

2006-2007 Annual Report: Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus Board Roger Babcock, Chair

The Board members included Roger Babcock (Chair), Tep Dobry , Dian Dooley, Zoe Hammatt, and John Zuern. Jon Goss served as GEC liaison.

The CEI Board reviewed 50 course proposals and had interesting, important and enjoyable discussions regarding the intent of the E focus and how to clarify proposal requirements so as to improve quality and reduce requests for clarification.

Policies and Hallmarks

The CEI Board had changed the proposal questions last year in order to clarify the requirements for successfully obtaining an E designation. Proposals must include a syllabus. It was apparent that the new questions did, in most cases (about 75%), effectively steer the proposals in the direction of providing the information needed to evaluate compliance with the Hallmarks. There were still quite a few proposals (25%) which had to be returned to the applicants for revisions.

The E focus Board agreed with the GEC proposal to make renewals good for 5 years and leave new approvals at 3 years.

The E focus Board instated a policy on Staff Proposals to have the Gen Ed staff automatically accept them without Board review. Since they are prepared by Department Chairs, they often do not thoroughly address the hallmarks, and a full review of the instructor proposal must occur after the instructor is determined anyway.

The E focus Board conducted a workshop for new applicants at the beginning of the Spring 2007 semester (January 17, 2007, 12:30-2:00) to help clarify proposal requirements and share examples of integrating ethics into curriculum in different disciplines. The workshop was a success with approximately 15 attendees.

The E focus Board had discussions regarding problems with several proposals, particularly those originating out of the humanities, that centered around the idea that the hallmarks are intended to teach ethical deliberation techniques and using a decision making framework to do so. Some instructors may have felt that the Board interpretation of the Hallmarks may be too prescriptive. Discussions are on-going with respect to this issue but it does not seem to be an insurmountable problem.

The E focus Board was a big promoter of on-line review of pending proposals and was delighted that the GE office initiated the WebCT review program. This worked very well and made service on the board much easier. The Board hopes that soon all proposals will be encouraged to be submitted on-line to reduce the need for GE office staff to scan documents into WebCT. Thanks GenEd staff!

Proposal Review Statistics

Proposals	Spring 2007	Summer 2007	Fall 2007	Total
Approved	22	4	15	41
Pending	0	1	1	2
Denied	0	3	0	3
Withdrawn	3	0	1	4
Total	25	8	17	50

Note: Additional information was requested from approximately 10 applicants.

Other Issues and Goals

No changes were found necessary for the end-of-semester survey. And it was noted that such changes should be very carefully considered and only made for well-defined reasons since surveys are most useful for comparative purposes.

The E Board plans to repeat the workshop for new applicants at the beginning of the Fall 2007 or Spring 2008 semester to help clarify proposal requirements and share examples of integrating ethics into curriculum in different disciplines..