Academic Standards Committee Meeting
September 11, 2008

Present: Bill Breitenbach, Debbie Chee, Ken Clark, Betsy Kirkpatrick, Chris Kline, Martins Linauts, Mark Martin, Sarah Moore, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Jack Roundy, Drew Shannon, Rob Taylor, Brad Tomhave, Seth Weinberger, Kristin Johnson (Senate liaison)

Organization. Kristin Johnson, the Faculty Senate liaison to the ASC, convened the meeting at 9:30. Seth Weinberger was elected chair. The committee decided to rotate secretarial duties among its members. Bill Breitenbach was appointed to go first; others will follow in alphabetical order.

Charges. Johnson distributed a list of seven charges to the ASC from the Faculty Senate:
1. Continue work on creation of an honor code and/or honor pledge.
2. Committee self-assessment.
3. Continue work on supplementing the academic honesty policy in the handbook with online material.
4. Finalize rewording of withdrawal policy when a student abandons a course.
5. Review the policy of requiring students to have drop codes during the automatic W period.
6. Clarify the reading period policy and the status of informal review sessions.
7. Revisit the ASC’s decision to require academic advisors in the major and consider more broadly the relative overload of academic advising in some departments.

Business

Charge Number 5. Weinberger suggested that the committee begin with charge number 5: “review the policy of requiring students to have drop codes during the automatic W period” (i.e., the third through sixth weeks of the semester). Because some students who wish to drop courses have difficulty getting drop codes from professors in time to meet the deadline, a question arose about the rationale for requiring drop codes during the automatic W period. Brad Tomhave, Rob Taylor, Mark Martin, and Weinberger thought it desirable to retain the drop-code requirement as a way to force students to talk to instructors before making a rash, panicked, or ill-advised decision to drop at a relatively late point in the semester, after both student and instructor had invested much in the course. Jack Roundy wondered if messages on Cascade could provide advice—for example, “Do you realize that you will fall below full-time status if you drop this course?” Tomhave noted that students who can’t get a drop code from their instructors can go to the Registrar’s Office before the deadline and ask to be dropped from the course without one. Breitenbach observed that in his experience students who want to drop during the automatic W period are making a sound decision, based on a realistic appraisal of their dim prospects for passing the course. He was inclined to let them drop on their own, without requiring consultation with the instructor. Weinberger suggested that it was advisors who most needed to know about a student’s decision to drop. Betsy Kirkpatrick asked if a student who made an unadvised decision to drop could be restored
to the course by the Registrar; Tomhave replied that this has been done. Weinberger characterized the debate as involving the competing claims of students’ responsibility for determining their academic programs and the university’s responsibility for providing adequate oversight. The discussion then turned to a consideration of whether changing the current policy would likely reduce or increase the number of petitions to the petitions subcommittee. Breitenbach M/S/F to no longer require drop codes during the automatic W period. The motion was soundly defeated, so the current policy remains in effect.

Membership of the petitions subcommittee during the fall semester. The petitions subcommittee will meet for 45 minutes on Wednesdays at 1:00. Sarah Moore urged that some members of the petitions subcommittee attend the meetings of the main committee to ensure coordination between the two bodies. The following individuals volunteered or were appointed to the petitions subcommittee for the fall semester: Betsy Kirkpatrick, Ken Clark, Martins Linauts, Kathie Hummel-Berry, Wade Hands, Sarah Moore, Brad Tomhave, Debbie Chee, Drew Shannon, and Roseann Fish.

Authority delegated to Office of the Registrar and Petition Preview Team. Tomhave distributed a document specifying powers that in the past have been delegated by the ASC to the Office of the Registrar and to the Petition Preview Team. The committee M/S/P to reaffirm the delegation of authority as set forth in that document.

Petitions subcommittee report. Tomhave reported on the activity of the petitions subcommittee during summer 2008 as well as during the entire academic year 2007-08:

10 petitions meetings scheduled during the summer for the period 04/24/2008 to 09/04/2008 with the following approvals and denials:

9 – Late Adds.
14 – Readmission/Reinstatement.
2 – Take summer class while dismissed or suspended
3 – Re-enrollment from Medical Withdrawal.
2 – Change from pass/fail grading option to letter grade.
3 – Time conflicts.
5 – Medical Withdrawals.
10 – “Last 8 Units Rule.”
2 – Concurrent Enrollment.
2 – Course repeat for 2\textsuperscript{nd} (or more) time.
4 – “6-Year Rule.”
2 – Minimum GPA for Internship.
1 – Attend Community College After Junior Class Standing.
3 – Foreign Language.
9 – Drop with “W” grade rather than “WF.”
1 – Appeal of denied transfer credit (Environmental Engineering/Study Abroad)

72 approved
1 – Late add.
5 – Readmission or Reinstatement.
1 – Reenrollment from Medical Withdrawal.
1 – Independent Study prior to Junior Year (student finishing freshman year)
1 – Drop without record after the deadline.
3 – Drop with “W” grade.
1 – Miscellaneous (issue degree based on possession of diploma from 1972)
13 denied

85 TOTAL

For the year September 7, 2007 to September 4, 2008

238 petitions decided.
200 approved.
  12 by Registrar.
  59 by Petition Preview Team.
  129 by Petitions Sub-Committee.
37 denied by the Sub-Committee.
  1 no action.

6 double-digit petition issues for 2007-2008 that comprise about 2/3rds of petition actions:
  46 - Readmission or Reinstatement.
  39 - Time Conflicts (19.3%).
  26 – Late Add.
  25 – Last 8 Units.
  19 – Drop with W.
  14 – Medical Withdrawal
169 total

Petitions totals for previous years:
  2006-2007 – 308 (54 time conflict petitions, 17.5%)
  2005-2006 – 252 (61 time conflict petitions, 24.2%)
  2004-2005 – 271 (59 time conflict petitions, 21.8%)
  2003-2004 – 289 (52 time conflict petitions, 18.0%)
  2002-2003 – 330 (64 time conflict petitions, 19.4%)

**Agenda setting for next meeting.** There ensued some preliminary and desultory discussion of charge number 4 (grading policy when a student abandons a course) and charge number 6 (review sessions during reading period). Weinberger announced that the committee would begin discussing charge 6 at its next meeting. Breitenbach asked to add an item to the list of charges: a consideration of whether courses taken in excess of the required number of courses for a major should be included in calculating the gpa in the major.
**Meeting times for the committee.** The committee decided to meet every other week on Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30. Meetings will be held in the McCormick Room. The next meeting will be held on September 25.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23.

Respectfully submitted,

William Breitenbach