Minutes
Academic Standards Committee
January 30, 2009

Present: Seth Weinberger, Mike Spivey, Drew Shannon, Greta Austin, Martins Linauts, Sarah Moore, Jack Roundy, Roseanne Fish, Carolyn Weisz, Ken Clark, Betsy Kirkpatrick, Brad Tomhave, and Debbie Chee

1. Minutes: The December 4th minutes were approved

2. Announcements:

3. Petitions Committee Report: Brad Tomhave provided the following report of the Petitions Committee for the period 12/18/08 through 1/29/09. There were thirty-four petitions; twenty-two petitions were approved, nine petitions were denied, and three petitions resulted in no action. For the year, 82 petitions have been approved and 99 petitions have been denied.

Along with reviewing the above petitions, Brad Tomhave reports the Sub-Committee met on 1/6/2009 to place academic sanctions. The Sub-Committee met on 1/15/2009 to consider petitions from students asking to be immediately readmitted or reinstated. Finally, the Sub-Committee met on 1/22/2009 and confirmed Thursdays at 8:15 as regular meeting time.

4. Announcements: None

5. Chair Weinberger reviewed semester’s agenda

6. Classroom Disruption Policy: Chair Weinberger reopened the discussion asking two questions. Should the student have the right to appeal the classroom disruption policy? Are faculty members using the policy inappropriately? Sarah Moore reviewed issues raised about the current policy; the length of time to address the disruption, the placement of the policy in the handbook, how is the student notified, and the clarity of what is disruptive behavior. Jack Roundy stated that the policy is invoked about once every other year because issues do not always need to be resolved by a classroom disruption contract. There has not been an issue around timing. Jack said that when these cases come to his attention, he tries to create the contract, meet with the student, and have the student sign the contract before the next scheduled class session. Jack emphasized that the focus of the contract is to alter behavior not attitudes or opinions. Jack spoke about a due process that protects both the faculty member and the student. Betsy Kirkpatrick agreed stating a student should have some way to say, “It was not me.”

Jack described the general process as including the following steps: if an issue arises, the faculty member should consult with Director of Academic Advising to discuss measures short of invoking the policy. Jack then asks the faculty member to write to the student outlining the behaviors affecting the class. If the behavior continues, then the faculty member will invoke the policy and the student is not allowed to return to class until they have met with the Director of Academic Advising and signed a contract. This process is relatively...
quick because of the work leading up to invoking the policy. Seth Weinberger said he would work on wording for the policy that would explain the steps to take before the policy is invoked.

The contract defines the disruptive behaviors and Jack works hard with the faculty member to focus on behaviors and not attitudes. Jack gave an example or a behavior that resulted in a contract: a student wanted to “take over a class,” for example, and the student took a vote asking to change course objectives. Sarah mentioned that in the past case, it was difficult to operationalize the behaviors given that they were subtle and, according to the faculty member, passive-aggressive.

Sarah Moore also noted that in last semester’s case, the student wanted to appeal the decision during the contract development process, taking issue with whether the behavior actually warranted invoking the classroom disruption policy. What if student feels policy was inappropriately applied? Should students have the right to appeal this decision? Jack Roundy noted that he not had an experience like this and would not know what an appeal process would look like. At this point, Sarah clarified that the current policy does permit appeal after a student has been dropped from the course. Sarah also mentioned that the logistics to organize a hearing board in a timely manner during the point at which a contract was being developed would be challenging. Carolyn Weisz asked why a student would appeal. Would the appeal be to get back into the course if dismissed? Or would they appeal change a “WF” to a “W.” Jack mentioned that a contract could be signed in February and the behavior appears again in March and they are dropped. The date withdrawn could be a difference in the grade assigned. Seth says some sort of appeal needs to stay.

Overall, there was agreement to include instructions for faculty members considering using the Classroom Disruption policy. The faculty member should contact the Director of Academic Advising for steps to take before invoking the policy. The committee also supported the idea of an appeal option for students, but the process was not formalized. There was no decision about placement of the policy in the Academic Handbook.

7. **Involuntary Withdrawal Policy:** Chair Weinberger introduced the request from Debbie Chee to look at creating an Involuntary Withdrawal policy. While Debbie Chee was not fully prepared to present the request, she gave a brief example of a situation not covered by existing policies. Jack Roundy asked if the Emergency Administrative Withdrawal (EAW) policy could be adapted to include these situations. After a quick review of the EAW policy, these situations would not be covered by the EAW because the EAW policy is not intended to apply in situations of chronic or on-going medical, emotional, or psychological distress. Debbie asked the discussion be tabled until a scheduled date. At that time the committee could also review the request from Donn Marshall, Associate Dean of Students, to amend the Medical Withdrawal policy. Sarah Moore said that she would email the committee the proposed language change.

8. **Advisors in the major:** Jack Roundy mentioned that the advisor needs to have the understanding of the major and serve as a touchstone for the department. He suggested a student could select his or her primary advisor and if that faculty member is not in the major,
then the student could select a secondary advisor in the major. Sarah Moore identified the majors with heavy advising loads as Biology, Business, Psychology, and IPE. Sarah suggested the idea of an “honorary” advisor. Faculty members who are seeking more advisees could be trained in the particular field. The shortcoming to this idea is the lack of graduate school knowledge. Carolyn Weisz mentioned that advisors in Psychology still refer students to other faculty members around graduate school information. Sarah Moore also suggested the idea to find majors that had dual interests such as Philosophy and Psychology and share advisees. Seth Weinberger asked if the issue is registration or graduate school. Jack Roundy said most advising appointment involve both issues and it would be hard to separate,

9. Greta Austin motioned to end the meeting and Betsy Kirkpatrick seconded the motion.

Submitted by Debbie Chee