

Dear colleague,

I write to report to you on the work of the Educational Policy and Planning Committee (EPPC) during the fall semester and on our plans for the spring term. Please note that the EPPC will hold its second and final meeting with the full faculty at noon on April 10, 2013. We hope you can attend.

1. Frontiers of Science

The EPPC was asked by Dean Valentini to organize the review of Frontiers of Science. That work is proceeding. A distinguished external committee composed of Bonnie Basler (Princeton), Robert Cave (Harvey Mudd College), David Goodstein (Caltech) and Benedict Gross (Harvard) visited the course on Feb. 3-6 and will report to the internal committee shortly. The internal review committee (see list of members below) has also visited the course and has had an extensive series of meetings with faculty and students in the course and across the science departments. The work of the review was greatly facilitated by the generous assistance of the Frontiers faculty and staff. The EPPC hopes to report to the Committee on Instruction by April.

2. Global education

The second task given the EPPC this year was to examine a range of issues around the global strategy of the University and teaching abroad. The EPPC's first faculty meeting on November 29, 2012 was devoted to an open discussion of how the faculty should proceed on this matter. (Summary minutes of that meeting are appended to this letter.) The EPPC then established a Subcommittee on Global Education with broad representation from a range of curricular committees and programs (see list of members below). At the request of Provost Coatsworth, that committee helped to plan a procedure for implementing the Mellon grant for a Global Liberal Arts Initiative, and drafted the Guidelines for Proposals which were discussed with department chairs and sent to all faculty. At the request of Dean Valentini, the EPPC Subcommittee on Global Education also agreed to serve as the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Office of Global Programs, a development that will allow for regular consultation and collaboration on all questions of global teaching. Michael Pippenger, Dean of Undergraduate Global Programs, and the OGP Advisory Committee, will assist departments proposing to teach courses abroad. We hope this structure will work well.

3. Online education

In the wake of the meeting organized by the PPC on online education, the PPC asked the EPPC to take up this question. In order to avoid duplication of effort, we have worked with Provost Coatsworth to ensure a strong Arts and Sciences representation on the Provostial committee established on this question. Adam Cannon, Computer Science, acts as the EPPC member/liaison to that committee, which includes EPPC member and PPC chair Cathy Popkin as well. We have also asked Kristine Billmyer, Dean of the School of Continuing Education, to join the EPPC, and will maintain a watching brief on this question. We solicit your advice on the issue of online education.

4. Pedagogical questions

The EPPC is agreed on the need to examine of a number of pedagogical and curricular issues that involve multiple schools. These include:

- a) the problem of differential and sometimes inconsistent course weightings (3-point and 4-point) and numberings, and of excessive student course loads;

- b) the need for a teaching center, and especially for expanded programs to support faculty and students across departments and schools;
- c) grading practices and grade inflation, including the problem of the A+ (a grade weighted at 4.33, although we have a 4-point scale);
- d) the need for a routine mechanism for following up on the curricular recommendations arrived at through the ARC process, a task for which the EPPC should perhaps take responsibility;
- e) the employment of adjuncts across the Arts & Sciences.

We are, however, aware of the dangers of undertaking more work than we can creditably accomplish and will be working with existing curricular committees and bodies on these questions. We welcome feedback from the faculty about the urgency of, and the best approach to, any of the above questions.

A list of members responsible for various issues follows. All members of the EPPC welcome communications from members of the faculty about our work.

Yours sincerely,
Susan Pedersen
Professor of History
Chair, EPPC

Frontiers of Science Internal Review Committee:

Robert Friedman (rf@math), Matthew Jones (mj340), Ann McDermott (aem5), Brendan O'Flaherty (bo2), Cathy Popkin (cp18), Jacqueline van Gorkom (jvangork@astro); Susan Pedersen (sp2216) and Stuart Firestein (sfirestein), co-chairs

Office of Global Programs Faculty Advisory Committee/EPPC Global Subcommittee:

Julie Crawford (jc830), Bachir Diagne (sd2456), Stathis Gourgouris (ssg93), Patricia Grieve (peg1), John Huber (jdh39), Donald Melnick (djm7), Timothy Mitchell (tm2421), Gareth Williams (gdw5), Madeleine Zelin (mhz1); Jack Snyder (jls6), chair; Michael Pippenger (mp2496), ex officio.

EPPC member/liaison for online education

Adam Cannon (cannon@cs)

All other curricular/pedagogical questions

Susan Pedersen (sp2216); Rose Razaghian (rr222).