

Academic Affairs Committee—November 6, 2018

Present: Steve Saunders, Loren McClenachan, Dale Kocevski, Luke Parker, Katie Donahue, Sam Scott, Christie Woodside, Jim Sloat, Lindsey Nelson, Sam Lee, Russ Johnson

I. Minutes from the previous meeting (October 30) were approved.

II. The committee continued its discussion of the proposal to add a major in Jewish Studies. Since the previous discussion of the proposal, the Jewish Studies program has provided additional information (at the AAC's request) about the structure of JS majors at those schools who currently have them and about the number of students who complete those majors. The structure of such majors varied between schools, with typically 2-4 core courses and a total of 10-12 courses. In some cases Hebrew language was a requirement. Typically only 1-2 students per graduating class completed the JS major at each school.

At Colby there are typically 1-2 students from each graduating class who complete the JS minor. One student every 2-3 years completes an Independent Major in JS. Based on these numbers, the committee did not anticipate that there would be strong student demand for a JS major. A question was raised about the possible administrative burdens or constraints that might be imposed by adding a JS major. Any new major imposes some institutional costs. The feeling was that such costs, while not enormous in this case given the small expected size of the major, would nonetheless exist. Constraints might well be created for departments offering courses that are needed for the JS major, in situations where it is no longer possible to offer the courses (due to a retirement, for example).

The committee decided not to approve a Jewish Studies major at this time. In lieu of a formal established JS major, the AAC will suggest that the Jewish Studies program support students who propose an Independent major in Jewish Studies by providing templates that will facilitate and streamline such proposals. This would be similar to the strategy used for many years by the Education program.

III. The committee continued its discussion of the Subcommittee on Academic Schedule's proposal for a common hour. The subcommittee has revised the proposals since last week. Some significant concerns were expressed about how the proposed schedule would impact departments that offer multiple classes that meet on four days of the week, as the number of slots available for those classes will be reduced. Departments most likely to be impacted by this would be Mathematics & Statistics, Physics & Astronomy, and language departments. The current version of the proposal will be discussed tomorrow morning at a meeting of department chairs and program directors. This will allow feedback from an

important constituency – people with experience putting together department/program curricula.