

EEB Supervisory Committee Meeting
28 February 2008

Proposed Agenda

1. Admissions update
 2. Curriculum Committee update:
 - a. Ad Hoc Committee regarding EEB core course
 - b. upcoming seminar courses
 3. Guidelines for Preliminary Exams
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Minutes

Meeting convened at 12:30 PM in 255 Bessey

Present were Anne Bronikowski, Greg Courtney, Jennifer Deitloff, Mark Kaiser, John Nason, and Charles Sauer.

Agenda

1. Fall 2008 EEB Field Trip – ad hoc agenda item

Action Item: John Nason raised the topic of the class fee for the Fall 2008 EEB field trip to Baja California. Since the trip will be international and involve higher costs, John has been exploring options for support, including student grants through academic colleges (CALs and LAS). John has secured administrative assistance from the Global Agriculture Programs Office. He distributed a proposed budget for committee review.

Resolved: John will continue to explore sources to finance the trip and will work with Charles to make any necessary adjustments to the course fee. No committee action required at this time.

2. Admissions Update

Action Item: The current status of applications and admission offers was reviewed. No responses to offers had been received as of the meeting date and no new developments were reported with applications.

Resolved: No specific action required or taken.

3. Curriculum Issues

a.

Action Item: update from Ad Hoc Committee

Mark Kaiser reported on the discussions within the Ad Hoc Committee, which met on 27 February. Progress has been made with the structure of the new core course. It will address levels of biological organization and the chief schools of thought in the discipline. Mark projected that the next committee meeting on 12 March should be sufficient to complete a working course proposal that may be vetted before the Curriculum Committee. After review by the Curriculum Committee, the proposal will pass to the Supercom, which will conduct a follow-on review and decide when to present it to faculty. Greg tentatively proposed 27 March as the date for the first faculty meeting should the previous steps allow. The goal is yet to offer the new course in Fall 2008.

Resolved: Follow-on action will be taken as progress with the course proposal advances.

b.

Action Item: upcoming EEB 698 (seminar) offerings

The committee was reminded of the need to finalize selection of seminar offers for Fall 2008 and to identify offerings in subsequent terms.

Resolved: Mark Kaiser will solicit faculty for proposals.

4. EEB Guidelines for Preliminary Examinations

Action Item: Faculty and students have raised the issue of elaborating a more detailed policy for preliminary exams. Some have observed that there is a lack of consistency in exam content. Program policy calls for the completion of both an oral and written component for admission to candidacy. Since Graduate College policy requires the oral exam, the discussion focused principally on the written component of the exam.

Each committee member expressed a view on the subject. The chief points included:

- A written component is needed as an important evaluative tool for the committee and as an important learning tool for the student; however, imposing a standard written component denies flexibility to the POS committee and the specific needs of the student.
- A single standard is difficult to establish as it may impose greater burdens on some and lesser on others.
- The existing policy is adequately detailed; POS committees should define exam content.
- Effectiveness of communication within POS committees among members and with the student can vary widely, sometimes creating uncertainty about exam expectations.
- Students need to be confident that exams will be fair; consequently, some direction from the program is appropriate.
- It would be helpful if the program could provide a framework that describes general minimum and maximum limits for exam format.

Resolved: The committee was unanimous in rejecting codification of a single standard for the written component of the prelim exam. It was decided to draft some general guidelines that may help students better understand what they may expect in the form and content of the exam. These guidelines will describe possible formats for the written component and provide advice to prepare for the exam. They will be incorporated into the EEB handbook. Charles will collect information and develop a draft for committee review.

5. Supercom Meeting Minutes – ad hoc agenda item

Action Item: Anne Bronikowski proposed that formal minutes be recorded and posted on the EEB Web site. A brief discussion of proper procedures and logistics followed.

Resolved: The Supercom will review and approve formal minutes, retroactive to the first meeting of the current term (Spring 2008). When approved, these minutes will be posted on the EEB Web site with the schedule of Supercom meetings.

6. Clark Award Comments – ad hoc agenda item

Action Item: Members were reminded to prepare their comments for the 2008 Clark Award candidates.

Resolved: Individual members will follow up as appropriate.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 PM.