Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee
(with revised “Registration and Attendance/Participation” policy attached)

December 4, 2008

Present: Bill Breitenbach, Debbie Chee, Ken Clark, Roseann Fish, Kathie Hummel-Berry, Betsy Kirkpatrick, Chris Kline, Martins Linauts, Sarah Moore, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Brad Tomhave, Seth Weinberger, Carol Lentz (Academic Advising Liaison)

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 am by Chair Weinberger.

Announcements: Based on feedback from two students who found her to be very helpful on a similar issue, Mark Martin declared “Debbie Chee remains the best.” Applause and verbal assent followed.

Business:
Minutes of previous meeting: Breitenbach M/S/P to approve the minutes of 11/20/08, with one numerical correction by Brad Tomhave.

Petitions Report: For the period 11/20/2008 – 12/03/2008, all 5 petitions were approved. Those included one petition for change of grading option from pass/fail to graded, two time conflicts, one waiver of minimum GPA for Independent Study, and on reinstatement from suspension. The sub-committee meeting of 12/03/08 was conducted by e-mail.

Year-to-date figures are (09/05/08- 12/03/08): Total of 56 petitions have been acted upon: 52 approved as follows; 18 Registrar approved, 16 preview-team approved, 18 sub-committee approved. Sub-committee denied 4 petitions. Leading petition issues are Late Add (24) and Time Conflict (16).

Non-Attendance (Abandonment) Language: Tomhave summarized the primary changes in the 11/25/08 draft of the “Proposed Changes to Withdrawal Policies,” copies of which were distributed at the meeting, and prior to that by e-mail. The changes: 1.) dates have been added for W and WF during summer sessions, which had not been previously stipulated; 2.) clarified language on the definition of non-attendance, focusing on instructors interpretation and what can be assigned; and 3.) a student dropped after the 6th week for non-attendance is automatically assigned a “WF” grade (as is also the case for students dropped after the 6th week for disruptive behavior).

As everyone was in agreement with the changes, there was no discussion. Kline M/S/P to adopt the new language. Voice vote was unanimous “Aye.” The “Proposed Changes to Withdrawal Policies” draft of 11/25/2008 is attached at end of these Minutes.

Note: See final policy “Registration and Attendance/Participation” attached at end of these Minutes.

Pass/Fail status – continued discussion:
The discussion of P/F status was re-opened by Chairperson Weinberger, who provided a summary of the 3 options that are at the fore-front of the discussion today; 1.) abolish P/F (aka the Ken Clark option), 2.) allow departments to determine course numbers as unavailable for P/F option, and 3.) leave policy as is – encourage individual instructors to require permission to enroll.

Thereupon, lively and sustained discussion ensued with many questions asked and thoughts and opinions proffered. It was impossible for the scribe to record all verbal exchange, therefore what follows is focused on the major issues/questions raised, a reasonable sampling of comments, and the final vote.

**Kirkpatrick:** Do we authority to abolish P/F? **Moore:** Yes, but Senate would have oversight and needs to agree.

**Perkins-Valdez** asked to hear arguments for abolishing the policy. **Kirkpatrick** responded that she has had problems with the policy in the past. **Moore** offered that there are a variety of problems/situations where students take a course P/F but later get “painted into a corner,” for example, realizing after the fact that their P/F graded foreign language course cannot be used to satisfy graduation requirements. **Hummel-Berry** commented that she does not see selection of the P/F option for a course as a good choice due to situations/circumstances that can’t be anticipated down the line.

**Breitenbach** offered a different way to look at it: What will happen if it is eliminated? He foresees that more students will take courses within a major, with upperclassman enrolling in 100 level courses, thereby squeezing out freshmen if they don’t have the P/F/ option. **Hummel-Berry** reminded the committee that a certain number of seats are set aside for freshmen in certain classes.

**Kline** wondered how many students take the P/F option, leading to a return look at the data sheet provided by Tomhave at the previous meeting – 51 students during fall semester 2008. **Moore**, referring to the chart, wondered if there was a pattern of enrollment. She detected a trend that many 300/400 level courses on the list are within the students major, while 100/200 level courses tend to be outside the major. **Weinberger** suggested some practical considerations: - limit PF to classes outside the major; - no freshmen can take P/F; - petition to take a course P/F. **Hummel-Berry** commented that there is something to be said for making students articulate the reason for taking a course P/F/. **Weinberger** asked Tomhave if the petition system would work, to which **Tomhave** responded “you’ve all seen how students express themselves.”

A straw vote was conducted at this point on the question of limiting P/F to classes outside the major, garnering 9 YES votes. **Clark** asked how would it work for students who haven’t yet declared a major….that’s a problem, it was agreed. **Perkins-Valdez**, a driving force behind this issue to begin with, opined that the system needs to be revised in some way – there need to be more conditions.

**Breitenbach** suggested that we not create a system of “Byzantine complexity”. **Kline** asserted that she was persuaded to consider abolishment, wondering how big an issue this would be three
years down the line when the students have no history of knowledge of the P/F option. She would argue against petitioning to take courses P/F, considering the workload of the petitions sub-committee as it exists already.

Clark added that as far as exposure to courses a student may not otherwise choose to take, there is the CORE, afterall. He reasserted his position that the P/F policy should be abolished. Perkins-Valdez stated that if the abolished policy is sent to the Faculty Senate, at least it would open the door to broader discussion.

Weinberger asked “how do students view it [P/F policy]?” Chee pointed out that existing surveys of students conducted by Randy Nelson (from Institutional Research) could be a vehicle for gathering information on the topic. Moore reported a 30% response rate, which is reasonable. Fish, representing the students, admitted to having no friends who have used the P/F option, other than in courses where it is the default grade, such as music ensembles. Martin pointed out that this leads to the issue of academic intensity and should be brought to the Faculty Senate.

Weinberger inquired of Tomhave whether it is possible to get information on what the actual grade would have been for the 51 students so registered this semester. Tomhave responded that it is possible; when analysis was done in the past, students generally get similar grade to what they otherwise are earning in other classes.

Perkins-Valdez opined that it does not seem like the committee’s concern is so much if students take a class to “slack-off” as it is that students paint themselves into a corner as regards requirements down the road. Breitenbach offered that it is a separate issue as to why students might value P/F option – perhaps a secure feeling to know they could use P/F; not necessarily to slack off, but if they get into situation where they need it, they have the option. The idea of taking away P/F may be limiting to students.

Breitenbach then suggested that the issue be put to vote. Hummel-Berry suggested perhaps to table the issue until the survey of the students is completed, Moore informed the committee that the survey and results would not be available until we are into the next semester. Chee and Perkins-Valdez did not feel that student input is important at this point. Moore stated her belief that student take the P/F option to lighten their load, not to “slack off.” Clark offered that the committee should vote it down, send it to Faculty Senate and see what the discussion would be in that arena. That would address Perkins-Valdez’s desire to know what other faculty think. Breitenbach added that the Faculty Senate has a certain number of days to respond…believed to be thirty days after official submission of approved Minutes.

M/S/P to vote on the motion: ASC abolish the P/F grading option for students. YES vote is to abolish, NO vote is the re-open the discussion. By voice vote, the motion carried unanimously to abolish P/F grading option. At that moment, a highly audible WOW was heard, followed by signs of relief from the collective whole.

Weinberger then exercised his executive power to overrule the unofficial suggestion that the meeting be adjourned at this point.
**Classroom disruption policy:** Weinberger opened discussion of this issue by directing the committee’s attention to the review of items by Moore (listed on the agenda): 1.) the easy part – *placement* of the policy in the handbook. Currently, the disruption policy is difficult to find, as it is embedded in Registration/Attendance/Policies. Weinberger suggested that the disruption policy statement could go in a section of its own – an easier heading that is easier to find on Cascade. 2.) Need for a *timeframe* for developing the contract (for permission to return to class)? 3.) other issues - *information to the student*; Some parts are not clear at times. Does the student need to be informed that they are “on thin ice?” Weinberger suggested that professors should let the student know there is a policy that may be invoked – put it in the syllabus.; student *right to appeal*. Does the student have the right to appeal in the midst of the process? As it stands now, appeal is possible only after the fact, after the contract with Academic Advising is completed, which may take some time - more than a week, during which time the student is not attending the class.

Martin wondered how often it occurs that a student is asked to leave a class. Moore and Lentz responded: about two times per semester.

Kline stated her feeling that it is a serious matter if a student is asked to leave a class, and that we have all probably had to resolve a situation on the spot.

Moore offered that Academic Advising is often put in a hard place, listening to student, talking to professor, and having to facilitate a contractual arrangement before returning to class, thus some clarification of the procedures would be helpful. Weinberger asked Lentz for examples of problems, to which she responded that the problems are not with coming to class drunk or high; problems tend more to cell phone use and consistent late arrival to class. Lentz and Roundy talk to faculty about having a conversation with the student in order to avoid invoking the policy.

Breitenbach brought up the issue of disability accommodation, as it can be disruptive, but is not subject to the policy as he sees it. Weinberger offered an example in his department where the accommodation would have been disruptive, therefore the department voted not to accommodate. Kline, after giving the example of texting as a problem that individual professors should deal with via participation grade, reminded the committee of the *fine work that Ivey West does with accommodation issues*. Weinberger expressed his opinion that the policy is not meant for cell phone problems. Perkins-Valdez offered that our students are adults – this is not high school – we should not have to be disciplinarians. Martin and Kline agreed that the policy needs to be for aggressive behavior.

Much to the delight of the scribe, Weinberger announced that “we’re out of time.” The committee will return to this topic in the spring and look at the language.

The meeting adjourned at 10:31, though informal discussion continued as the scribe beat a hasty exit.

Respectfully submitted,
Martins Linauts  
Scribe for the day
Registration and Attendance/Participation

All students regularly attending a course must be admitted by the Office of Admission and registered for either credit or audit. It is the student’s responsibility to be properly registered. It is the instructor’s responsibility to restrict attendance and participation in the class to those students properly registered. Visitors to classes are expected to conform to visitor regulations. Infants and/or small children may not attend classes. (See Course Requirements.)

As described in the “Preregistration” section above, if a student fails to attend the first class session or notify the instructor in advance of a first-day absence, the instructor may ask the Registrar to drop the student from the course, thereby freeing a place for another student.

Regular class attendance is expected of all students. Absence from class for any reason does not excuse the student from completing all course assignments and requirements.

An instructor who notes a significant pattern of absence on the part of a student should submit a Student Alert to the Office of Academic Advising, who will contact and inform the student of the instructor’s concerns. When non-attendance is in the instructor’s judgment excessive, the instructor may levy a grade penalty or may direct the Registrar to drop the student from the course. If a student is dropped for non-attendance after the sixth week of class, a “WF” grade is automatically assigned.

Moreover, when non-attendance is excessive, as described in the preceding paragraph, in all of a student’s academic courses, the student is considered to have voluntarily withdrawn from the University. The Registrar will then officially drop the student from all registered courses and will so inform the student. Once dropped from all courses, the student is required to leave campus. If a student is dropped from all registered courses after the sixth week of class, a “WF” grade is automatically assigned. (See Withdrawal From a Course/From the University, Withdrawal Grades.)

Disruptive class behavior is unacceptable. Disruptive class behavior is behavior which, in the judgment of the instructor, impedes other students’ opportunity to learn and which directly and significantly interferes with class objectives. Should such behavior occur, the instructor will request the student to leave class and will refer the matter to the Director of Academic Advising. Permission to return to class will be granted only after the student meets with the Director of Academic Advising and signs a contract agreeing to appropriate ameliorative action. If the disruptive behavior continues, the instructor may direct the Registrar to drop the student from the course. Students wishing to appeal an administrative drop for class disruption may do so by petition to the Academic Standards Committee. In such cases, students will continue to be barred from class until the Committee renders its decision. If a student is dropped from a class for disruptive behavior, after the 6th week of class, a “WF” grade is automatically assigned.
Withdrawal from a Course/Withdrawal from the University

A student may terminate his or her responsibility for a course, or for all registered courses, by completing the official withdrawal process through the student’s Cascade Web Account or through the Office of the Registrar.

If a student stops attending class without completing an official withdrawal, and circumstances are such that the instructor does not direct the Registrar to drop the student, the instructor may assign a “WF” grade or may assign a letter grade based on the work completed by the student minus any penalty the instructor may assess for lack of attendance. (See Withdrawal Grades.)

Failure to complete the term does not cancel the student’s obligation to pay tuition and all other charges in full. For specific details regarding tuition refund policies contact the Student Accounts Office.

Withdrawal Grades

Withdrawal without record on the permanent academic record is permissible through the first two weeks of the fall and spring semesters when a student completes official withdrawal procedures. Withdrawal Passing (“W”) is granted during the third through sixth weeks of the fall and spring semesters when a student completes official withdrawal procedures. After the sixth week of the semester, Withdrawal Failing (“WF”) is given except as noted below.

During the seventh through twelfth weeks of the fall and spring semesters, a grade of “W” may be granted by the instructor only if all of the following conditions are met: (1) a student completes official withdrawal procedures and (2) there have been exceptional circumstances beyond the student’s control, in which case the student must demonstrate in writing to the satisfaction of the instructor that exceptional circumstances exist, and (3) either the student’s work has been of passing quality or the exceptional circumstances have prevented the student from completing work of passing quality. An instructor may assign a “W” using the Faculty Withdrawal Grade Submission Form available from the Office of the Registrar.

After the twelfth week of classes, the Academic Standards Committee may permit a grade of “W” to be assigned. The student must withdraw from the course and submit a petition to support a claim of exceptional circumstances. The petition must include a statement by the course instructor as on the quality of the student’s work in the course. If the petition is approved, a grade of “W” is assigned. If the petition is denied, a grade of “WF” is assigned.

Completing official withdrawal procedures after the last day of regularly scheduled classes is not allowed.

A withdrawal at any point past the date for withdrawal without record counts as a “course attempt” if the student registers again for the course.
During the summer session the withdrawal process described for the fall and spring semesters applies to the summer session during the following weeks: First week, drop without record; second week, automatic “W”; third, fourth, and fifth weeks, “WF” is the automatic grade and instructors have the authority to assign a “W”; after the fifth week, the “WF” remains the automatic grade and the Academic Standards Committee assumes the authority to assign a “W” grade.

A student who remains registered in a class but has a poor record of attendance may be subject to the registration and withdrawal policies that allow an instructor or the Registrar to drop that student. (See Registration and Attendance/Participation, Withdrawal From a Course/From the University.)