The Committee on Academic Standards and Procedures met on Thursday, February 11 from 11:00am – 12:20pm in 121 Kirkland Hall. Committee members in attendance were Professors David E. Cliffe, Kathy L. Gaca, M. Shane Hutson, Elizabeth A. Lunbeck, Matthew Ramsey, and George Becker.

The Committee had two proposals on its agenda. The first item addressed involves a charge from the Faculty Council requesting CASP to explore the desirability of permitting students to declare their majors as early as the tenth week of the second semester. As understood by the Committee, the proposal to allow students the opportunity to declare their major prior to the start of the third semester was primarily motivated over concern regarding the adequacy of pre-major advising, especially in the areas of mathematics and the natural sciences. As noted in the minutes of the Faculty Council, such a change will have the likely result that some students (i.e., those who declare their major prior to the third semester) “might be better served by receiving guidance from a major advisor.”

Following careful examination of some of the pros and cons of the recommended change, the Committee voted unanimously to reject adoption of the proposal. It should be noted that the Committee is not opposed as a matter of principle to allow students to declare a major prior to the third semester. Rather, the Committee believes that the solution to the existing deficiencies in pre-major advising are more effectively addressed through improvement of the advising system currently in place. The Committee believes that such improvement could be achieved by adoption of one or a combination of the following strategies:

1. Improve the training of pre-major advising.

2. Encourage students, both in writing and from advisors, to seek council from the department in which they want to major.

3. Encourage the mathematics department to identify one or more contact persons who can provide guidance to advisors and/or students.

4. Hire some pre-major advisors from the departments of mathematics and the natural sciences.

5. Try to retain the best advisors rather than rotating them out of the advising system on a regular basis.
The second proposal addressed by the Committee was submitted by Professor Matthew Ramsey, a member of CASP. He proposed that the Committee ask the Faculty Council to reconsider its decision to reject the Committee’s recommendation on departmental honors on grounds that the Committee’s proposal was not adequately presented at the Council meeting. It should be recalled that the Committee’s proposal called for retaining the old model (honors/high honors) rather than substituting the new model approved last year (honors/highest honors). Following detailed discussion, the Committee rejected Professor Ramsey’s proposal by a vote of 4 to 2.
To: Gregg Horowitz, Chair of A&S Faculty Council

From: George Becker, Chair of Committee on Academic Standards and Procedures

Date: April 6, 2010

Re: Recommendations to Faculty Council

The Committee on Academic Standards and Procedures met on Friday, April 2 from 2:00pm–3:45pm in 410 Kirkland Hall. Committee members in attendance were Professors David Cliffel, Kathy Gaca, M. Shane Hutson, Matthew Ramsey, and George Becker.

The Committee had three items on its agenda. The first item addressed involved a charge from the Committee on Educational Programs requesting CASP to consider codifying a policy regarding the number of hours that can be double-counted between non-interdisciplinary majors. As noted in the charge, unlike the existence of a regulation that stipulates a limit of six hours that can be double-counted between an interdisciplinary major and a non-interdisciplinary major, no policy has ever been formulated regarding two non-interdisciplinary majors. Following a brief discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the six-hours rule should also be applied to non-interdisciplinary majors.

The Committee’s second agenda item involved a charge from the Dean’s Office to choose the Arts and Science Founder’s Medalist and the Banner Bearer for Commencement. Following thorough discussion of the six candidates being considered, the Committee, by unanimous vote, generated a rank order of the top three candidates. The Committee’s recommendations were subsequently conveyed to the Dean’s Office.

The final item considered involved a second charge from CEP. CASP was asked to examine “whether or not the requirement for Honors programs that are not defined as specific tracks within a major should be considered as requirements for the major and therefore subject to the maximum hours allowed” under the newly adopted 48-hours regulation. The Committee decided on the following two recommendations:

1. By a vote of four to one, the Committee recommends that the 48-hours rule should also be made to apply to Honors programs that are not defined as specific tracks within a major on grounds that the newly adopted 48-hours rule should prove flexible enough to accommodate such programs.

2. In light of some of the difficulties that Committee members encountered in decoding the number of hours required for Honors programs in some Departments, the Committee makes the following recommendation: Every Department that has an Honors program should clearly specify the exact number of hours required.