MINUTES of the Academic Standards Committee

April 10, 2009

Present: Seth Weinberger, Debbie Chee, students Rosann Fish and Drew Shannon, Sarah Moore, Carolyn Weisz, Wade Hands, Jack Roundy, Martins Linauts, Betsy Kirkpatrick, Brad Tomhave

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Weinberger at 2:05pm.

APPROVAL of MINUTES: Kirkpatrick moved, and unanimous voice vote affirmed, that the Minutes of 3/27/09 be approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Tomhave announced that 1912 continuing students had completed registration, slightly ahead of AY2007-08 at 1900 head count.

Kirkpatrick inquired about new acceptances. According to Roundy, information will be available May 5.

Weinberger announced that he attended the last faculty meeting (4/6/09) with the intent of presenting the P/F policy as approved by the ASC. However, due to late addition as an agenda item, there was insufficient time for the attendees to discuss the P/F decision. His sense is that the P/F option will continue but require instructor permission and perhaps limited to upper classmen.


1 Approved Readmission
   1 Approved Waiver of “Last 8 Units Rule
   1 Approved Waiver of minimum GPA required for an internship
   1 Approved Completion of Foreign Language Required with Substitute Courses

4 Total

- Sub-Committee met on 04/02/2009 to approve waiver of “Last 8 Units,” the minimum grade point average required for an internship, and readmission from dismissal. Committee deferred decision on application of Academic Re-Evaluation Policy to readmitted student. Prior to meeting, Petition Preview Team approved waiver of “Last 8 Units Rule.”

- Sub-Committee met on 04/09/2009 (during registration week) and the report for this meeting will be presented at the next meeting of the Academic Standards Committee.
Total Petitions for the Year 9/5/2008 – 4/2/2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registrar Approved:</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview Team Approved:</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Committee Approved:</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Approved:</strong></td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Committee No Action:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Committee Denied:</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Petitions:</strong></td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BUSINESS:**

I. **SELF-ASSESSMENT REVISITED - REVIEW for Faculty Senate:** Weinberger reported that he has been asked to appear at Faculty Senate to report on two items related to the self-assessment of the ASC completed earlier in the academic year. He asked the assembled committee members to engage in a review of the two items so as to confirm issues that he should bring up at the Senate meeting.

----

**Issue 1.) Reading period – whether professors should be allowed to have “review/study sessions” during reading period:**

Moore began the discussion by stating that the issue has more to it – if review sessions are allowed to be scheduled, this may put pressure on students to attend. Tomhave pointed out that the rule is no activities and Moore supported that, adding that there are to be no activities even if they promote learning. Students often come to Tomhave asking to reserve a room for a review session, but his hands are essentially tied by the rule. Weinberger added that students should not be faced with a choice between going off campus during reading period (skiing, perhaps) and attending a review session. There is always the question / risk of new material being presented and that is not fair to students who are unable, or chose not, to attend. Weinberger then stated that he wanted to take to the Senate thoughts about the following questions/topics: a.) Does the ASC think that the ambiguity in how we allow faculty to operate under the policy is acceptable (for example, saying that a professor may sit in a big empty room and students can go visit that professor). and b.) Do we want to be hard and fast – no student-related activities? Student representatives Fish and Shannon affirmed that they recognized the value of review sessions but insisted that no new material be presented. Roundy opined that he wants to be more traditional – students arrive at reading period in “varying states of disarray” and should have the four days to rest and collect themselves. Reading from the Handbook, Tomhave stressed the phrase “and other activities” which bans almost everything.

At this point, Weinberger asked “what is the opinion of the ASC to take to the Senate?”, to which Roundy responded that there is a variety of opinions. Weisz added that faculty should be encouraged to be available during reading period and have office hours for the benefit of the students. Hands let it be known that he has never been a proponent of the reading period, and now, after hearing the various opinions, would leave the policy as is.
Moore offered that we don’t really know how students use the reading period time, and Chee added that decompression occurs at the beginning of reading period.

Weinberger summarized that his sense is that there is not consensus among ASC members on the issue, to which Roundy added that changes would create more problems – leave it alone. Tomhave had the last word, stating that we ARE looking for guidance on the review session issue.

Issue 2.) At times, the charges to ASC overlap or conflict with Curriculum Committee (as reported by Weinberger in the self-assessment). Do we think there is a problem to be solved? Weinberger is not sure what to talk about in front of the Senate. Tomhave offered a bit of history as an example of overlap, remarking that the issue of many petitions to waive pre-requisites for Science in Context prompted the request from ASC to reconsider the prerequisite rule, but they said to keep it as is. However, since Science in Context no longer exists, that problem has gone away. Tomhave went on to say that Foreign Language requirements are now a source of overlap conflict, asking “how can ASC make decisions about a Curriculum Committee rule?” Roundy felt that overlap conflict is infrequent enough that it does not require formality, suggesting that perhaps the Faculty Senate liaison could act as intermediary. Moore stated that if there are curricular issues, they can always be referred to the CC via the Faculty Senate. She further stated we could invite CC members (“working groups”, as Tomhave pointed out) to ASC meetings on an ad hoc basis as needed. Weinberger appeared to be satisfied at this point and discussion ended.

II. INDEPENDENT STUDY – continued conversation: Weinberger opened the continuation of the Independent Study discussion by posing the questions “How are students using Independent Study? To circumvent requirements? For group projects?” He directed the attention of the committee to four proposed questions (enumerated on the agenda) to add to the Independent Study Request Form:

i. How many people will be involved in this project?
ii. What is your motivation to do an independent study?
iii. Are you proposing this independent study to “make up” a .25 or .5 credit deficiency?
iv. How was the reading list designed?

Kirkpatrick began the discussion by pointing out that students may worry about answering question #3 as posed. She suggested that perhaps a “check all the boxes that apply” format might be a better approach, giving the students a choice. It was pointed out that this form (with proposed questions) is only at a point where Tomhave collects information – actual approval of the request comes from the involved professor. Student representative Fish suggested that we might indicate that “this is part of a survey” so as not to intimidate the student. Weisz asked whether we should consider “boxes to check” for the other questions as well, and Moore added that boxes to check would make data collection easier. Tomhave stated that it could be arranged that students could not register for Independent Study without completing the survey. Roundy opined that question #1 (how many people are involved?) was rather odd, as if it were inviting more than one
participant, to which Moore responded that better wording might be in the line of “is there any other student who submitted a similar proposal? Or same reading list?”

Tomhave referred to a recent case in which two students who had similar independent studies resulted in an enhanced experience for both the students and the professor. It raises the issue, however, of whether this constitutes a “course”, particularly if a greater number of students (e.g. six in another recent case) want to enroll for a similar independent study. Further, it raises the questions of (uncompensated) faculty workload and the inability of the CC to review what essentially becomes a new course. Weinberger stated emphatically that burdens on faculty are not an issue for ASC – that is for a larger body such as the Faculty Senate. We need to figure out how to encourage the student interest without pressuring faculty to take on more load than contracted for.

Moore brought the discussion back to the four “survey” questions, and several suggestions were made for wording of the questions as well as suggestions for check box responses. Weinberger will revise the questions with the following input to consider:

i. Reword: Are you cooperating with other students on this project?
ii. Check boxes for motivation: credit; interest; needed for timely graduation
iii. Use of the term “deficiency” in credits is negative, therefore consider more positive wording such as: partial unit to close a credit gap
iv. Check boxes for design of Reading List: faculty; self; joint effort

Weisz reminded the committee of the discrepancy in hours – 150 hours as stated in the handbook versus 130 hours as noted on-line. The on-line form needs to be updated to 150 hours.

There being no further input from committee members on the independent study issue, discussion moved to the next item.

III. HONOR CODE / PLEDGE: After establishing that there was a missing word (“the”) in line 3 of the revised pledge, discussion moved to the general question of how to implement the honor code/pledge. Referring to the Student Affairs Pledge and the Honor Code/Pledge, Moore wondered if it is possible to integrate both to incorporate the academic and civic aspects; she stated that it would be “odd” for students to take two separate but related pledges at the Matriculation Ceremony. Chee thinks it is a great idea to have one pledge at orientation/matriculation. Weinberger and Chee will meet to work on integrating the two pledges and then a decision by the ASC can be made regarding a single pledge.

As the meeting began to break up, Weinberger reviewed items for the next meeting, including the Honor Code, creation of a subcommittee to work over the summer on the academic integrity policy, and the admissions process – does ASC have any purview over admissions? Chee informed the committee that Student Affairs Summer Interns could potentially be utilized to do some of the work related to the academic integrity policy.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.
Respectfully submitted by;
Martins Linauts