its ethics, its limitations, and its social implications. The major, while focused on a particular discipline or outcome, should be a broadening educational experience, rather than a technical training ground.

We make the following specific recommendations.

1. Each major should review its requirements, with a critical eye toward the proportion of hours devoted to the study of the structure of knowledge and theory versus that spent on purely factual material or training in the latest applied techniques. We do not expect that all majors are best served by the same proportions.
 - (a) A major should be able to demonstrate its sequential learning experience.
 - (b) A major should provide its students with a capstone experience, such as a senior project or seminar, that evaluates their grasp of the methodology of the discipline and its power and limitations.
 - (c) A major should strive to avoid, wherever possible, providing courses whose sole purpose is the coverage of new, factual material that is not grounded in the theory of the discipline, or that quickly will be outdated.
2. Writing should be stressed in courses taught to majors. Library research papers and other technical papers allow students to aim their writing toward their major. The capstone experience that we suggest for the major should have a significant writing component. Department chairs should be encouraged to work with the Writing Committee to develop W-courses in the major.
3. Each major should develop in its students an understanding of the social implications of and ethical concerns related to that field of study.
4. Each major should incorporate a historical perspective, the heritage of that field.
5. Faculty advisors should convey to prospective students the time needed to complete the degree program. Students (and their parents) can then develop realistic expectations concerning their long-term study at Eastern. We suggest the following guidelines: fewer than 70 hours in a program will require eight semesters; 70-78 hours in a program will require nine semesters; more than 78 hours in a program will require ten semesters. Such guidelines also would be valuable

information for students changing their majors, perhaps helping to avoid some advising problems caused by a lack of understanding of the requirements of the major.

6. Departments should examine the use of summer workshop credit being applied toward the major. We recommend that all courses used for credit toward an EIU degree be submitted to the CAA for approval, i.e., that all courses, including workshops, be subject to the same approval process.
7. Internships should be intimately related to the study of the major, with the emphasis placed on what they contribute to the student's learning, not on how much (or if) they pay. Internships should not be allowed to offer more credit toward graduation than what counts toward the major.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45. Billie Rawlings - Recording Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING
September 19, 1991, 2:00 p.m.
Room 200 Blair Hall

Agenda:

- *88-99 Undergraduate Education Study of Eastern Illinois University.
- *90-153 Proposed Recommendations of the Task Force on Minority Participation, Chapter V: Teaching, Learning, and the Curriculum.
- *91-11-B-R New Course Proposal, PSY 2999, Psychological Forum.
- *91-34 Proposal Regarding Student Absence Policy.
- *91-35 Proposal to Add Section 0054 Harp to the List of Courses under Music Applied Study.

* Motion on floor.