

Minutes for CPEP Board Meeting

December 6, 2018 – Submitted by Tom Owens (sub for Deb Streeter)

Present:

Board Chair Jan Zeserson, Alex Chertok, Raymond Roe, Rachel Aleks, Tom Owens, Andy Borum, Ifeoma Ajunwa, Bob Turgeon, Willie Marshall, Esta Bigler, Rob Scott (ex officio), Tess Wheelwright (ex officio)

Excused:

Deb Streeter, Sandra Greene, Mary Katzenstein, Katherine McComas (ex officio)

Meeting was called to order by Jan Zeserson at 3:03.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 9, 2018 board meeting were approved unanimously without change.

Approval of Agreement on Operating Principles and Procedures document

The Agreement on Operating Principles and Procedures document, which was discussed and modified at the previous meeting and circulated prior to this this meeting, was approved unanimously.

Approval of Bylaws Section 2.1.c and d regarding board membership

This revised section of the Bylaws, which had been discussed and presented by Rachel, Willie, Ray, and Jan, and which was circulated to the board prior to this meeting, was approved unanimously.

Obtaining feedback from currently incarcerated students

Jan raised the question about how effectively we receive feedback from our current students. Rachel clarified the question by recognizing that we do course evaluations for each course, but that the results do not necessarily come back to the instructors, and the responses to general questions about the program are not forwarded to the board. Tess noted that instructors currently must request evaluations to see them. Esta also asked whether we get feedback from our students at the time of graduation, when perhaps they have the broadest perspectives on the program. Rob responded that this is highly variable and depends on whether the administration at the relevant facility would permit us to conduct such a survey. **An ad hoc committee of Rachel, Ray, and Willie will draft questions that we might ask our students. Jan will circulate these for board review before our next meeting. Jan also asked that the current evaluation form be sent to everyone on the board for reference.**

Curriculum Committee Report

Tom reported that the Curriculum Committee met in November where they reviewed and approved all of the spring courses that will be rostered through Cornell (courses rostered by Cayuga CC are reviewed by CCC). Tom raised the concern about how we are going to deal with students who are accepted into the program who do not have sufficient math background to be successful in our current non-credit (NC) math courses (both Tom and Fred are experiencing this circumstance this semester). Rob indicated that the problem at Five Points this semester is at least in part due to the small number of students who were permitted to take the exam. We have fewer students now at Five Points than when Hobart William Smith was offering courses there.

The discussion revolved around the compromises required to balance having a regular (pedagogically sound) sequence of classes for new students versus maintaining a sufficient number of students in the program. In recent years, it has been necessary to have entrance exams more than once a year which makes it difficult to have a regular sequence of classes that all new students take. **The curriculum committee will discuss this and make recommendations to the board at the next meeting.**

Computer Labs in our prisons

The students in the Certificate Program at Cayuga have now had four sessions in the new computer lab. At present, there is not need for an ad hoc committee because Andy and Ed Mei, our CPEP intern, are handling it, but they may need help next semester. Rob reported we are working toward a computer lab installation at Auburn CF sometime in January. We discussed whether we are going to need a part-time person to run the computer labs once things get going. Andy will keep the board informed.

Nominating Committee

The committee, consisting of Rachel, Ray, Infoema, and Jan, reported that we will need five new members to start July 1, 2019. One *must* be a non-Cornell person with experience as a criminal justice professional. One *may* be a formerly incarcerated student, and one *may* be a grad student or post-doc instructor (current or previous). It was noted that these latter two categories are one-year appointments (with the possibility of reappointment to a maximum of three successive terms). **Board members are requested to send nominations to Rachel soon because the board must vote on membership at our late spring (probably May) meeting.** Board members should contact individuals before nominating them for membership to see if they would be interested but note that this contact is not a guarantee that they will be approved to board membership. The nominations committee will then follow up with all nominees to request a short, introductory bio.

NYC-CPEP Committee

There will be an event at Weill-Cornell on 8 January 2019, organized by NYC-CPEP, a group of former CPEP TAs working in concert with an ad hoc board committee (Esta, Mary, Rob). A panel of former TAs who have moved into fields of medicine and social justice will present. Room capacity is 65 attendees. **Board members are encouraged to attend (announcement**

coming). Rob is working on selected donors or potential donors (primarily parents of former CPEP volunteers) to attend as well.

CPEP 2nd

Willie and Tess have organized regular, informal social events for the CPEP community on the second of each month at various locations. The plan is that if the second of the month falls on Monday through Thursday, the gathering be on campus; Friday through Sunday, it will be downtown. Two gatherings so far (11/2 and 12/2, both at Argos Inn) have been successful. Next gathering is Wednesday January 2nd, location to be announced. It was noted that drinks at places like Argos can be expensive; Jan suggested CPEP pick up the tab for a first round of drinks as a thank-you. Rob suggested we make donations to a pool to buy first rounds for grad students. It was also suggested that some locations may be willing to sponsor first rounds for grad students. Finger food provided by CPEP funds was also mentioned.

Establishing a CPEP “emergency fund”

Jan has started discussion with Alternatives Federal Credit Union (AFCU) about an emergency fund for CPEP alums. An ad hoc committee of Jan, Tom, and Willie (Ray, will you join, too?) was appointed to look into how this might work.

Report from Associate Director of Curriculum and Programming

Tess reported that this semester the program has held four lunch meetings for instructors: one for first time instructors, one for women instructors, one for current instructors based on curriculum groups (math, English, social sciences, etc) and the most recent for all current and future (spring 2019) instructors. All have been very successful, particularly for helping new instructors. Ed Mei has organized an evening gathering (better timing for undergrads) pizza party for current TAs. These will all be reprised in the spring.

Tess also reported she will visit the Prison University Project at San Quentin in mid-December, and she hopes to bring back ideas to implement at the CPEP kickoff in January. Sixteen TAs are taking the Reflections course this semester (run by Rob and Willie).

Esta asked whether we are accommodating different learning styles in our prison classes, as there is research which shows that many people in prison have AD and ADHD issues. Tess said one way some instructors attempt to accommodate is by giving take-home exams instead of in-class, timed exams.

Report from the Executive Director

Rob raised the important issue about how CPEP can continue to support and participate in state and national prison education initiatives. He challenged us to think about a day when, because of the reinstatement of Pell and TAP grants that other colleges get directly involved in prison education because it will be an income stream. For example, Cayuga CC could, with federal and state funding, operate and staff a full Associates degree program with no participation from Cornell. His question was – what might CPEP’s role be in this sort of universe, and what should we be doing now to plan for this likely occurrence?

It was decided that this is an excellent discussion topic for our next board meeting, which will likely be scheduled in March before Spring Break (Doodle poll to come). Esta indicated that she would like to come to Ithaca for that meeting, and Tess suggested that we might also book her for a guest lecture at one of the prisons and/or on campus

Miscellaneous

It was reported that CPEP's participation in the events during Trustee Council weekend in November were highly successful: Rob's presented to the Committee on Academic Affairs, and a panel of Rob, Tess, Darnell, Ed and Jan presented to a group of Council members.

The meeting was concluded at 4:31 pm, almost on time.