

Academic Affairs Committee—November 13, 2018

Present: Sandy Maisel, Steve Saunders, Dale Kocevski, Luke Parker, Katie Donahue, Sam Scott, Sam Lee, Barbara Moore, Russ Johnson, Jim Sloat, Loren McClenachan

I. Minutes from the previous meeting (November 6) were approved.

II. One course proposal was approved.

Environmental Studies 2xx (Seafood Forensics: Uncovering Fraud in Ocean Food Systems) Exp, N

III. The committee was given an update from the Distribution Requirements Task Force. The DRTF was tasked (Spring 2016) with reviewing the Academic Precepts and our current requirements, which the faculty felt were outmoded. The DRTF has done a lot of research over the last couple of years, and now plans to bring forward some concrete proposals this academic year. A number of forums and workshops are being held to address specific aspects of a new set of requirements. At tomorrow's faculty meeting the DRTF will introduce a "Sense of the faculty" motion asking for approval to use the Core Capacities as a framework for developing a new set of requirements. In addition to consultations with the faculty, the DRTF is scheduling meetings with students (working with SGA), and with the Dean of the College staff.

Members of the AAC asked for clarification (and additional information) on a number of points. The Core Capacities will be analogous to the current Academic Precepts in the sense that they are not requirements themselves, but serve as a foundation for deciding what the requirements should be. The circles in the Core Capacities graphic are intended to represent the student at the center, surrounded by the five overlapping groups of capacities. There will be opportunities to discuss the Core Capacities at the November faculty meeting, at a forum during the reading period, and again at the December faculty meeting.

Some members of the committee felt that some of the capacities should be worded differently (or just more clearly). For example: "ability to speak different languages" (why plural?) and "environmental awareness" (why not scientific literacy). Some felt that perhaps "historical perspective" should be included. The role of the circles in the graphical representation of the capacities was questioned. Some committee members were not convinced that the graphical form of presentation is helpful.

It was noted that students have not been consulted very much yet in the overall process of reviewing our requirements. There may be areas where students have a

substantially different perspective than faculty members. Work so far by the DRTF seems to indicate that most faculty members would prefer to maintain a three semester language requirement. There are some indications that many students would prefer to have a reduced (two semester) language requirement, or none at all.