The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 6 November 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the sixth special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, the minutes of the October 2, 2007 meeting were approved. Debate on the second part of Richard Nunan’s proposed amendment, which was pending from the previous meeting, resumed. Mr. Nunan (at-large) moved to table his amendment so that a new amendment from the History Department could be proposed—an amendment, he said, that would “change the landscape of Goal III.1” on p. 9 of the Gen-Ed Proposal. The motion to table, after receiving a second, passed.

George Hopkins (History) then proposed the History Department’s two-part amendment, which was seconded. The amendment would change the number of historical eras to be covered in Goal III.1 from four to two. Accordingly, the amendment called for the terms “pre-modern and modern” to replace the terms “ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern” in both Defining Characteristic #1 and Approval Criterion #1. Mr. Hopkins explained that as a result of the previous discussion in the Senate, the chair and Senators of the History Dept. in consultation with other faculty drafted the amendment to address concerns raised in the preceding Senate meeting. The History Dept. held onto the aim of providing students with a broad overview of history, but was willing to scale back the amount of coverage. He added that the History Dept. faculty did not want to endorse a date as a dividing line between the pre-modern and modern periods because such a date would be arbitrary. Overall, the amendment, while retaining the aim of providing a deep historical perspective, provides more flexibility and more easily allows other departments to propose courses that would meet the goal.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) observed that the proposed amendment did not call for a change in the requirements of p. 9. The old language remains, he noted. He asked for unanimous consent that the language in Requirement #2 be changed in accordance with the proposed new language for Defining Characteristic #1 and Approval Criterion #1.

Scott Peeples (English) asked for unanimous consent that the language in Requirement #2 specify that students take one course in the pre-modern era and one in the modern era. Unanimous consent was granted.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) stated that he would like additional language in the text of p. 9 that would make clear that a substantial amount of historical time must be covered in each required history course. Such language would provide guidance for the Gen-Ed Committee in approving proposed courses.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) asked if his course in the History of Computing, which would span both the pre-modern and modern periods, would count. Mr. Hopkins surmised that if most of the material presented in the course fell in the modern period, it would
probably count toward the requirement for the modern period. Do you think that is fair, asked Mr. Hopkins? Mr. Boetje thought that it was.

Todd McNerney (Theatre) spoke in favor of the History Department’s amendment, noting that it seriously took into account the concerns raised in the previous meeting’s discussion. He urged that the Senate pass the amendment and then take up the concerns that Mr. Wilder had just raised. Paul Young (Mathematics), however, was not totally happy with the use of the definite article before the two periods (“the pre-modern and modern eras”) and asked for unanimous consent to change to the indefinite article “a pre-modern era and a modern era”), but unanimous consent was not obtained. Meg Cormack (at-large) suggested that the indefinite article only be used with the term pre-modern and that the definite article remain with the term modern. She asked for unanimous consent to approve change, but it was not granted. Patricia Ward (at-large) suggested that “the” be removed altogether before the phrase “pre-modern and modern eras,” but again unanimous consent was not obtained.

Mr. Nunan next remarked that the amendment goes a long way to honoring the spirit of a goal-driven Gen-Ed curriculum, and noted that the change offered by the amendment would do the same thing for the history goal as previous amendments had done for the science goal. He urged Senators to vote for the amendment, if they wanted a goal-driven Gen-Ed system.

The Senate voted on the History Department’s proposed amendment, which passed.

Mr. Wilder then proposed that the following sentence be added to the Approval Criteria of p. 9: “Approved courses will cover substantial historical developments and periods within the pre-modern and modern eras, rather than specific episodes.” If passed, this statement would constitute Approval Criterion #6 in the Approval Criteria.

John Huddlestun (Religious Studies) said that the “rather” clause at the end of the sentence was not needed, and asked for unanimous consent to delete it, but unanimous consent was not granted. He then moved to delete the clause. His motion was seconded and debate on his amendment ensued. Thomas Ross (Psychology) argued that the clause serves as a kind of guarantee that larger stretches of historical time will be covered in each course, and said that, though it might be a little redundant, it would provide guidance to the Gen-Ed Committee. The Senate then voted on Huddlestun’s amendment, which failed.

Tim Carens (English) then asked for unanimous consent to strike the words “historical developments and” from the amendment. Unanimous consent was not granted. He then moved to strike the words. The motion was seconded and voted on, but did not pass.

Mr. Nunan then asked for unanimous consent to have Mr. Wilder’s proposed sentence replace Approval Criterion #5, in the event that Mr. Wilder’s amendment passes. Unanimous consent was granted.

Mr. Young next moved to alter the language of the first part of Mr. Wilder’s amendment, so that it read “Approved courses will be defined by their coverage of . . . .” The motion was seconded. Norris Preyer (Physics) asked what the rationale for the change was. Mr. Young
answered, saying that he was “literalist”: if a course failed to cover an appropriate span of
time it would not meet the criteria for approval. Doryjane Birrer (English) said that the added
language seemed redundant. The Senate voted on the motion, which failed.

Next, Jim Newhard (Classics) asked for unanimous consent to change the word “episodes” to
“events,” but unanimous consent was not granted. He then made a motion to make the
change, and the motion was seconded. His rationale for the change was that the term
“episode” was not as clear as the term “event.” An event, he said, is quite specific, but an
episode can be long. The Senate vote on the motion, which failed.

Mr. Carens then asked for unanimous consent to replace the first four words of the
amendment (“Approved courses will cover”) with the word “Cover” in order to make
proposed Approval Criterion #5 grammatically parallel to the other Approval Criteria.
Unanimous consent was given.

Mr. Phillips next asked for unanimous consent to change the word “Cover” to “Survey,” but it was
not granted. Since time for debate on p. 9 was running out, George Hopkins moved to
extend debate by fifteen minutes. The motion was seconded and passed. Mr. Phillips then
moved that the word “Cover” be changed to “Survey. After his motion was seconded, he
explained that the word “survey” suggests the idea of broad coverage, which accords with the
aim of the history goal. Ms. Cormack responded that “survey” also suggest superficial
coverage and a lack of depth. The Senate voted and the motion failed.

Michael Gomez (Hispanic Studies) then asked for unanimous consent to change “Cover” to “Consider,”
but unanimous consent was not given. Mr. Young then moved that the word
“only” be inserted in front of the word “specific” so that the last clause of Mr. Wilder’s
amendment would read “rather than only specific episodes.” The motion was seconded. The
Senate then voted and the motion passed.

Mr. Huddlestun then wondered how the terms “substantial” and “specific” would be defined
with respect to various occurrences in history. Does the Roman Empire, for example, cover a
“substantial” period? Mr. Carens then moved to change “specific episodes” to “a specific
episode.” The motion, after receiving a second, failed.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Wilder’s amendment, which passed.

Mr. Nunan then moved to put before the Senate the second part of his amendment that had
been tabled (the first part was voted down in the previous meeting). The amendment sought
to reduce the number of analytic “aspects” that courses satisfying the history goal would have
to cover. More specifically, it proposed to change Defining Criteria #1 and Approval #1 by
replacing the word “and” with the term “and/or” so that they would each read, “Develop
knowledge of the history of human civilizations [. . .] through the study of the political,
social, cultural, and/or intellectual aspects of . . . .” His motion to take off the table received a
second and passed. Mr. Nunan said that, given the changes that had already been made to p. 9,
he now felt less pressed about this part of his amendment; still, he was concerned that all
four aspects wouldn’t be covered in courses in a serious manner, and said that he knows how
difficult the task is from teaching Honors Western Civilization. He was therefore skeptical that the job could be done properly in less intensive courses. He added that to provide the Gen-Ed Committee with guidance we need discussion in the Senate about this issue. In the same way that the Senate discussed the science goal and the difficulties of covering all the criteria, the Senate needs to talk about what counts as coverage of an “aspect” to help guide future Gen-Ed Committees.

Mr. Hopkins responded, saying that for analysis you can separate the intellectual, the political, the social, and cultural, but in the real world they are all intertwined, and that you need some discussion of all of them, though the emphasis on each will vary. He added that he wouldn’t want to legislate the particular mix or degree of emphasis for each aspect.

Mr. McNerney pointed out that by adding “and/or” a course could meet the Approval Criteria by covering only one of the analytic aspects. Reiterating Mr. Hopkins point that the various aspects are intertwined with each other, he said that you couldn’t talk about one without talking about the others. Ms. Cormack added that though we can’t legislate the degree of coverage of each aspect, we can assume a good-faith effort that they will all be covered.

The Senate then voted on the second part of Mr. Nunan’s first amendment, which failed.

Mr. Nunan then moved that his second amendment be approved. This amendment would delete both Defining Characteristic #2 (“Acquire knowledge of leading theories of historical change advanced by historians to evaluate developments in past civilizations, societies, and cultures”) and Approval Criteria #2 (“Give students knowledge of leading theories of historical change advanced by historians to evaluate developments in past civilizations, societies, and cultures”). Mr. Nunan added that the History Department sees this as a friendly amendment.

Mr. McNerney asked those in the History Dept. if such was the case, and Bill Olejniczak (guest and chair of the History Dept.) responded that it was.

Scott Peeples (English) said that he would like to keep both Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criteria #2 in the document. He thought it was fine to remove the words “advanced by historians,” but thought that Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criteria #2 were key to differentiating college-level history courses from high-school level ones, and that it was important for students to learn about disagreements in the historical scholarship. Mr. Krasnoff replied that he agrees with the spirit of Mr. Peeples’ remarks, but not the language in Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criteria #2, which focuses on the theory of why history changes. That, he said, is a narrow topic, which is not appropriate for the document. He also thought that the sort of issues that Mr. Peeples mentioned would still be addressed in many history courses.

Thomas Ross (Psychology) thought that the Senate needed to be careful about removing language from p. 9 that would prevent students from learning the methodologies used by historians. For this reason, he was reluctant to support the amendment. In response, Mr. Hopkins noted that other parts of the Gen-Ed document dealt with such methodologies. Mr.
Parsons added that, given Mr. Hopkins’ statement, Mr. Ross’ concern was addressed by the document as a whole.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Nunan’s second amendment, which passed.

Mr. Nunan then mentioned an issue concerning AP credits. He observed that the College has a general practice of accepting AP credits that apply to Gen-Ed requirements, but that the language in the Gen-Ed Proposal may exclude some AP courses as counting toward the new Gen-Ed requirements. We need, he said, to talk about this issue more broadly at some point.

Next, the Senate turned its attention to p. 10 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, concerning Goal III.2: Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Achievements.

Mr. Wilder opened discussion on p. 10 by proposing a series of amendments (four in total) on behalf of the Philosophy Department. He said amendments one, three, and four mainly involved word-smithing and were intended to improve the clarity of the document. The first amendment proposed to do the following: first, to alter the Goal statement with the insertion of the words “Traditions and” so that it would read: “Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Traditions and Achievements”; and second, to revise the relevant sections of Goal III.2 accordingly by inserting the phrase “traditions and” in the introductory line of Defining Characteristic 2, in Defining Characteristic 2b, 2c, and 2d, in Requirement 3, in Approval Criterion 1, in the introductory line of Approval Criterion 2, and in Approval Criteria 2b, 2c, and 2d.

The motion to amend received a second. Mr. Wilder then explained that the rationale for the proposed changes is similar to the one made with respect to the discussion of such terms as “episodes” and “events.” “Achievements” suggest single events or artifacts, and thus a narrowing of subject matter. “Traditions” imply greater historical and intellectual breadth. Students need, he said, to look at broader traditions, and not just singular events.

Evan Parry (Theatre) responded that he didn’t understand the word “achievements” in the way Mr. Wilder defined it. Susan Kattwinkel (guest) observed that the term “traditions” would preclude courses that treat achievements or events that are happening now. Mr. Huddlestun remarked that he is not sure what “achievements” mean, but wouldn’t have that problem with “traditions.” Frank Cossa (Art History) said that he likes the use of “traditions” because cultural and artistic “failures” can be just as interesting as achievements. The word “traditions’ broadens the possible subject matter.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Wilder’s first amendment, which passed.

Mr. Wilder next proposed the second amendment, which would delete Requirement #3. This requirement states the following: “Students must complete at least one course that is devoted to the study of achievements in visual or performing arts, or that combines the study of any form of artistic achievement with the creation of that art form. Such courses will be tagged so that students may identify them.” The motion to amend was seconded.
Mr. Wilder explained that while he likes the idea that art courses can satisfy this Gen-Ed requirement, which they can’t in our current Gen-Ed system, he sees as problematic the requirement that “at least one” art course must be taken to meet the goal, which thus singles out art courses for special treatment. He also said that the amendment would add more flexibility to the Gen-Ed system.

Mr. Parry responded that on the surface the amendment seems to give preferential treatment to the arts, but he liked the language in the document because the arts need protection both in the academy and in society in general. The arts, he continued, are especially under attack (even more than science) by government (in the form of reduced funding). We have many students who have had no experience of the arts because of cuts in government funding, no aesthetic experience, no knowledge of the arts. And developing such aesthetic experience, he stressed, is crucial to their development of human beings.

Ms. Kattwinkel noted that in focus groups conducted two years ago, in which one-half of the faculty participated, all saw the arts as important. This requirement, she said, is something that faculty members want. She added that the requirement does not privilege a subject matter, but a process, a way of thinking and approaching the world, just as, say, science offers a way of approaching the world. Moreover, the current proposal is weaker in this area than earlier forms of the proposal. The current proposal does not include a course devoted solely to the creation of art; consequently, most courses in studio art won’t qualify for the goal unless they are changed to include some attention to the theory of artistic creation. She also noted that the requirement would not create a burden on the School of the Arts. She noted that in courses where students create art, though they do not become experts, they experience something special. It is important, she stressed, for students to experience the process of creation. Most liberal arts schools recognize this and that is why they typically require such a course (seventeen of twenty-five COPLAC schools require such a course).

Mr. McNerney spoke against the proposed amendment. He pointed out that the Senate has given worth to all other areas of human endeavor covered in the Gen-Ed Proposal; therefore, to approve the proposed amendment would be saying that art is not important. He reiterated Mr. Parry’s point that the arts are under attack—in the form of censorship, reduced funding, and so on—and emphasized that we need to show our students that art is of value and that it is an important part of their education.

Mr. Parson said that he was not persuaded by the arguments presented so far. He didn’t agree with the notion that because art constitutes a different process of production, it should receive special treatment. He was not persuaded by the argument that because art may have had a special place in the liberal arts tradition, it should continue to be treated in a special way. Our thinking on all sorts of disciplines and aspects of education has evolved over time, and will continue to. With regard to the argument that the arts are under attack, he noted that the same could be said of other areas of inquiry. And the notion that because art has been cut back in high schools and under-funded could be said of other disciplines as well. Finally, he concluded that passing the amendment would ultimately not change things much because students will continue to take art courses; we don’t need to force students to take them.
Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) said that he was an example of a student who didn’t want to take any art courses and thought they were a waste of time. But part of education, he continued, is taking courses you aren’t familiar with and making discoveries. His favorite courses, it turned out, were in music. It’s important, he said, that we have students experience the arts. He was persuaded that the arts aren’t properly valued and that we need to take a stand for them.

Mr. Krasnoff said that he was neutral on the issue, but that Mr. McNerney’s “speech” was not valid. We do support and value the arts at the College, he insisted. But he said that his colleagues in the Philosophy Dept. were agitated by the special favor created for art. While he did think that the arts do provide a different way of thinking, he didn’t like certain kinds of courses to receive special protection, which ends up discouraging professors from upgrading their teaching. He added, however, that while he’s worried about a policy of protectionism, he isn’t overly worried about it, yet leans toward Mr. Parson’s view.

Mr. Parry said that he agreed with Mr. Parson on the problem of reduced funding for the arts in secondary schools, and with Ms. Kattwinkel on the notion that art offers a different way of thinking. He elaborated on his earlier point that students need to develop a more sophisticated sense of aesthetics, which only comes with exposure to sophisticated art forms. He then commented on the issue of teaching the ethical dimensions of cultural achievements, as outlined in Defining Characteristic 2.d and Approval Criteria 2.d. He explained how a course in acting moves students toward this objective. Such a course helps students to think like and be another person. He said that such experiences broaden students tremendously, often making them more tolerant. Courses of this kind offer an important way of learning ethics.

Mr. McNerney, after apologizing for his earlier impassioned remarks, said that while it is true that the approval of Mr. Wilder’s second amendment won’t have much of a practical effect on the School of the Arts, it is important keep the present language in the document, which validates art as a special mode of thinking and underscores the value of studying that mode. Such validation also has implications for the inclusion of other disciplines, such as English, which offer courses that are engaged in the study of the arts.

Mr. Huddlestun mentioned that he had been an art major in college and noted that though many students say that they can’t make art, taking an art course often turns out to be a vital experience, which makes them more well-rounded human beings.

Addressing the issue that Requirement #3 constituted a kind of protectionism for art courses, Mr. Overby argued that such was not the case. Don’t we make students take science courses to meet the science goal, and social science courses to meet the social science goal, etc.? Voting against the amendment is simply giving art its fair due; it’s not protectionism. Art has value and enriches everyone, and Mr. Overby gave the example of a Nobel-Prize winning chemist who wrote a play. But students won’t take art courses, he added, unless they are required to take them.

A Senator moved to extend debate by fifteen minutes. The motion was seconded and passed.
Mr. Young said that he didn’t see Requirement #3 as protectionism for a school. He also thought that some in the Senate were losing sight of Goal III.2: Requirement #3 is not about protecting a school, but about achieving the goal.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) declared himself “a computer geek,” but said that there is another aspect of his identity that is centered on music. Art, he said, “forces you to put yourself out there.” It can be transformative for an individual. The possibility of such experiences needs to happen for students.

Frank Cossa (Art History) said that he is divided on the amendment. On the one hand, he doesn’t want students to be in his classes if they don’t want to be there. On the other hand, students and the public in general need to be educated about art. To illustrate the latter point, he mentioned examples of certain countries condemning modern art and of museums closing down exhibits because of reactions to one part of them.

Mr. Nunan said that he was not comfortable with all the talk about art as special and different. They are, but so are other disciplines. With respect to the idea that other departments could offer courses that met Requirement #3, he said that language in the document did not support that contention. He added that he sought flexibility and favored not constraining students and not putting up more requirements and hurdles.

In response to Mr. Nunan, Conseula Francis (English) spoke against the amendment and argued that the current language in the document should remain because it allows departments outside the School of the Arts to offer courses that could meet the goal. She gave the example of her English course on the Black Arts Movement, explaining that course asks students to produce art in the tradition of the movement. She saw her course—or a version of it—as satisfying Goal III.2. Expanding on this point, Ms. Kattwinkel said that some film classes taught in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and courses in computer graphics in the School of Science and Mathematics could very well satisfy Requirement #3. She thought that a number of schools would be involved in this part of the Gen-Ed goal.

Mr. Parson responded that passage of Mr. Wilder’s amendment does not preclude such courses as the one Ms. Francis mentioned from satisfying the goal. He added that he was still not persuaded by the claims stemming from the view that art is special, different. Yes, art does offer a different way of thinking, but every discipline could make the claim that it is different and offers its own way of thinking. He concluded that as currently worded, Requirement #3 amounts to protectionism.

Doryjane Birrer (English) remarked that there is something ineffable in the creative process. In other disciplines that deal with cultural achievements, the mode is discursive (argument is central), but the creative process is different in this regard and constitutes a fundamentally different mode of inquiry.

Ms. Cormack said that she was never forced as a student to take an art course, and that the discussion in that direction narrows the Gen-Ed system. Glen Lesses (guest) reiterated the point that each discipline can claim that its mode of investigation is unique. Thus he didn’t
find the argument about uniqueness compelling. He also said that arts are not under more attack than other disciplines, and therefore shouldn’t be singled out for special protection.

Ms. Francis responded that she did not read Goal III.2—and Requirement #3 specifically—as giving special protection for the School of the Arts. It is only asking students to learn a special way of thinking and of investigating the world. In that respect, it is no different than the science goal. It is disingenuous to see the goal as protectionist.

Mr. Huddlestun called the question, which succeeded. The Senate then voted on the second amendment to p. 10 proposed by Mr. Wilder. The amendment failed.

Mr. Wilder, before proposing on behalf the Philosophy Dept. a third amendment to p. 10, thanked his fellow Senators for the thoughtfulness and quality of the preceding debate. He then proposed the third amendment, which would alter Defining Characteristic 2.c and Approval Criterion 2.c, by replacing the current language—which reads, “Cultural, historical and/or philosophical dimensions that influence and are influenced by these achievements”—with the following language: “Techniques appropriate to the study of the arts and humanities.”

The proposed amendment was seconded. Mr. Wilder then explained that the rationale for the change was to allow more courses to qualify for Goal III.2. The words “influence” and “influenced” in the current wording indicate that courses should use an historical approach, thus potentially excluding other approaches. The amendment thus seeks to make sure that courses not historical in nature qualify.

David Gentry (at-large) spoke in favor of the amendment, noting that if the amendment passes the word “humanities” would be included in the Gen-Ed document. He pointed out that nowhere else in the document does the word appear, and was concerned that students could graduate from the College without ever taking a course in the humanities. Mr. Parry said that he, too, supported the amendment and liked the added breadth it gave to the goal.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Wilder’s third proposed amendment to p. 10, and it passed.

Mr. Wilder, again on behalf of the Philosophy Dept., proposed the fourth amendment to p. 10, which would insert the word “intellectual” in Defining Characteristic 2.d and Approval Criteria 2.d so that both would read as follows: “Social, historical, intellectual impact and/or ethical dimensions of the traditions and achievements and the way they are interpreted and valued.” The aim of the amendment, he explained, was to make sure that the criteria for courses satisfying the goal are not interpreted too narrowly by excluding courses that focus on the intellectual impact of artistic and cultural traditions and achievements. He added that the main significance of such traditions and achievements is often intellectual.

The Senate voted on Mr. Wilder’s proposed fourth amendment, which passed.

Mr. Young then asked a question about Defining Characteristic #2, wondering whether the intent was that all four items listed under it (a, b, c, and d) should be covered or just two. Bob
Mignone (guest) said that the intent was not all four, but more than one. Mr. Young responded that he would therefore like to see a change. Steve Jaumé (Geology) suggested that the words “two of the following” could be added at the end of the line of Defining Characteristic #2. Mr. Young wondered whether the four courses required to satisfy the goal should cover all areas. Ms. Kattwinkel responded that the Gen-Ed Committee was not eager to impose that level of logistical control. Mr. Mignone added that the word “multiple” means “at least two.” Mr. Young said that his colleagues weren’t quite understanding his question.

Moving to a different topic, Mr. Nunan commented on Requirement #5, which states that “Coursework satisfying this requirement may not be double-counted with the courses used to satisfy the human history requirement (Goal III.1a) unless it is above the 100 level. Mr. Nunan observed that the presence of Requirement #5 implies that AP history courses cannot be used to fulfill the history requirement, since students who exempt 100-level history courses because of AP test results would still be required to take more advanced history courses to meet the human history requirement. This raises a more general question that the Gen-Ed Proposal never addresses directly: will appropriate AP and IB courses enable students to waive some of the Gen-Ed requirements, as has always been the case in the past? Requirement #5, he said, seems to suggest that the answer is “no,” at least for AP history courses. He reminded the Senate that at some point it needs to discuss the general policy it should adopt about AP and IB courses with respect to the new Gen-Ed program.

Mr. Krasnoff added that there is another problem. Because the history requirement is flexible, if a student takes a high-level history course it will count for many goals. Such multiple, even excessive counting poses a potential problem.

Next, Ms. Cormack moved that Requirement #2 be modified by changing the word three to two: “Students must complete these courses in at least three two different departments or programs.” The motion received a second.

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting. Speaker Kelly announced that discussion of Ms. Cormack’s motion would begin at the start of the next Faculty Senate meeting devoted to the Gen-Ed Proposal, set for 27 November 2007. The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary