

Educational Policy Committee Minutes

September 18, 2025 - Fully Virtual

Attended Committee Members: Marina Puzakova, Daniel Babcock, Kelly Austin, Corrie Vakil, Khurram Hussain, Linda Bell, Lucy Napper, Michael Dills-Allen, Naomi Rothman, Terry-Ann Jones, Todd Watkins, Tom Hammond, Edmund Webb, Joanna Mishtal, Lisa Lindley, Lori McClaind, Michael Gusmano, Olivia Grimes

1. Approval of September 4th minutes (attached).

- No comments
- Minutes approved

2. Update on R&P 1.3.2.1 revision (Educational Policy Committee).

- Sent to Senate.

3. Discussion of R&P 3.2.1 Changes in Curricula or Courses. R&P 3.2.1.

- The comments were shared with the Senate working group.
- Frank Gunter (Chair of the working group from Senate) is a guest speaker.
 - Most of recommendations made are excellent - working group will address them
 - Extra precision, etc.
 - Main issue: page 3, #8 - vague and subjective on purpose / by necessity (want to provide a space for things we cannot expect, bottom has 3 examples), if more precision is desired, where to go with it?
 - Haven't spoken to GRC yet, likely next week
 - Any recommended language from those who wanted more precision?
 - Could a potential alternative be to empower the college policy committees to say, no this isn't non-substantive, and switch it over to the catch-all category
 - Add a line which says discretion can be used
 - Potentially confusing: who can raise such an issue? Others had clear guidelines, adding who category 8 would be designated to would help clarify.
 - Other issue: bullet 9 - what was the intent of restricting it to academic programs only?
 - Task force working on continuing education units (CEU) (not a degree seeking program / not for credit; could be for alumni) - within that policy, need to establish a board, the proposed language makes it apply here
 - Third route that isn't undergrad or graduate focused? - Seems to be suggesting an overarching route, but what is the advantage of this?
 - Student Affairs has a lot of things called "programs", without adding "academic" it seems too broad; e.g., Google "Lehigh student affairs program" and it's used frequently to refer to their programs
 - No definition of what a program is
 - Some courses that are towards a degree are zero-credit, so need to be careful about language

- Gunter feels he understands the points brought up, will bring it all up with the rest of the working group
- What is the process going forward?
 - Time-pressure indicates done by end of semester
 - Working group will meet with Ed Pol again, GRC, some individual colleges
 - Mid-October, come back with new version for stakeholders to get a response from
 - Topic not on agenda for next Ed Pol meeting - perhaps 2 meetings from now

4. Provisional 0-credit courses (Kelly Austin). A discussion for Ed Policy in 2021 is attached.

- Guest: Michael Jorgensen, music department chair
- From Kelly/Michael:
 - Music and theatre department offer courses for 0-1 credit - lesson, ensemble and production type courses
 - Offered this way for as long as we can remember
 - Meant to make these types of events more accessible to students - students can choose to take it for 0 or 1 credit
 - 0 credits allows students to join in a low risk way, and also not exceed maximum number of credits when this is a concern
 - Bringing this up because a 0 credit course was proposed and denied (production of into the woods - 3 hr show, bringing together theater and music department)
 - Ensemble course to learn their parts and how to interact with others
 - Argument 1: the policy/memo says 0 credit courses are available for ensembles, and this is an ensemble
 - Argument 2: provisional course and theatre; provisional is ensemble, should be eligible for 0 credits
 - Don't want to make participating in a show a barrier for students if it doesn't fit in their degree to add additional credits
 - Currently: listed as 1-4 credits, 4 students are not registered for the class, have to overload; don't want to have to tell faculty that a student was recommended not to take extra credits
 - Advocating to allow this course to have a 0 credit option; and how to make it clear going forward that a production is an ensemble and should thus be approved to have a 0 credit option
 - Not an argument about whether there should be 0 credit option or not, but that the option exists, and this class qualifies
 - Plus, students don't want to do the petition paperwork - barrier to entry
 - Investigation shows that there have been things approved by faculty groups and never made it to Ed Pol
 - Can students not register for the course and still participate in the play?
 - 5-7 years ago, less strict; course had 20 people enrolled, but in reality had 80 people participating, so enrollment doesn't accurately reflect the amount of work and effort that went in to the production

- For a 0 credit course, you are graded and it shows up on transcript, just doesn't count towards GPA
 - Students are encouraged to use credits if it fits in their schedule, 0 credit just allows the opportunity for those without room in their schedule to participate
- Concern is that restrictions on credits are to protect students from their own decisions, and from taking too many credits than they can handle; how to ensure students are not taking on more than they can manage?
 - Michael Jorgensen: This is rarely the case, and students seem to be good at holding themselves accountable; often students will take a semester off (of participating in theatre/musical involvements) if they have too much going on
 - Not claiming it's impossible that students become overloaded, but experientially, students self select out as much as they self select in
 - Kelly: grade doesn't go into GPA, but it still matters to students. We don't control how many clubs students are in, or if they're involved in sports, etc., so ultimately we cannot control how much a student takes on
 - +1 from Todd Watkins; we don't put guardrails elsewhere else, why here? Seems like an imbalance in the system. Assume students can make wise choices about their time management, allow those who don't to learn from their mistakes
 - Terry-Ann Jones: But grades are not attached to clubs... limitations are set for a reason, can't be a free for all
 - Tom Hammond: similarly, clubs / sports are not taught by faculty; exists in a different space
 - Edmund Webb: heavy advising goes a long way, engineering students enjoy having a release from thinking about technical topics all day but often have high-credit semesters
 - Tom Hammond: lots of places where zero-credit courses may be nicely used to encourage co-curriculum, but it is a slippery slope - what about only allowing students to take one 0-credit course per semester?
 - Push-back: some students are required because of their scholarship to do a certain amount of ensembles / private lessons; we don't want them to take it for 0 credits, but they may need to
 - Michael Gusmano - there are other 0-credit courses (e.g., math 0) where it may not make sense to prevent a student from taking two 0-credit courses
 - Advisor permission to take more than one 0-credit course, instead of restricting to one?
 - Due to scholarship, this would be putting student scholarships at risk of their advisor's denial
 - Also, how would this be monitored?
- Theatre has always been associated with courses and credits
 - Don't want to encourage finding loopholes (remove theatre component so it's just music, and it would be allowed as a 0-credit ensemble)
- What would the ideal situation look like?
 - Michael Dillis-Allen: big concern is students overdoing it; adding guardrails like being discussed, specifically related to advising, could make it work
 - Don't want to throw open a door that we purposely only cracked open
- Where would the policy live?

- Add to R&P - expectations should be clear
 - Send to Senate
- In the future, there needs to be a more thorough discussion about creating a policy surrounding 0-credit courses
- If approved, create another section of the course for 0-credits, instead of having all students re-register, and risking students dropping below 12 credits
- Vote on allowing provisional 0-credit course:
 - APPROVED

5. R&P 3.2.2.1 Cross-listing courses. Revised language from EdPol—returned from Senate.

Update: Feedback requested from Colleges' CPCs.

- Contacted, on their next agenda item for CPC then they will get back to us

6. Budget Proposal (a note from the Senate attached).

- Note from Senate (on Coursesite)
 - Budget for Ed Pol, GRC, and Secretary of Faculty, is ~2K each
 - Suggests combining most/all of funds to a single index to support faculty governance
 - Support of this from Michael Dillis-Allen
- Supportive of the ideas from the letter
- How else are these funds used?
 - Cookies and soda :)
 - Taken back at end of year

Did not have time to discuss:

7. Bound/Cross-listed courses waitlists (Lucy Napper).

Note: cross-listed courses no longer have waitlists which may cause major issues for interdisciplinary programs and the faculty who teach classes for those programs.

8. Revision of R&P 3.21.1. Prior EdPol proposed revision and a note from Senate are attached.

9. 3.20.1 - Requirements for Graduation (Michael Dills-Allen).

10. 3.1.4.2 - Leave of Absence (Michael Dills-Allen).

11. Discussion of R&P 3.6 - Need clarification that special topics are a form of provisional class as this is being used as a work around in some areas.

12. Priority registration (Michael Dills-Allen).

13. Discussion of R&P 3.2.5 (Attendance policy) (Lori McClain).

14. Discussion of R&P 3.7.2 (Common Hour Exams) (Request from Faculty Senate attached)

15. Discussion of teaching evaluations: to use them as a tool for teaching improvement (vs. teaching evaluations).

16. Discussion of Apprentice Teaching 3.14.5.1.

Minutes prepared by Olivia Grimes