

Academic Affairs Committee
April 23, 2020
Minutes

Present: Wendy Cook, Eric Foch, Dan Lipori, Megan Matheson, Andy Piacsek, Josh Welsh, Ke Zhong, David Douglas, Rose Spodobalski-Brower, Julia Stringfellow

Absent: Jacklyn Krause

Guest(s): Carolyn Thurston and Aaron Brown

Meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m.

Megan moved to approve the minutes as amended. Andy seconded and minutes were approved.

Mandatory Mid-term Discussion. Carolyn Thurston indicated that this was a strong wish from a previous Provost to do mandatory mid-term grades. It doesn't seem to be realistic on the quarter system. Early Alert is a fully integrated system and it wouldn't take much to add a mid-term grade reporting, but making it mandatory could be problematic for faculty. Carolyn reported that after five years of utilizing Early Alert about 1/3 faculty use it regularly. Aaron talked about information he has from a previous institution that used mid-term grade process. They looked at different data points and he has some from data from 2014. Students who received C- at mid-term typically received a B or higher in the course. The committee needs to be really intentional about it if we do this and maybe focus on 100 – 200 level courses. Aaron also suggested not making this mandatory. It is helpful to gather information for the students to help change their potential grade. One suggestion was if a student is getting a C- or lower and not going to pass the class with a C or higher that there is an alert in the system. This would need to be very clearly defined. If Early Alert system was used, there would be a benefit as it would be one system, rather than getting requests from multiple departments. Carolyn suggested that if a student was failing at a certain point in the quarter, then a notification could be made. This might be a compromise. It was suggested automatically using the information from Canvas grade book as an option. However, not everyone uses Canvas for grading. Andy suggested encouraging faculty to use the current system by a certain date in the quarter if a student is below a certain threshold. Deadline may be the end of the fifth week of the quarter. We should have that date announced at the beginning of the quarter. Carolyn indicated that approximately 90% of the alerts are currently submitted early prior to the sixth week. Andy indicated if this could be integrated with Athletics and housing on academic issues. They are not just concerned about if they are failing, but where their grade is during the quarter. Wendy indicated that everyone within the chain should be trained appropriately on what do with the information they get on the early alert. This will be talked further at a future meeting to decide if they want to put something in policy.

Academic Appeals – Carolyn indicated that when students come to her office they typically have not gone through all the steps yet. She walks them through the process. Her office encourages students to handle it internally and try and work it out with the instructor. Carolyn facilitates the process and the hearing. In the past there has been someone assigned to advocate for the faculty member and one for the student. Where it got left in last conversation with the committee is who should be the advocate for either student and/or faculty. Should it be someone from this committee? Carolyn indicated she has a student going to hearing currently and really does need someone to work with the student. Usually only 1-2 appeals go to hearing a year. Carolyn indicated that the term hearing advisor could be used. The

current process is very time consuming. She would like to see tightening up the language for the policy. Information needs to be put in so the student knows they should have everything in writing (complaint and documentation) they want to present to the chair and/or dean. Add "or deans designee" since most of the associate deans end up working on these. It is not the same to have an email conversation with a faculty member and they need to meet with them. Carolyn is willing to go with the student, if they are concerned. It is not currently clear what the student needs to do. Carolyn indicated she feels that the student contacts her within a quarter of the grade being appealed that is good. After the notice of to the faculty member of the appeal would be a good time to assign a hearing advisor to both the student and faculty member. Carolyn said that the student has an opportunity to respond to the faculty written response. Could possibly use the members of the academic appeals committee as hearing advisors if they are not assigned to that hearing and do not have connection to the appeal. The form is more of a check off that they have met all the steps. The student then provides additional written materials prior to the hearing. Once the faculty member responds the student has an opportunity to see that information and the student has an opportunity to respond to that information. The Board receives a packet of information that has been provided by the student and faculty a week prior to the hearing. It could be up to a month because they are waiting for a response from people. Usually take 6-9 months to get a hearing done from the first time a student meets with Student Success. The hearing usually takes place within 3 months after the complaint is filed with Student Success.

Programmatic appeals – Cases where a student has a complaint that they were removed from a program, Carolyn indicated that the Board of Appeals is not a hearing platform for this. She recommend a second board be made of faculty from programs like (Para medicine, graduate studies, counseling, college of education, college of business, aviation) that convene for a student to appeal the decision of removal.

The committee does not feel they want to push for mandatory mid-term grade reporting. Maybe utilize the Early Alert similar to what Carolyn and Aaron suggested. Currently there is no policy language around Early Alert. Josh will put together some information for the committee for next time.

Josh will give the committee an update on the charges-to-date for the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.