

Minutes of the Academic Affairs Committee
February 7, 2017

Present: Margaret McFadden, Fernando Gouvea, Marta Ameri, Barbara Moore, Beth Schiller, Sahan Dissanayake, Adrienne Carmack, Jenner Foster, Jim Scott, Karlene Burrell-McRae, Jim Sloat, Nadia El-Shaarawi

- I. Approval of the minutes
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without change.

- II. Course proposal subcommittee

After some discussion of the numbering of the Methods of Art history course, the committee moved and approved the consent agenda of courses approved by the sub-committee. We will recommend re-numbering the course at the 300 level. Art and Maine will be postponed until the following year.

Courses approved:

AR 4XX: Methods of Art History

AR 3XX: Art and Maine (2018)

CH 217: Environmental Chemistry

CI 284: Documentary Film: History and Theory

CI 285: Experimental Cinema

- III. Updates on A+ grades/report to faculty meeting

Margaret explained what had happened since our last discussion of this topic. She and Jim Sloat took the question of grade distributions and the A+ grades to the Division Chairs, who recommended that we bring it to the faculty meeting for informational purposes. At the faculty meeting, we reviewed the chart of grade distributions created by Jim and shared with the faculty and encouraged the faculty to have intra-departmental discussions of grade norms. Also at the faculty meeting, there was a request that departments receive information about grade distributions, as in the past (although chairs often disliked having that information). There was also discussion of the need to also share some comparative data for divisions/the college when we provide departmental information to chairs.

There isn't a consensus in this group about what the problem is or how to solve it. But there is a consensus that we would need more information to formulate a proposal, so Jim Scott will work with Beth Schiller to do a statistical analysis to better define the problem. There is agreement that at the base of this discussion is a concern about fairness, so we do need to pursue this further.

- IV. Discussion of proposed changes in the Art major

The Art department proposes to re-organize and re-number their courses to add cohesion and to diminish obstacles to enrollment by eliminating some pre-requisites and introductory courses, especially AR 131. The course will continue to exist as an elective. Since there were many questions, we will invite the chair of the Art department to meet with us soon to clarify.