Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee

October 9, 2008

Present: Bill Breitenbach, Debbie Chee, Ken Clark, Roseann Fish, Chris Kline, Sarah Moore, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Drew Shannon, Ted Taranovski, Brad Tomhave, Seth Weinberger, Carol Lentz (Academic Advising liaison).

Chair Weinberger called the meeting to order at 9:35 am.

Business

Minutes of the previous meeting: Chris Kline M/S/P that minutes of the previous meeting be accepted.

Petitions report: During the period September 25 - October 8, 2008, 5 petitions were approved and 2 were denied. The 5 approved petitions were late adds. One denied petition was a request to change a course from graded to pass/fail; the other was to change a course from graded to audit.

Total petitions since September 5: 35 petitions approved, 4 denied. Leading petition issues: Late Add - 21 petitions; Time Conflict - 12 petitions.

Announcements: There were none.

Supplementing the Academic Honesty Policy: Chair Seth Weinberger opened the topic by wondering if we should defer the discussion in the absence of Mark Martin, who was the chair of the Academic Honesty subcommittee last year. He noted that we will need to put together a subcommittee. Sarah Moore added that Jane Carlin would like to be a part of the subcommittee, and Chris Kline thinks student representation is also needed. Seth said we should constitute a committee including Mark and Jane. Student Roseann Fish and Debbie Chee volunteered. Sarah said she would ask for volunteers at our next Petitions subcommittee meeting. Chris added that Julie Christoph should give our policy amendments a read.

Ted Taranovski had several questions concerning the academic integrity policy in its present form. Referring to Part 1 e., Ted wondered if the policy was intended to get the Academic Dean involved in all cases where charges of plagiarism have been leveled, or whether the policy should say something about involving the Dean or his or her designee. Ted also wondered how long we keep records of academic misconduct. Ted suggested there may be an obligation for the University to keep the records in case of accusations of plagiarism 10 or 20 years down the road, and that we should keep records for the protection of the University. Brad Tomhave responded that Hearing Board reports are kept forever, but that academic integrity reports are disposed of after graduation. There was general agreement that present wording of the Academic Integrity code makes it unclear that Hearing Board reports are part of the permanent record. Brad will make some editorial changes to clarify this issue.
Ted's remaining question pertained to part 1 a. He wondered how much we want to involve department chairs when charges of academic dishonesty have been leveled. Ted feels there has been a gradual shift in the center of gravity from the individual faculty member to Deans, Chairs, and Hearing Boards. Seth noted that the policy says "...the faculty member may consult with the department chair, program director, or the Registrar...." Dolen Perkins-Valdez thought the issue is to deal with these cases in a consistent manner; faculty responses to plagiarism can range from letting it slide to enforcing the rules to the greatest extent possible. At this point Seth decided to table the discussion until more committee members were present.

**Academic Standards Committee self-assessment.** Chair Weinberger opened the discussion of committee self-assessment by asking about the size of the committee. There was general agreement that the size is just about right, with 12 faculty, 4 ex-officio, and 2 student members.

Seth asked how many hours per month do members spend on committee work. Bill Breitenbach asked if it would work to have the Petitions subcommittee meet every 2 weeks; Brad responded that it wouldn't work because some petitions are time sensitive. Sarah added that even though the number of faculty has increased over the years, we have a hard time finding enough people for committee work because there are so many committees now; we wouldn't want a larger committee as it would be unwieldy, and a smaller committee wouldn't be able to handle the work. Ted wondered if committee work is ever left undone; Sarah felt that the work does get finished. Dolen asked if there were mechanisms we can put in place to work more efficiently. Bill suggested longer meetings so we spend less time getting back up to speed on topics left from previous meetings, but Sarah said it would be very difficult to schedule 90 minute meetings for all committee members. Dolen suggested allotting a certain amount of time for discussion. Ted thought it would help also to circulate draft motions by email before the meeting so we have time to consider the motion.

Seth asked if we schedule adequate time to complete the work of the committee. There was agreement that the current schedule is practical and adequate.

Seth asked about committee membership, noting that we have faculty, students, ex-officio members, a librarian, the Academic Dean, and the Registrar. He asked if there was anyone else we should have. Brad said there was some sense that we should have a representative from the school of Music, especially for petitions, and that it would also be good to be sure we have a chemist or biologist. Ted added that we should always try to get members from diverse departments when making the roster each year.

Seth asked about our committee organization. He noted that the chair is selected by acclamation and asked if that seemed OK. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of selecting junior faculty to chair the committee. Sarah suggested that we have a paper nomination and a vote, which was agreeable to everyone present.

Seth asked how well the chair contributes to the operation of the committee. Sarah said that there has been a history of collaboration between the person in her position and the Standards Committee Chair, and she asked if this was a good idea. Seth responded that it was very useful combining the perspective of a faculty member with that of the Academic Dean.
Seth asked about committee organization; everyone was happy with the way things are organized.

Tom have M/S/P that the meeting be adjourned at 10:32 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Clark,
Secretary of the Day