

Committee on Academic Priorities annual report, 2010-11

Introduction:

The work of the Committee on Academic Priorities is guided by the following mandates, established by the faculty:

1. According to the Faculty Code (paragraph 25) the committee is charged with responsibility for educational and curricular priorities of the College. The Code also gives the committee an advisory role to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty regarding faculty appointments, this “shall include both long-range planning for the number, type and distribution of faculty appointments, and yearly authorizations for hiring into tenure-track appointments.”
2. The Committee is also guided in its work by the strategic plan *The Smith Design for Learning*, developed by the faculty, that recommits us to our mission and that outlines principles for the curriculum. Our job as a faculty and on the Committee on Academic Priorities in particular, is to implement those principles and ideas, to articulate our purposes through initiatives, to incorporate ideas that have been generated by the faculty into a vision that is true to our core values and to new directions and commitments.

Agenda for 2010-11

A. Curricular initiatives: Global Engagement Seminars and Concentrations

Global Engagement Seminars

The Committee approved a pilot program in Global Engagement Seminars, intensive seminars designed and taught by a team of Smith faculty members and offered away from campus. The seminars bring together classroom and experiential learning. The four week seminar is followed by a six to eight-week internship related to the seminar.

See Appendix A. for a description of the pilot.

Concentrations

The Committee on Academic Priorities proposed changes in the Faculty Code to move Concentrations from the pilot phase to implementation as part of the Smith curriculum. In addition to the Concentrations in Museums, Archives, Poetry and Biomath that had been developed in the pilot phase, the faculty also approved Concentrations in Buddhist Studies, South Asia, Book Studies, and a Concentration sponsored by CEEDS with a rotating topic, the inaugural topic is Sustainable Food.

See Appendix B. for approved changes to the Faculty Code.

B. Ada Comstock Study Group recommendations related to CAP

After several faculty discussions of the report of the April 2010 Ada Comstock Scholars Study Group (written by Robert Buchele, Barbara Kellum, Erika Laquer, Melanie Medina, Maureen Mollahan, Bill Peterson, Danielle Carr Ramdath, and Audrey Smith) the Committee on Academic Priorities endorsed some of the recommendations related to its mandate and deferred discussion of issues that touch on broader concerns that require more study.

Specifically, CAP approved the following actions following discussion with members of the Ada Comstock Study Group and at faculty meetings:

1. Assuming that the norm for the minimum number of transferable credits is increased to 48, CAP approves enforcing the written academic plan outlined in the Faculty Code, 73 (f):

Each student is required to submit to her major adviser during the second semester of her sophomore year **a written plan for the final two years**, including a statement of the objectives that determined the plan, a tentative list of courses to be taken both inside and outside the major, and a tentative specification of how the other requirements for the major will be met.

Use the same criteria for Ada Comstock Scholars and transfer students:

For Ada Comstock Scholars, assign a graduation date, normally within 6 semesters of matriculation, based on the number of credits transferred in, and on the written academic plan, devised in conjunction with the Ada class dean and faculty adviser. If extraordinary circumstances arise, a student may appeal to the Administrative Board to reset her graduation date beyond 6 semesters.

2. Require that Ada Comstock Scholars fulfill the same writing requirement as traditional undergraduates, to complete a Writing Intensive (WI) course.

The WI requirement can be satisfied before matriculation based on transcript review by the registrar, in conjunction with the writing committee

Note: The WI requirement is defined in the *Catalogue*, pp. 8-9. Add sentence to reflect new expectation for Ada Comstock Scholars and transfer students.

“Ada Comstock Scholars and transfer students are required to complete at least one writing-intensive course, with a grade of C- or higher, during their first two semesters at Smith. The WI requirement can be satisfied before matriculation based on transcript review by the registrar, in conjunction with the writing committee.”

3. The Study Group recommended that criteria for Deans' List be consistent for all Smith students. CAP approved the following action:

Replace the current Dean's List language and criteria in the Catalogue:

“The Dean's List for each year names those students whose total records for the previous academic year average 3.333 or above and include at least 24 credits for traditional-aged undergraduates or 16 credits for Ada Comstock Scholars. Students must be enrolled at Smith for the full year to be named to the Dean's List.”
Catalogue p. 28

With the language for Dean's List in the Faculty Code section 62 (f):

The Dean's List is made up of students whose total records for the previous academic year average 3.333 or above, and who complete at least 24 credits for full-time students or 16 credits for part-time students. Students must be enrolled at Smith for the full year to be named to the Dean's List.

The Committee deferred action on two other issues, pending further study: a recommendation that criteria for First Group Scholars be consistent for all Smith students and a recommendation that transfer credit be given for on-line courses.

C. Enrollment Policy

The faculty members of CAP reviewed and endorsed the current practices employed by the Provost regarding enrollment policy with some modifications. These guidelines will be discussed at the retreat for Chairs and Directors in September 2011, included in the Chairs' and Directors' handbook and included in a report to the faculty at a meeting in fall 2011.

Departmental requests for limitations on enrollment

Requests to limit enrollment in courses that are neither seminars nor colloquia must be submitted for approval to the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) by Departments/Programs or individual faculty members with the endorsement (signature of the Chair) of their Department/Program.

Requests for enrollment limits in courses taught by multiple members of a Department/Program, including introductory courses for major/minors, elementary or intensive language courses, writing intensive courses, studio art courses, laboratory courses, performance courses, and others should be submitted by Department/Program Chairs on behalf of all instructors who will teach the courses. For other courses, including most 200-level courses, individual faculty members must submit requests for enrollment limitations to CAP, with the endorsement (signature of the Chair) of their Department/Program.

In both cases (Department/Program submissions, and individual faculty submissions), requests for enrollment limitations must be accompanied by compelling pedagogical justifications, such as, but not limited to, multiple writing assignments that include multiple drafts, limited facilities, field trips, or guidelines from professional organizations for enrollments in types of courses, such as language courses. In addition, the request should describe the likely effects enrollment limits on the course(s) will have on the accessibility of departmental offerings to students. CAP will provide a form that must be completed by those submitting enrollment limitation requests.

See Appendix C. for "Questions to be added to Course Proposal Form regarding maximum caps on courses."

Minimum Number of Students in Classes

The Committee on Academic Priorities endorses the present lower limits of 10 for 100- and 200-level courses and 6 for 300-level courses. The minimum enrollment levels are generally fair and should be enforced, so long as the Provost's office keeps in mind that certain disciplines necessary to a liberal arts curriculum may not have the number of majors necessary to sustain the minimum threshold in all of their courses, all of the time. The Provost and CAP recognize that some chronically under-enrolled courses are necessary for the completion of major requirements.

Courses that are given for the first time should be excluded from the general rule in order to let the course become known. Action should be taken the second time that a course is under-enrolled.

We recommend the following course of action when a class is under-enrolled:

1. If time and circumstances permit, (with the agreement of the instructor) the class will be canceled and the instructor will teach another course instead. Instructors who have reason to suspect a course they will teach in an upcoming semester may fall below the threshold should, if possible, arrange to have a back-up course/teaching responsibility.
2. If the above course of action is not feasible, the instructor, with the agreement of the Provost, may be allowed to teach the course. However, if the course is canceled, or converted to a special studies, the instructor may co-teach a large enrollment course that same semester, or teach an additional course the next semester or the next academic year.
3. Normally, a course with an enrollment under the minimum cap will not be taught again as is for three years.

D. Requests for new positions

The president and the provost approved all of the recommendations made by the Committee on Academic Priorities for eight tenure track position for searches in 2011-12.

1. American Studies: Position request developed in consultation with history and Afro-American Studies for a tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor. While this position will be housed in the American Studies Program, its occupant will contribute two of his or her four yearly courses to the Smith History department. Candidates should be well prepared to teach the range of theoretical and methodological questions, both established and emerging, central to American Studies scholarship, and they must be prepared to teach an Early American survey in the History department. We especially value intellectual versatility, the ability to work across historical periods, and alertness to the transnational and comparative perspectives that have reshaped American Studies work in recent years. We seek a candidate who will not replicate our current strengths in 19th and early 20th Century history; we are particularly interested in candidates who work with Native American materials and/or cross cultural encounters in early America. This position fills a vacancy created by a retirement.
2. Anthropology: For a position at the level of assistant professor with a specialization in South

Asia, with a focus on religion. South Asia is generally acknowledged as a core geographic region in the development of anthropology and in contemporary scholarship. The department is aware of the strengths at Smith in Buddhist studies and would be more interested in a person whose research focuses on Islam. The Department expects that this position will contribute to the new Concentration in South Asia. South Asian anthropology courses will also support the Five College Certificate program in International Relations. This position fills a vacancy created by a resignation.

3. Economics: Request for 1.5 FTE to fill vacancies created by two retirements and reflecting a 0.5 FTE cut to the staffing in the department. CAP recommended approving 1.0 FTE, or possibly 1.5 FTE, pending a workable joint position within Smith or with another college in the Five Colleges. Area of specialization public economics or international.
4. Engineering. Request for a position at the rank of assistant professor, field open. To seek an outstanding candidate who understands and shares a passion for integrating engineering and the liberal arts. The individual would be able to contribute to teaching in our core areas of mechanical, electrical, and/or thermo-chemical engineering fundamentals. The Program is also interested in exploring the possible relevance of bringing in additional expertise in the areas of design thinking and/or complex systems. To fill a vacancy created by a resignation.
5. French Studies. Request for a tenure-track position in French Studies at the rank of assistant professor Specialist in contemporary French Studies with interdisciplinary training in the humanities; demonstrated interest in new media and second language acquisition would be an asset. Must have Ph.D. in hand by time of appointment.
This position fills a vacancy created by a tenure denial.
6. History: Request for a position at the rank of assistant professor in African history. This request is based on the critical importance of African history to the curriculum of a first-rate liberal arts college such as Smith and, in particular, its centrality to the well-being of the many related curricular programs at Smith and in the Five Colleges that the current African historian has contributed to and helped develop during his tenure. The History department is supported by Afro-American Studies and the African Studies program in making this request. This position fills a vacancy created by a retirement
7. Mathematics & Statistics: Request for a position at the rank of assistant professor, field open. This position fills a vacancy created by a retirement.
8. Music: Request for a position at the rank of assistant professor in composition. It is an absolute priority that composition be maintained as one of the core areas of the music curriculum at Smith. The ideal candidate would be capable of teaching composition for both traditional and electronic/digital media. Primary training and professional experience must be in composition. This position fills a vacancy created by a retirement.

Failed searches in BIO and EDC will re-open in 2011-12. PHY will defer a new search for the failed search in 2010-11.

Two requests were denied. The Environmental Science and Policy Program requested a new position and also a joint position with Physics; there were no vacancies that could be replaced by a position in ES&P; although there is a .5 FTE available in PHY, there is not another .5 FTE vacancy that could be used to support this request.

E. Decennial and midterm reports

During the 2010-11 academic year CAP completed decennial reviews with the following departments:

Afro-American Studies, decennial begun in 2008-09.

Anthropology, decennial begun in 2008-09.

Art, decennial begun in spring 2010.

Clarke School/ Masters in Education of the Deaf Program, self-study and visit in 2010-11

French Studies, begun and completed in 2010-11.

Sociology, decennial begun in 2008-09.

Decennial and midterm reviews in process:

Decennials:

Comparative Literature, complete except for final meeting with CAP.

East Asian Languages and Literatures, complete except for final meeting with CAP.

Exercise and Sport Studies, begun in 2010-11

Neuroscience, begun in spring 2011.

Midterms: (complete except for final meeting with CAP)

Astronomy: Held in conjunction with decennial review of Five College Astronomy department.

Biochemistry

Italian

Physics

F. Report of the Subcommittee on Honors and Independent Programs

The Subcommittee on Honors and Independent Programs met five times during the 2010-2011 academic year. The subcommittee's actions, recommendations and proposed agenda items for the upcoming year are listed below. Membership: Margaret Bruzelius (Chair), Robert Buchele, Nicholas Horton, William Oram.

Actions:

1. Departmental Honors Program, Class of 2011: One hundred and one applications were considered, 101 were admitted. Of the 101 students admitted, 15 withdrew during the course of the year (14 of whom converted to a Special Studies). 86 students completed the program: 10 Honors, 42 High Honors, 34 Highest Honors.
2. Departmental Honors Program, Class of '12J: One application was considered and approved.

3. Student-designed Interdepartmental Majors: Sixteen student-designed major applications were considered: 14 were approved. The approved majors include: Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies (1), Astrophysics (1), International Development Studies; Agricultural Resource Use and Food Security (1), Liberal Studies (6), Linguistics (1), Logic (3), and Peace and Conflict Studies (1).
4. Student-designed Interdepartmental Minors: There were no applications for student-designed minors.
5. Smith Scholars Program: There were no applications to enter the Smith Scholars Program.
6. Research Assistance from the Tomlinson Fund: A total of \$13,737.20 was given to 39 Departmental Honors students to help with research expenses.
7. Latin Honors Awards: Nine students were recommended for *summa cum laude*, 32 students for *magna cum laude* and 94 students for *cum laude*.

Recommendations:

In addition, the subcommittee submitted three proposals for consideration by CAP.

1. A new option for entering department honors
Proposal: a new option for students to enter honors through special studies. Students planning to write a senior thesis project could first enroll in a fall semester special studies that would center on refining the research design and securing the data set needed to carry out her research. If the special studies proceeds well, the student could register in November during the normal registration period for a Spring-semester honors project.

This option would be open to any Department or Program that cares to pursue it, to be re-evaluated by SHIP and CAP after two years. The hope is that this change will encourage more students to attempt honors.

Reasoning: about one-quarter of students pursuing honors convert them to special studies. This proposal is a more positive track with the goal of recruiting more students to the honors programs. CAP approved this proposal, and the Chair announced it at the May faculty meeting.

2. Honor Code Violations and Departmental Honors
Proposal: a policy whereby a student applying to the Departmental Honors program would certify on her Honors Application that she had not been sanctioned by the Honor Board at a serious level (1/3 step grade reduction or more). As with Latin Honors, any sanction imposed in the first year would be excluded; the student would only be debarred from the Honors for serious violations in the sophomore, junior or senior year.

Reasoning: Honor Code Violations and Departmental Honors: Because of privacy laws, the College cannot pass along the names of those students who were found guilty of honor code violations to departments and programs. The proposal asks students who are applying to a

departmental honors program to certify on the application that they have not been sanctioned for a serious infraction by the Honor Board. The chair of SHIP would then verify the certifications. CAP approved this proposal and the Chair announced it at the May faculty meeting.

3. **An Earlier Date for Theses Evaluations.**

CAP will consider next academic year SHIP's suggestion that the honors evaluations for all theses and orals presentations be submitted to the Chair of SHIP by the last day of class. This will separate the submission of the honors evaluations from the later recording of senior grades.

4. **Demographic Trends for Departmental Honors:**

SHIP also submitted a report that describes the demographic profile of students who pursue honors. SHIP recommends that CAP review the honors program to ensure all students have equal access to this opportunity.

See Appendix D. for report on "Demographic Trends for Departmental Honors"

5. **Festival of Honors:**

Finally, we also include a short account of the very successful "Festival of Honors" in Division III by Margaret Anderson. SHIP feels strongly that such celebrations of Honors should be promoted in each Division.

See Appendix E. for Report on Festival of Honors

F. Futures Initiative

Two elected members of CAP (Martine Gantrel and Nicholas Horton), along with the members of the Committee on Mission and Priorities, Faculty Council and other faculty leaders, participated in the year-long trustee-initiated project called the Futures Initiative. The Futures Initiative brought trustees, faculty, students and administrators together to discuss the long-term trends that are likely to have an impact on private, liberal arts colleges in the next 20 years. More information about the Futures Initiative is available on the *Smith By Design* Moodle site.

G. Advising, First Year Seminars and Presidential Seminars

1. Advising

The Committee met with Kate Queeney, the faculty director of advising, to discuss the pilot phase of Liberal Arts Advising for 2010-11.

See Appendix F. for details.

2. First Year Seminars

The Committee met with Susan Etheredge, director of the First-Year Seminars. For Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 there were a total of 25 FYS (26 sections, 421 seats, 370 students enrolled, 88% of capacity) and 5 FYS (5 sections, 80 seats, 63 students enrolled, 79% of capacity). This represents about 69% of the entering class. Instructors were primarily from Division I (n=19, 63%) with a smaller number from Division II (n=6, 20%) and Division III (n=5, 17%).

Plans for the fall have been coordinated with the writing committee. There will be 26 FYS (27 sections, 445 total seats available), 9 sections of ENG 118 (135 seats available), and 1 section of ENG 119 (15 seats available). In addition there are some writing intensive courses other than FYS and ENG.

Susan also discussed other initiatives of the program. There will be a first-year programs coordination meeting, as well as a May faculty development workshop for all FYS instructors. Student progress in writing is now being tracked by requesting mid-semester grades for all students in writing intensive courses. A majority of faculty completed these assessments, which led to recommendations for a second writing intensive course for a number of students. This pilot will be continued with further encouragements for faculty and advisors to help guide students to second courses.

Susan also noted a concern about first-year students being wait-listed for ENG119 this spring because the course filled with seniors and juniors before they could register. CAP **approved** providing priority access to ENG119 registration for first-years and sophomores, with the exact mechanism to be determined in conjunction with the registrar.

3. Presidential Seminars.

Cate Rowen, the director of Institutional Research and Educational Assessment (IR) discussed moderator guides that will be used to gather information on Presidential Seminars through student and faculty focus groups. The student focus group took place in February, and the faculty session was scheduled to take place at the end of spring semester. CAP members advised the Director of Institutional Research and Educational Assessment to add a question to determine if students acquire new skills as a result of having taken a Presidential Seminar.

H. Curricular update

In 2010-11 CAP, and subsequently the faculty, approved 17 new permanent courses; 17 experimental courses; 8 new topics; 13 experimental topics and 4 new Concentrations. Among the new offerings are 9 First-Year Seminars and 10 Presidential Seminars.

I. Meetings with the Student Curriculum Committee

CAP met twice with representatives of the Student Curriculum Committee: November 3, 2010 and April 6, 2011. The primary topics of discussion were, in November, Concentrations and the new Course Evaluation system being prepared by an *ad hoc* committee that includes student representation; and in April, procedures for the selection of faculty members for the student teaching awards presented at Rally Day each year.

J. Subcommittee on Writing

CAP heard reports from the subcommittee on writing at several meetings. The subcommittee drafted a letter to be sent out to instructors of courses designated as writing intensive (WI) to remind them that the standards approved by the faculty in spring 2010 would take effect in 2011-12.

See Appendix G.

K. Liberal Arts Lunches

CAP hosted the weekly Liberal Arts Lunches featuring research by Smith faculty members. See Appendix H. for the full schedule.

Possible agenda items for 2011-12

A. Workload

Differences among disciplines and in departmental practices have led to different understandings of what is expected by the “plus” in a 2/2+ teaching load. The Committee intends to review faculty workload in 2010-11 to develop a clearer set of expectations and guidelines, taking into account variability among fields.

B. Assessment of non-major programs

In keeping with the Faculty Code paragraph 25.b.1: “The Committee shall solicit, generate and review new academic initiatives, and shall periodically assess ongoing programs to insure that they continue to contribute to the academic priorities of the College,” the Committee will review non-major programs, using as a model the legislation for Concentrations that requires a review of each Concentration every five years.

CAP 2010-2011

Bob Buchele, Economics
Martine Gantrel, French
Nicholas Horton, Mathematics & Statistics
Joseph McVeigh, German
Bill Oram, English
Don Baumer, Government (representing
Faculty Council)

John Davis, Associate Provost
Danielle Ramdath, Associate Dean of the
Faculty
Maureen Mahoney, Dean of the College
Marilyn Schuster, Provost & Dean of the
Faculty (Chair)

Appendix A.
Global Engagement Seminars Pilot 2010-2012 – short term, intensive study away

Basic plan:

- A 3-4 week **intensive summer seminar** in a site away from campus.
- Faculty members select up to **ten students**, preferably rising juniors and seniors
- The seminar is followed by **an internship or service-learning experience** developed with partners on site. Students use their Praxis funds.
- Students present a **reflection** on the seminar and internship at the *Smith Elects the World* conference the following fall.

Another format:

- Students are selected for a seminar in the fall semester to prepare for a J-term service learning experience or internship.
- In J-term students spend four weeks at the site they have been prepared for.
- Students reflect on the seminar and service learning experience when they return.

During the Fall 2010 semester and 2011 J-term:

Women's Health in India, taught by Les Jaffe, physician. During the fall semester five students studied health issues of young women in the developing world including cultural issues in Tibet and India related to health education for women. During J-term Dr. Jaffe and the students joined Professor Jay Garfield's Five College program on Tibetan Studies in India where the students successfully engaged young Tibetan women in culturally-based reproductive health education, providing our students a sense of empowerment and leadership while they did meaningful community service. Regarding health issues of Indian women, they were able to observe first-hand what they had studied in the fall. The students shadowed an Indian physician providing care to women at a charity hospital and saw the challenges involved in treating sixty patients a day with limited resources.

Spring semester 2011: Training for faculty directors through the Global Studies Center.

Summer 2011:

Costa Rica at a Crossroads: Globalization and Sustainability in Costa Rica

Gary Lehring, Government and Amy Rhodes, Geosciences.

Professors Lehring and Rhodes will teach this course in May-June 2011 and have arranged for a wide range of internships related to politics, sustainability, environmental science and policy and other issues covered in the seminar. Fifteen students will participate and experience "home stays" as well as internships.

Jerusalem

Justin Cammy, Jewish Studies; Suleiman Mourad, Religion; and Donna Divine, Government
The Jerusalem Global Engagement Seminar will benefit from collaboration with Hebrew University. Internships have been arranged through a group that oversees internships in Israel.

Summer 2012:

Greece offered by Scott Bradbury, Classics and John Brady, Geosciences

Perhaps a repeat of the **Costa Rica** and **Jerusalem** seminars.

Appendix B.
Concentrations: approved changes to the Faculty Code

76. (d) Concentrations are courses of study that integrate multiple disciplinary perspectives through a common theme and aim to provide a useful bridge between liberal learning and experiential learning through internships, independent projects or community service. The basic template for concentrations includes:
- i. A gateway course (could be partial credit).
 - ii. A group of courses in the curriculum from which students choose 4 or 5, from a variety of departments or programs to provide a multidisciplinary approach to a central topic. Five College courses may count. Normally, only 3 courses from any one major may count toward both the student's major and the Concentration.
 - iii. One or two practical, applied learning experiences, whether or not they bear credit (for example, internship, service learning, guided independent research, study away).
 - iv. A capstone experience: could be a seminar, but other models are possible.
 - v. Students apply, normally fifteen per class year are accepted.
- (e) Faculty members from two or more departments or programs may initiate the formation of a concentration by submitting a proposal to the Committee on Academic Priorities. The Committee shall consider the academic merits of the proposal and report its recommendation to the faculty for a vote. Information about existing concentrations and different ways of implementing the template may be obtained from the Office of the Provost & Dean of the Faculty.
- (f) Each concentration will be governed by an advisory committee of faculty members and staff that will vet applications, advise students, plan the curriculum and set policy for the concentration. The advisory committee will recommend a director or directors to the Provost to be appointed for a three-year renewable term. The director will certify when students have completed a concentration and will notify the registrar.
- (g) Concentrations approved by the Committee on Academic Priorities and the faculty-at-large shall be listed in the catalogue and the Provost, in consultation with the Committee, shall evaluate each concentration every five years to determine its educational value, effective use of resources, future costs and future directions and impact on departments and program.
62. (e) If a department or program or concentration requires, as part of its major or its requirements, that a student undertake a special course, seminar, or independent project for Distinction/Pass/Fail, this fact will not reduce a student's option of taking up to 16 credits on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis as provided in Section (d).
73. (g) On its official transcripts, the College will recognize the completion of no more than two majors, or one major and one minor, or one major and one Five College Certificate for each student, even if the student chooses to complete the requirements for additional majors, minors, or Certificates. In addition, the college will recognize the completion of no more

than one concentration for each student. No second major or minor may be in the same department or program as the first major.

78. (b) Proposals of new courses should be accompanied by an outline of the work to be covered by the course. This syllabus should indicate briefly the purpose of the proposed course, its value to the students for whom it is designed, its place in the department's or program's or concentration's total offering, the sequence of major topics within the course, the more important elements in its bibliography, and its relationship to offerings at the other Five Colleges.

Appendix C.

Questions to be added to Course Proposal Form regarding maximum caps on courses

If you wish to cap this course at a certain maximum number of students, please respond to the questions below; if you do not wish to cap the course, please move on to the next section.

1. What is the pedagogical or other justification for requesting a cap?

2. Is this course (check one):

required for the major can count toward the major

neither of the above

3. How often will this course be offered? (check one):

each semester once each year every other year

irregularly

4. If this course were capped, how many students might be denied access?
(Please estimate, if possible, based on past enrollments in this or similar courses.)

5. Assuming that your present level of enrollments continues, what steps will your

Department or Program take to assure that no majors or potential majors are prevented from majoring due to a cap on enrollment in this course, and that no non-majors presently served are denied access to your Department's courses?

Appendix D. Demographic Trends for Departmental Honors

Margaret Bruzelius (chair, subcommittee on Honors and Independent Projects)
Bob Buchele
Nicholas Horton
Williams Oram

The original system of Honors was instituted to challenge those students who came to Smith well-trained and ready to do independent work. For those Honors students the thesis was the culmination of a program of study that began in the sophomore or junior year. Honors as it exists now at Smith continues to reward those arrive at college relatively well-prepared, although it no longer represents the apex of a program (even if the required inclusion of grades in the major as part of the calculation for the Honors designation implies that the thesis project is seen as the culmination of a training process). The work Smith thesis writers currently produce is clearly of a very high quality (this is, of course, also a reflection of the fact that unsuccessful thesis writers are “converted” to special studies students), but is limited to a very narrow range of students.

As a “research college” Smith reports that “70% of our students . . . report that they engage in significant, focused research projects with faculty, experiences in which they gain knowledge and mastery usually acquired in graduate studies” (*Smith Design for Learning*). But only 10% are eligible for Honors as the result of a thesis, our premier research project. In 2010, in a large class of 731, roughly 9% of the class enrolled in an Honors course (65), and about 7.7% of the class (56 – one of whom received no honors) completed the Honors course. 84% of the students enrolled in Honors completed the program; 9 students converted to special studies because of acceleration, illness, or lack of satisfactory progress.

The Research Opportunity Working Group report that led to Strategic Direction II in the *Smith Design for Learning*, “Promote a Culture of Research, Inquiry and Discovery,” suggests that Smith needs to foster a “culture of research and purposeful inquiry” that is “developmental . . . and should reflect opportunities for students in all four years.” Such a research culture would include a commitment to methods courses, smaller independent research projects linked to classes or groups of classes, and multiple opportunities for independent work. If Smith truly values a “culture of inquiry” does it want to continue only awarding “Honors” to thesis writers? Would we want to consider some other avenue for Honors that would reward multiple independent projects successfully executed? Without eliminating the possibility of writing a thesis, could we want to imagine a system that rewards projects of many sizes and scales that display imagination and marshal the research skills that Smith students learn?

This report is intended to serve as background for a future review of the Honors program. We are concerned by the trends described below, particularly relating to demographic disparities, and that feel that in a college whose mission is based on access, under-represented minorities (URM: defined as black, hispanic and native american) are under-represented in the Honors program.

Table 1

Thesis Writers by Race/ethnicity (2005-2010)					
Number of students	Wrote Thesis?				
Row Labels	No	Yes	Grand Total	% of Each Category Writing a Thesis	% of Thesis Writers in each Category
Asian-American	411	23	434	5.30%	6.08%
International	242	41	283	14.49%	10.85%
URM	543	24	567	4.23%	6.35%
White/Unknown	2681	290	2971	9.76%	76.72%
Grand Total	3877	378	4255	8.88%	

How to use Table 1: Of the 434 Asian students at Smith between 2005-2010, 23 wrote theses. This means that 5.30% of the Asians wrote theses. Alternatively, we can see that 6.08% of those who wrote theses were Asian.

Table 2

Thesis Writers by First Generation (FG) Status (2005-2010)					
	Wrote a thesis?				
	No	Yes	Grand Total	% in Each Category Writing a Thesis	% of Thesis Writers in Each Category
FG	710	51	761	6.70%	13.49%
Not FG	3167	327	3494	9.36%	86.51%
Grand Total	3877	378	4255	8.88%	

How to use Table 2: Of the 761 first generation students at Smith between 2005-2010, 51 wrote theses. This means that 6.70% of the first generation students wrote theses. Alternatively, we can see that 13.49% of those who wrote theses were first generation students.

Table 3

Thesis Writers Within Each Division (2005-2010)			
	Number of Students Writing a Thesis	% in Each Division Writing a Thesis	TOTAL number of majors^ at graduation
Division 1	111	6.9%	1616
Division 2	72	4.3%	1674
Division 3	179	12.8%	1398
Other	16	4.7%	340
Total	378		5028
^ Double majors are counted twice			

Since the adoption of the Smith Design for Learning and in light of the report from the Research Opportunities Working Group and keeping in mind the changing demographic not only of Smith's enrollment but that of the college-age population of the country as a whole, now seems a propitious moment to reconsider what remains of the original Honors program – the accomplishment of a thesis project. Such a re-examination of Honors could consider questions such as:

- The re-establishment of honors programs that could encourage under-represented and first-generation students who are currently not attempting honors to attempt self-designed, independent projects. A model for this would be the current Achieving Excellence in Math, Engineering, and Sciences program (AEMES), a program dedicated to building a community of diverse students in the sciences, math and engineering at Smith. (<http://www.science.smith.edu/mentoring/programs.html>)
- Allowing collaborative theses across department/s programs. The Chair of SHIP has received several inquiries about the possibility of thesis projects in the sciences jointly prepared by two students.
- Allowing a one-semester thesis option with a special studies pre-requisite?
- Establishing division-wide programs such as Division III's Festival of Honors to foster discussion among and increase the presentations skills of honors writers.
- Simplifying the current unwieldy Honors evaluations to two tiers, Highest Honors and Honors? (Perhaps with the number of Highest honors awards limited by a percentage?)

Qualifying for honors

Our current method for entering honors disadvantages students who come to Smith with poor preparation. Given the fact that admissions into Honors is highly dependent on GPA in the major and that the final honors determination is determined by a combination of grades in the major, the thesis project itself, and an honors presentation, a student who starts off with poor college preparation may find herself shut out of honors because her early grades reflect that preparation. Departments are unwilling to allow students to undertake honors if, given the GPA in courses in the major, it is mathematically impossible for the student to achieve honors even with a brilliant thesis.

Some students writing theses (usually those who convert to special studies) struggle to formulate a question that can be answered; they find that moving from papers written for particular courses written in the context of the readings and vocabulary of those courses to devising an independent project that they themselves define very difficult. Again, experience no doubt varies by department and division, but one way to perhaps open up the opportunity to participate in honors - to conceive a project, find the appropriate bibliography, and write a thesis project proposal – would be to encourage course work in the sophomore and junior year that required just such work. Clearly in Div III the AEMES program attempts to prepare students for the work required in a thesis project.

Given our changing demographic, we wonder if taking up a number of the suggestions contained in the report of the Research Opportunities Working Group and one suggested by the Junior Year on Campus report. Among the many suggestions are:

- One credit interterm courses related to inquiry hosted by departments, programs or centers
- 2-credit special studies as subgroups of classes like seminars that would focus on independent projects
- One-credit writing labs attached to either single classes or groups of upper level courses in Divisions 1 & 11 as a rough equivalent for lab experience in Div III
- Inquiry based workshops as part of Pre-orientation, or possibly the new programs for rising sophomores that are planned to take place before the semester starts
- A “methods” course – possibly division-wide – that would give student practice in the steps that would prepare for a thesis project
- Division-wide 2-credit s/u courses open only to sophomores and juniors in the majors in each division in which faculty could speak about their current research and students would each elaborate a question, a bibliography, and a thesis proposal, without writing a thesis project.
- Should we eliminate the “conversion” process and simply allow Honors theses not to receive honors? We could name them something else, for example, Senior Project – and the Senior Project would be the way in which a student made herself eligible for honors.

Honors communities?

Also in line with the recommendation of the ROWG, we might want to consider creating learning communities among thesis writers. Traditionally, a student in an Honors Thesis project has worked

alone, under the supervision of a faculty member. In 2009-2010 Div III instituted a “Festival of Honors” in which students across all the departments met on a regular basis to discuss their progress and answer each other’s questions. The program culminated in a dinner to honor all the thesis writing students.

Should we consider instituting such a program in all three divisions? Our students could certainly benefit from practice in describing their project in terms accessible to anyone (a vital skill for applying for grants in any field) and in formulating questions about work outside their field. Creating a community of young scholars each involved in her own project but also expected as part of that project to respond to the work of others could be a very good way for our students to practice the skills of self-presentation and generous attention. It might also help some students who come from backgrounds less familiar with the practices of academe to feel supported in their work.

Evaluation and the weight of grades in the major

For students already in the Honors program, grade inflation has led to an increase in the number of students who qualify for highest honors. This year of the 55 students who earned departmental honors, 25 earned highest honors, 25 earned high honors, and only 5 earned honors. Members of SHIP felt that this proportion was exactly backward: highest honors should be reserved for a small fraction of the very highest performing students.

At the Director of Honors lunches the one subject that elicited real enthusiasm was the idea that the system be limited to two levels of honors, Honors and Highest Honors. While the details of this idea were not worked out, the sense of the meeting was that honors should be simplified: all students who attempted a thesis project would simply receive honors while only truly exceptional work would receive Highest Honors. Of course, how to articulate and preserve this distinction will require careful thought.

Furthermore, with the sole exception of Economics, where the director of a thesis is not one of its evaluators, some Directors of Honors voiced concern about the amount of influence a thesis director can have on a student’s eventual honors designation. Each director of a thesis submits not only a grade for the *course* in which the student is enrolled (CHM 430D for example) but also evaluates the *final project*, for honors, high honors, highest honors. This struck some members of the group as equivalent to resting one’s thumb on the scale while weighing produce.

Directors of Honors also voiced some support for constituting the honors project as a 2- or possibly even 3- semester process: in this version of honors, the first semester’s progress would be evaluated at midyear and only students who had made satisfactory progress would be allowed to enter the second semester, which would qualify them for honors. A three-semester process would be more suited to projects in which data collection and/or lab work is essential to the project. However, in some departments and programs data collection and analysis can occupy the greater part of both semesters, and Directors in these departments feel that such a divided honors procedure is unworkable.

Appendix E.

Report on Division III Festival of Honors

Div III Festival of Honors – brief history

Spring 2009: The Natural Sciences Planning Community hatched the idea of organizing an event that would emphasize the interconnectedness of the departments/programs in Div III. We decided that an honors festival would both demonstrate the faculty's interest in students carrying out independent research projects and generate a feeling of community among the honors students.

Summer 2009: Provost Marilyn Schuster agreed to support social events and the concept of coordinating honors presentations across Div III.

2009-10: We felt our way through organizing a year-long series of events that brought together honors students in the sciences. In November, we hosted a tea for faculty advisers and honors students. In January, a lunch, and in April/May coordinated honors presentations that concluded with a celebratory dinner. The tea was a great success, although we decided that it should have been held earlier in the fall. The January lunch was poorly attended, and we decided that it wasn't worth repeating. The coordinated talks were highlighted in a single Div III booklet, which the honors students very much appreciated. Our scheduling efforts resulted in some conflicts for faculty who are members of both departments and programs. Dinner was held in Ford Hall Atrium. Tom Litwin and Margaret Bruzelius gave brief congratulatory talks. Despite "issues" that came up throughout the year, we believed that the overall idea of a festival was worth refining and further developing in 2010-11.

Examples of "issues" included the following:

- a. Some faculty were worried that departmental autonomy would be lost in scheduling honors presentations, and that individual honors students would be forced to give their presentations at awkward times. This problem did not materialize, and, in fact departments and programs were relieved of individually scheduling their honors presentations.
- b. Faculty who were not initially enthusiastic about the festival idea did not attend the tea or lunch.
- c. At one point, we suggested that honors presentations be standardized in format. This idea was met with great resistance, and we realized that it wasn't necessary (see below).
- d. We thought that a January event in which honors students gave "updates" (e.g., about 5 minutes) on their research projects would be an excellent way to reveal to honors students in different departments/programs the types of experimental problems their colleagues were pursuing and the methodologies they were using. This idea did not get traction. We believe that it deserves further consideration in the future, and may be more easily approached now that the overall idea of the festival is better understood by faculty and students.

In the summer of 2010, the Provost again agreed to support an honors festival for 2010-11.

Because of moving and renovations upheavals in the science center we had neither a tea nor

lunch. In retrospect, we regretted not hosting a tea and resolved to schedule one early in the fall of 2011 as a good launch to the 2011-12 festival.

In mid-spring of 2011, we began plans for coordinating honors presentations and making the booklet. Adam Hall scheduled the time blocks for all departments/programs. Advisors and students decided on the sequence of talks within each time block. Each honors student provided her name as she wished it to appear in the booklet, the title of her thesis, and names of her advisor(s) and thesis readers. All of this information was made into a booklet by administrative assistants. The booklet, as mentioned previously, was a great success with the honors students.

This year's scheduling had minimal conflicts of talks. In 2010, we learned that it was not possible to expect all Div III departments/programs to adhere to a standard presentation format, and that such a format was not necessary. Thus presentations in different departments/programs were scheduled in blocks of time that permitted talks and question periods preferred by each group. For example, each PSY honors student's presentation and question period was a full hour in length. By contrast, BIO and BCH honors students gave 20-minute talks followed by 10 minutes of questions. The BCH honors students also had oral exams in addition to their public presentations. These were scheduled on a different day and not published in the booklet. In sum, the overall festival succeeded in emphasizing the successes of all honors students across the division while permitting individual departments/programs to dictate the nature of the final presentations and exams.

The honors celebration dinner was a simple buffet of Chinese food held in Ford Hall Atrium. Marilyn Schuster, Tom Litwin and Margaret Bruzelius all spoke briefly. Several students and faculty lingered well after the food was packed away, giving the suggestion that they enjoyed a mellow moment to reflect on their hard work just concluded. In 2010-11, a total of 43 honors students worked with faculty in eight departments/programs across Division III. This was the greatest number of honors projects ever carried out in Division III.

Margie Anderson

Appendix F.
Advising Update May 2011
Kate Queeney, Faculty Director of Advising

Work on advising this year was carried out in collaboration with the First Year Class Dean (Tom Riddell, with Jane Stangl participating starting Spring 2011) and also with an Advising Steering Committee (ASC) composed of myself, Danielle Ramdath, two faculty from the current LAA pilot (Daphne Lamothe and Greg White) and two faculty from last year's Moodle eportfolio pilot (Barbara Brehm-Curtis and Lauren Duncan). Cate Rowen represented the Office of Institutional research at many of the ASC discussions. I served for a second year on the Assessment Subcommittee of CAP, which was very useful for thinking about the ways advising and assessment are coupled through the eportfolio; this subcommittee has provided excellent guidance on eportfolio development. I also met with the Writing Committee to talk about writing assessment and how that might work with the eportfolio. Tom Laughner and Danielle Ramdath convened a group last spring/summer to identify an eportfolio tool for use in the LAA pilot, something we completed in June with the selection of Digication. Caroline Moore in ITS was completely responsible for the implementation of our eportfolio through Digication; she and I worked together last August to prepare the first-year eportfolio template and launch it for orientation. Jesse Jokinen in OIR has provided administrative support for advising functions and has also carried out some analysis of various advising-related assessments.

Board of Liberal Arts Advisers (LAA) Pilot

The LAA pilot in 2010-2011 involved 17 faculty volunteers and approximately 140 first-year advisees. The cornerstones of the pilot program are additional mandated meetings with advisees in the middle of the first semester and at the start of the second semester, and use of an eportfolio (Digication) that combines reflective advising questions and student self-assessment (for this year in the areas of quantitative skills, writing and information literacy). The eportfolio is intended to enhance advising conversations by giving students the opportunity to reflect before meeting with their advisers and by allowing advisers to read these reflections ahead of time and to have some entries into conversations that rise above straightforward course selection.

Survey assessments of adviser/advisee reactions to the LAA pilot were carried out at the start of 2nd semester. Results from these assessments were presented at the April Teaching Arts Lunch on Advising; the full reports prepared by the Office of Institutional Research are attached. We followed up the student survey with informal meetings with students; approximately 10 students total came to these meetings, but judging from the survey responses, their experiences were fairly representative.

The main points I take from these initial assessments are as follows:

- 1) Technical support for the eportfolio software needs to be markedly improved for both faculty and students. I handled all user-related tech support this year and was able to help every student who contacted me (about 20 students outside my own advisees), and Caroline Moore dealt with Digication-level bugs. Specific feedback from the students shows they favor better online instructions (screen shots) as well as User Support-based help with Digication.

Related to the tech support issue, if we could find ways to have both students and faculty use the eportfolio platform more often, ease of use would also be greatly enhanced. At the Assessment Subcommittee there was some interest in having WI courses use the eportfolio more directly (students are already supposed to upload their writing samples there), and there may be other curricular ways to use Digication. A challenge will be that not all students have subscriptions, so for now use is limited to LAA pilot participants.

2) Students need more and better clarification on the purpose of the eportfolio—many of them misidentify it as a substitute for, rather than an enhancement of, face to face contact with their adviser. Faculty may also need better support in how to use the eportfolio successfully, something we will address at this year’s May faculty development workshop on advising.

3) Students were not really clamoring for more ways to use eportfolios, but it’s still possible they would be attracted by ways they could use eportfolios outside advising. I think we should try to mount some pilot workshops (e.g. through the CDO) on what they can do with eportfolios, and it might also be worth exploring whether there are some faculty who would like to experiment with Digication for courses, concentrations, etc. This would add subscription costs if we went outside LAA participants; we might also think about these “extras” as carrots for LAA participation.

We have also added local questions that are advising-related to the Enrolled Student Survey (attached as a separate document). While the previous assessments were very specific to students’ impressions of elements of the LAA pilot, these questions seek to understand students’ perceptions of advising generally, so that we might compare LAA and non-LAA students in terms of some higher-level advising outcomes. *[Note: this analysis is now complete and shows some statistically significant—and positive—differences for LAA vs. “regular” first-year advisees.]*

For the second year of the LAA pilot we are again relying on volunteers from among faculty who are eligible for pre-major advising, and we anticipate a similarly-sized group. *[Note: we have 27 faculty signed up for the 2011-12 LAA pilot in addition to the continuing 17 faculty from the first year.]*

Eportfolio development beyond the first year

This summer we will develop a general eportfolio template for the students’ second year. The Advising Steering Committee has also endorsed the idea of working with a small number of volunteer departments/programs that would like to experiment with a major eportfolio for major advising. This would start with the Faculty Code-mandated plan for a major that each student is supposed to write when she declares her major. The plan is for a few models of the major eportfolio to serve as examples for future development across the curriculum.

Sophomore Reboot

A sophomore advising program is envisioned as part of LAA as students move into their second year; we ran Sophomore Reboot in Fall 2010 and are in the process of allowing students to sign up for the 2011 version, which will take place on Sunday, Sept. 11, 2011. The OIR-prepared report from our 2010 participant survey is attached. The main takeaway from these survey results, which is similar to results from the 2009 program (which was significantly changed for 2010), is that students

who show up to do the program tend to find it valuable. Our problem both years has been getting the students who signed up ahead of time to show up.

This year, in response to our two years' worth of survey results, the Advising Steering Committee in consultation with Maureen Mahoney recommended major structural changes to make the program shorter and to hold it after classes have started. Students will choose only one workshop this year, and they will sign up ahead of time for the informal faculty-led discussions about advising. The online signup form, which also contains more detailed information about the program, is posted on the Class Deans' website at <http://www.smith.edu/classdeans/reboot.php>.

This year we opened up Reboot first to LAA participants. Registration was announced via an email to LAA students on May 3, and less than 12 hours later, 20 participants had signed up. At the end of finals week we will open up registration to all sophomores by invitation. The number of students we can accommodate will depend in large part on how well-dispersed their workshop choices are, although initial results show great variability in students first through third choices. *[Note: we are in the process of assigning workshop choices to the approximately 150 students who have signed up to date.]*

Advising issues CAP might wish to consider

Advising loads

I had several informal conversations this year with faculty and with Tom Riddell about advising loads—there are some departments/programs and some individual faculty with unusually high advising loads. I looked at advising numbers for all faculty and found that, almost without exception, these unusually high loads are at least in part the result of uneven distribution of advisees with departments and programs. In some cases this arises because of faculty leaves—a faculty member sheds advisees when s/he goes on sabbatical, and his/her number of advisees is not restored immediately on return to campus. However, there are a number of cases where some relief could be provided by the Chair or Director taking a more active role in distributing advisees.

Tom and I agree that there should be a soft cap on number of advisees, and that number should be something like 25. If there is sufficient support for this idea, I would like to obtain data on advisees for Fall 2011 and begin conversations with specific faculty about how to normalize their advising loads, leaving the details up to individuals and to individual departments and programs. It is important to note, I think, that while many of the faculty with a large number of advisees end up in that situation because they have excellent rapport with students, as well as expertise in areas students want to study, there is simply a limit to how effective an adviser one can be with a large number of advisees.

It is also worth noting that some faculty have proposed that, in departments with a high ratio of majors to advisers, faculty should not be asked to participate in pre-major (or liberal arts) advising. The main problem I see with this approach is that it would deny entering students access to advisers in the very fields many of them are interested in. It would put additional pressure on students to declare majors early, and it would also remove some of our most effective advisers from a critical stage of academic advising. It may in fact be the case that in some departments/programs it makes

sense for faculty to receive a slightly smaller number of first-year advisees, but that will depend on the details of advisee allocation in any given year.

Evaluation of advisers

Every time I meet with student groups and ask them about advising, I hear some number of advising horror stories about advisers who will not return calls or emails; advisers who tell students that if they leave the adviser alone, the adviser will give them their registration code; advisers who react angrily when students do not want to take courses in the adviser's field; advisers who are dismissive of entire fields we offer at the college; advisers who have no idea who their advisees are and who give the impression that they don't think this is a problem; and advisers who simply give bad (wrong) information. I also hear stories of less-than-effective advising, where the feedback students have to offer could potentially be very helpful to individual advisers.

In some cases, when an advising relationship is going particularly badly, the First Year Class Dean finds out about it and can step in either to reassign the student or to give the student help in improving her interactions with her adviser. In some cases the student chooses on her own to find a new pre-major adviser or, I suspect in more cases, declares a major on the early side to get a new adviser. Some students keep their pre-major adviser but turn to another faculty member for de facto advising.

If we think advising is important to our students' education, I think we need a way to identify when it's not working and to help faculty who are struggling (and may not know it) do a better job at it. We also need to help students who are not doing well at being advisees, but I think we need to acknowledge that the feedback mechanism in that direction is a little more developed (i.e. faculty often, or at least sometimes, report advising problems to the Class Deans). I think in many cases improvement in suboptimal advising might simply require a re-norming of advisers' understanding of what is expected of us in this role. But in some cases, we probably need faculty development around advising even for those who don't normally volunteer for such activities. Which brings me to the final question. . .

Who should do advising?

This was a central question the Advising Task Force grappled with, and I don't think we were able to come to a conclusion. Lee Cuba, who headed the Teagle-funded study that informed (and continues to inform) a lot of our work, feels very strongly that not everyone should do the kind of advising envisioned for LAA. This came up at the faculty meeting where I led a discussion on the LAA.

As I hope I articulated then, I have two strong and somewhat conflicting opinions on this. First, it seems that there are some number of faculty who are bad at pre-major advising and who perhaps don't care to get better at it.

Second, if we accept that we will use only faculty who are "good" at advising, I think we risk developing a subculture of "nurturers" who take care of new students, and among other things I worry about the ways this might stratify our faculty along lines of gender, division, rank, etc. The LAA pilot is interesting in that, while it selects only volunteers (so presumably people who are

“good” at advising in some way, or at least care deeply about it), it rewards them with a fund for research, thereby enhancing the other end of the spectrum of faculty life in relation to the teaching/service orientation of advising.

One thing that has become clear to me after two years of working intensely on advising-related matters here is that the messages we send to faculty early in their careers about the importance of advising have some staying power. When junior faculty are encouraged by senior faculty to try to avoid pre-major advising (as some apparently are), they are acting rationally if they view this activity as much less important than their scholarly work and even than their teaching. That view may be a useful one for thinking about how to allocate one’s time during the probationary period (although it’s not clear that a normal advising load, handled conscientiously, is incompatible with productivity in other areas), but I think we are setting ourselves up for disappointment if we expect faculty to shift priorities *en masse* once that period expires.

Appendix G. Letters concerning WI courses

April 13, 2011

Dear Teacher of a Writing-Intensive Course:

As you know, the Faculty voted last spring to adopt new guidelines defining what a writing-intensive course (WI) must include. Those guidelines made two essential changes, stating that a writing-intensive course requires:

1. students to write a minimum of 15 pages of finished work (not counting drafts and revisions) in at least 3 papers, one of which must be at least 5 pages;
2. students to write in drafts and instructors to provide feedback in at least 2 papers while writing is still in process so that students may incorporate instructors' comments and thus prepare better work.

The new guidelines add that a writing-intensive course will also employ some of the following strategies:

- Using peer review, tailored to the goals of particular assignments, with prompts enabling students to become constructive readers (“What evidence offered in support of the central argument do you find most compelling?”) as opposed to unhelpful readers (“What did you like best about this essay?”).
- Convening individual conferences devoted to students' writing.
- Employing the “workshop method”—that is, reserving class time for discussing and evaluating writing.
- Incorporating a range of “low stakes” writing activities that will not be evaluated but will inculcate in students the notion that one may both learn to write and write to learn.

Following the faculty vote, CAP waited a year to implement the decision. The new rules will go into effect in fall 2011. We are asking all instructors of WI courses to let CAP know if they plan to continue to list their courses as writing intensive and, if so, to provide a brief explanation of how they will implement the guidelines. Please let Danielle Ramdath at dramdath@smith.edu know by May 30th about your course and plan for implementation so that we may include it in the list of writing intensive offerings. If we do not hear from you, we will assume you do not wish your course to be listed as writing intensive.

With thanks,

The Committee on Academic Priorities

Marilyn Schuster (Chair)	John Davis	Joseph McVeigh
Donald Baumer	Martine Gantrel	William Oram
Robert Buchele	Nicholas Horton	Danielle Ramdath
	Maureen Mahoney	

CAP/jam

cc	Writing Committee:	Julio Alves	William Oram
		Susan Etheredge	Sharon Seelig
		Suzanne Gottschang	Doreen Weinberger

May 20, 2011

Dear Teacher of a Writing-Intensive Course:

This message is a follow-up to the one we sent you earlier this spring. We still need to hear from you about the writing-intensive course you are scheduled to teach next year. Please let us know if you plan to keep it writing-intensive and, if so, how.

Please respond by May 31st in one of the following ways: either write a brief paragraph saying how you plan to keep your course writing-intensive, or fill out the questionnaire below. Please send your response to Danielle Ramdath at dramdath@smith.edu. **If we don't hear from you by May 31st, we will assume that you do not intend to keep your course writing-intensive.**

Thanks for responding at this busy time.

The members of CAP

Donald Baumer	Nicholas Horton
Robert Buchele	Joseph McVeigh
Martine Gantrel	William Oram

Questionnaire on Writing-Intensive Course

Instructor Name: _____

Course Number & Name _____

Please check ONE of the following two options:

I do not plan to teach my course according to the new guidelines; please delete the writing-intensive designation.

I plan to teach the course according to the new guidelines. In my course:

- *Students will write a minimum of 15 pages of finished work (not counting drafts and revisions) in at least 3 papers, one of which must be at least 5 pages.*
- *Students will write in drafts and I will provide feedback in at least 2 papers while writing is still in process so that students may incorporate my comments and thus prepare better work.*

If you selected this option, continue to next question

If you plan to teach the course according to the new guidelines, please let us know if in addition you will incorporate any of the following strategies:

Peer review, tailored to the goals of particular assignments, with prompts enabling students to become constructive readers.

Individual conferences with students, devoted to students' writing.

The use of class time for discussing and evaluating writing.

A range of "low stakes" writing activities that will not be evaluated but will inculcate in students the notion that one may both learn to write and write to learn.

Appendix H.
Liberal Arts Lunch Schedule

Liberal Arts Luncheon, Fall 2010

Lower Level, Smith College Conference Center, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| September 23 | Marilyn Schuster, Provost and Dean of the Faculty
“Faculty Matters: Reflections on last year, goals for the year ahead” |
| September 30 | Jefferson Hunter, English Language and Literature
“The Art of Film: The dissolve” |
| October 7 | James Miller, Economics
“Why Cryonics Could Extend Your Life by Thousands of Years and Save over 100,000 Lives Each Day” |
| October 14 | Suleiman Mourad, Religion
“The Medieval Roots of Modern Islamic Jihad” |
| October 21 | Reid Bertone-Johnson, Landscape Studies
“The Ada & Archibald MacLeish Field Station: Experience in the liberal arts” |
| October 28 | Randy Frost, Psychology
“Hoarding and other Acquisitive Behaviors” |
| November 4 | Martine Gantrel, French Studies
“Edith Wharton and Marcel Proust: Why they never met” |
| November 11 | Chris Gole, Mathematics
“Do Plants Know Math? ‘Mystic’ spirals, Fibonacci numbers and geometry” |
| November 18 | Paul Voss, Engineering
“Exploring the Arctic Atmosphere with the World's Smallest Robotic Balloons: A scientific collaboration between Norwegian Meteorological Institute and Smith College” |
| December 2 | Andrew Rotman, Religion
“The Making of a New Masculinity in a Landmark Bollywood Film: <i>Amar, Akbar, Anthony</i> and the politics of muscular Hinduism” |
| December 9 | Fraser Stables, Art
"Solo Shoot: Recent Photography and Video" |

Liberal Arts Luncheon, Spring 2011

Lower Level, Smith College Conference Center, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

- February 3 Gregory White, Government
“Climate Change and Human Migration: A Security Concern?”
- February 10 Joseph McVeigh, German Studies
“How Ozzie and Harriet Saved Europe after WW II”
- February 17 Lester Tome, Dance
“Princely Machos in Tights: The Embodiment of Masculinity in the Cuban Ballet”
- February 24 Andrea Stone, English
“‘The Ignominious Cord’: Executing the Enemy in 18th-Century African American Print”
- March 3 Susan Stratton Sayre, Economics
“A Tale of Two Manchac: A Comparative Study of Aquifer Management in Southern Spain”
- March 10 Joshua Birk, History
“Slaves of the Court: Eunuchs in the Medieval Mediterranean World”
- March 24 Annaliese Beery, Psychology
“Biodiversity in Neuroscience: Why Study Weird Species and Two Sexes?”
- March 31 Roger Kaufman, Economics
“Economics Issues in Higher Education: The Case of Smith”
- April 7 Adam Hall, Biological Sciences
“General Anesthesia: The Good, the Bad and the Questionable”
- April 14 Riché Barnes, Afro-American Studies
“Modeling Motherhood: Choices, Demands and Expectations”
- April 21 Malcolm McNee, Spanish and Portuguese
“(Un)Natural Wor(l)ds: Environmentalty in Contemporary Art and Literature from Brazil”
- April 28 Alexandra Keller, Film Studies
“Undead Media: The Digital Vampire”