CCGB Meeting Agenda, May 9, 2008

1. Approval of minutes
2. Undergraduate announcements
3. Update on the online math diagnostic exam (F. Shumway)
4. Update on liberal studies approval process (D. Gries)
5. Report on ASPAC (J. Bartsch)
6. Committee assignments for Fall 2008 (E. Fisher)

CCGB Minutes, March 28, 2008

Ex-Officio: B. East, R. Evans, L. Schneider, M. Spencer
Other: P. Doing, R. Kline, C. Pakkala

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the 2/22/08 CCGB Meeting were approved as written.

Undergraduate Announcements: B. East stated that the PeopleSoft system has gone online. Some people have reported problems with it, and she said that people are welcome to email her with feedback. B. Kusse said that it takes too much time to navigate between students. E. Fisher said that she can’t seem to look up records of former students. It is tedious to look at grades one semester at a time, and it would be better to eliminate the extra space on the transcripts. B. East said that she pushed the PeopleSoft designers hard to get an unofficial transcript in the Student Services Center. She requested that people send feedback to her and Engineering Advising.

M. Spencer announced that admissions decision letters would be mailed to freshmen on 3/31. Students can check the decisions online. Engineering Admissions observes a moratorium on questions for two days after that to let students mull over the decisions. Cornell Days will take place April 10-21. There were over 1,100 visitors to the Engineering College alone last year.

Report on How Well ENGRG 150 Meets its Objectives: D. Gries spoke about his assessment of ENGRG 150. Based on the results of the surveys, we’re doing well on the first two objectives: (1) To have first-year engineering students meet with their faculty advisors on a regular basis in a friendly and supportive atmosphere so that a supportive relationship and understanding necessary for effective communication between the two can be developed, and (2) To provide first-year engineering students with an introduction and orientation to engineering activities and the College of Engineering.

Objective 3 “To help students improve study, examination, and survival skills useful in the College of Engineering,” was not pushed much in the course. The CCGB ought to give feedback on whether the objective should be continued and pushed more.

Objective 4, “To make students conscious of the ethical principles by which members of the Cornell community as well as all engineers should abide,” is more important due to the ethical principles, but, as you can see from the survey, this objective has not been achieved as well as objectives 1 and 2.

R. Kline and P. Doing help run the ethics portion of ENGRG 150. The ethics play will not to be given this year because students don’t appreciate it. R. Kline said that he wants to do something with each individual ENGRG 150 section (there are 40 sections). He would like each instructor to conduct a session on engineering ethics, and the Bovay Program would provide materials and assistance. The Bovay Program has had a lot of guest speakers in the past, and they would provide the instructors with a list of po-
tential guest speakers. Hypothetical and real case studies on ethics would be utilized for the ethics portion of the class. Having the instructors and classes decide on the topics might be better received.

B. East asked if the faculty would be provided with case studies and questions for the class. R. Kline replied that they would, and the National Academy of Engineering has an online ethics site, with research cases and engineering cases that classes can utilize. A case description plus guidelines, analysis, and questions about the case can be provided by the Bovay Program. They already do some class presentations on ethics for other classes.

D. Gries stated that faculty members weren’t involved in the play, they did not “own” it. It would be good to talk about ethical issues close to home such as Lake Source Cooling, the old Morse Chain site, and other local issues.

A. Zehnder asked whether we need to do ethics at all. D. Gries replied that ethics was put into the curriculum in ENGRG 150 in 2002. E. Fisher said that the inclusion of ethics in the curriculum was ABET driven.

Some teachers might not want to devote an entire class session to ethics. J. Bartsch said that some faculty went to the play, and some didn’t. He will continue having case studies in his classes and will have a Bovay person come in to facilitate; that approach seems to work well. B. East suggested that perhaps staff members could be trained to facilitate discussions. R. Kline said that the peer advisors are interested in doing this and the Bovay Program can work with them.

D. Gries requested that people give him feedback about ENGRG 150 issues. P. Doing suggested that perhaps the play shouldn’t be completely written off but instead revised. J. Cisne said that although students didn’t like the play, it incited discussion and got their attention. R. Kline said that the purpose of the play was to raise issues to prompt discussions in groups, so it seemed to accomplish that. E. Fisher said that she read about the Ethics Bowl, which is a competition. R. Kline said that they have the Ethics Bowl at the Association of Practical Ethics. It appears to involve mostly graduate students, but there may be one at the undergraduate level also.

E. Fisher suggested that maybe a contest would be interesting. She asked that people give feedback to D. Gries, R. Kline or P. Doing.

**Description of New Liberal Studies Approval Process:** E. Fisher spoke about the proposed liberal studies course approval procedure. A little more than a year ago, R. Robbins was upset because the Advising Office was spending a great deal of time on the liberal studies issue. He thought it would be better if the Liberal Studies Committee made decisions about liberal studies. During the past year the committee tried to work on this. Students currently fill out a petition and a faculty member makes a statement about why a course meets the criteria, etc. It hasn’t been terrible system, but it hasn’t reduced Advising’s work at all and has increased the Liberal Studies Committee’s workload. The list of liberal studies courses seems to have life of its one. It is tough for the Advising staff to keep up with the decisions made, so they adopted a change in procedure.

Effective Fall 2008, we will no longer be reviewing ARTS and CALS courses as liberal studies substitutes. B. East said that in ARTS and CALS the courses are already divided into categories that we use. Our students know that. E. Fisher said that the downside is that ARTS has a policy that courses can be put into only one category. CALS does have courses in multiple categories. Some ENG students might want to use something in a category different from ARTS. But this isn’t a real hardship.
Under the new system, we will review courses from other colleges (i.e. Human Ecology). Courses of Study will have the new liberal studies list. We have on the web a list of courses that we have denied as liberal studies. The list of approved courses is on there also. We are setting a 5 year approval limit for approved courses; we might continue to accept them or not beyond the 5 year limit.

B. East said that the driving force behind the new policy is NOT that Advising can’t keep up with this, but rather that students argue with Advising staff about this. Other colleges are experts about their courses.

D. Williamson asked how far the current list is from what this policy will enforce. E. Fisher replied that the current list has a lot of strange things on it that have been petitioned in the past, i.e. Introduction to the Solar System. It is very inclusive. The new list will be very different from that. We only have on the list what we have approved during the last year. If courses have been taken already, they are fine.

R. Bland stated that we need to make sure that undergraduate advisors have access to both the old and new lists when checking students for graduation. B. East said that all undergraduate coordinators will be sent information about where the lists are located. D. Gries said that 22 courses have been denied and 6 approved on the lists.

J. Bartsch asked why the petitions need to be cleared by the registrar in the student’s college. If an instructor has a course that is historical and cultural and is approved, why should it go to the registrar for approval? E. Fisher responded that she spoke with D. Morey in A&S about the approval issue. Some instructors are very obliging about approving things for students, so it would be better if the registrar or committee of the appropriate college were making decisions about the courses.

R. Evans asked if he could appeal to the CCGB if ENGRC 350 were put on the declined list. B. East replied that he could appeal to the Liberal Studies Committee to put it on the approved list.

W. Philpot wondered if the Liberal Studies Committee could look at the art history courses as a group since many CEE students take them. E. Fisher said that students could get statements from the instructors as to how the courses would satisfy a category. She requested that people contact her or the Liberal Studies Committee with questions.

**Discussion of the use of Engineering Communications Courses to Satisfy Liberal Studies Requirements:** E. Fisher stated that the Liberal Studies Committee looked at the courses that satisfy the liberal studies requirement. We have Engineering Communications (ENGRC) courses that are sometimes counted as liberal studies. The inclination of the Liberal Studies Committee was to remove the ENGRC courses from the approved list and not approve the CALS communication courses as liberal studies. But ENGRC courses may be playing a special role in the curricula of various departments. She wondered if it would cause a hardship to remove them and whether the view of them as non liberal studies is reasonable.

J. Bartsch said that it would be a big problem for BEE because the communications courses are a requirement in the curriculum. He thinks they are fine as liberal studies. Our students need to be able to write. About one-half of their students use a communications course or ENGRC 350 as liberal studies. E. Fisher said that she advises her students to take the communications courses as advisor approved electives.
R. Evans said that on one hand he is in favor of narrowing what counts as what, partly because he used to be an advisor. He likes to tell students that not anything goes for a reason—to give students a type of experience. There is an incredibly long historical tradition of counting rhetoric as liberal studies. He is concerned that there are a certain number of students each year who have taken more than a single course to fulfill the technical writing requirement. About 20 students a year are choosing to take more communications courses, likely because it fulfills another requirement. Students are already stretched in terms of requirements. Double-dipping is an opportunity to allow students to get more communications courses in. The ENGRC 335 course really ought to be under cultural analysis studies.

B. East asked what is being taught in ENGRC 350. R. Evans replied that the rhetoric of scientific communication is taught; it is contextual. A case can be made that the course is related to the art of language. When students are making smart choices for something that will benefit them in the future, we need to encourage that. ENGRC 350 is not an easy course.

M. Duncan said that, like communications, statistics is important, but that doesn’t necessarily make it liberal studies. L. Lee said that she has received petitions for other communications courses at the university, and it is hard for students to understand why an ENGRC course is acceptable but not a course in CALS or another college.

A. Zehnder said that freshman writing isn’t considered liberal studies. W. Philpot said that students can take 1 credit courses but ENGRC 350 has more depth. We shouldn’t allow as liberal studies lots of other things that don’t meet our students’ needs.

J. Bartsch said that the CALS communications courses count as technical communications, but he feels they have changed quite a bit. Communications has moved away from technical work, and engineering students are discouraged from the courses. He recommends that ENGRC 350 or other engineering communications courses be allowed as liberal studies. We shouldn’t let COMM 260 count toward technical writing.

R. Evans said that ENGRC 350 falls into the literature and arts category and ENGRC 335 in the cultural analysis category. He will write up a request that ENGRC courses count as liberal studies courses. Communications courses are currently allowed as liberal studies.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.