

Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee  
Minutes - Feb. 22, 2018

Present (Voting): Clem Ehoff, Janet Finke, Christos Graikos, Dan Lipori, Ke Zhong  
Present (Ex-officio): Julia Stringfellow, Walter Szeliga  
Absent (Voting): Eric Bennett, Rodney Bransdorfer, David Martin, Megan Matheson  
Absent (Ex-officio): Lindsey Brown, Gail Mackin  
Guests: Dawn Varnum

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. Minutes of Feb. 8, 2018 were approved as written.

*Chair updates*

None.

*Old Business*

a. Class Attendance Policy & Procedure CWUP/R 5-90-040(34)/2-90-040(34)

Walter met with Toni Burvee and with Gail to discuss concerns surrounding potential liability issues with non-students. Based on that discussion, it appears there is no liability issue as long as instructors are in their classes teaching. If someone is injured while on-campus, it's the responsibility of the injured person to demonstrate that the university was negligent and how. Any labs with dangerous materials are typically locked and that would be a bigger liability issue than having non-students in the classrooms. However, part (B) of the policy would still be needed.

Dawn and Rodney worked on new language for (C). This new language addresses summer, as well as additional issues that were not covered previously. Dan suggested changing "MyCWU" in the new (C) to something more generic, such as "Student Information System." Dawn indicate the language in the procedure should be changed to "Student Information System" as well in order to stay consistent. Clem questioned the language in the last sentence in the procedure; Dan suggested deleting "attended" from the last sentence.

Dan moved to vote on the changes to the new language in (C), and changes to the procedure language. Motion passed and the changes were approved.

b. Student Conduct Statement for Syllabi (Review changes to Syllabi Policy)

Walter shared more background information about the diversity statement. It did pass through Provost Council and is online with the caveat that AAC will look into the language again. There are concerns with the language "such as" because this leaves it open to the possibility that someone could put an anti-diversity statement in a course syllabus. This is different than the disability statement, for which there is standard, agreed-upon language. The Provost Office was concerned that someone could put in a statement saying they weren't going to accept diversity.

Dan suggested adding to 11: "A statement consistent with the university's commitment to diversity, such as:"

Regarding academic dishonesty and the student conduct statement, Dan emailed Joey Bryant, Director of Student Rights & Responsibilities. Joey provided some information about an academic dishonesty policy. The policy doesn't give anything more specific but referencing it should be considered. The WAC number and link in the Syllabi policy changed and is different

from what is currently online, so that needs to be updated.

Janet suggested making academic dishonesty and student conduct two separate items on the syllabi to clarify a little more. Renumber the policy with Academic Dishonesty as 10, Conduct as 11, Diversity as 12, and Disability as 13.

Dan moved to move on the Syllabi policy as amended. Motion seconded; changes to the policy were approved.

### *New Business*

#### a. Changes to course substitution policy & form

Last year AAC made some changes to the course substitution policy. The registrar's office made changes to the course substitution form to match the policy changes. After that happened, people started questioning the changes. The issue came up a few times in Faculty Senate. Concerns are mainly about the "justification of substitution" box. Following our changes, both the chair and dean signatures are required. One concern is if the chair and dean signatures are really needed, then is the justification really needed? Another concern regards "dummy courses," e.g. 1-credit courses that are taken when a student took a 4-credit course elsewhere and needs to make up one credit in order for the transfer for work. A secondary question that arose was whether or not a committee should be responsible for double-checking forms when making policy changes that might have an effect.

Dawn explained that degree checkout will be more likely to question how courses from different disciplines will substitute; for example, an art class for a math class, or a PE class for an engineering class. From Registrar Services' perspective, they want the dean to approve the substitution. The justification box is there to be read as a point of reference. It's the registrar's job to act as the gatekeeper, and they will question if it seems like people aren't sure what they signed off on. Another example is substituting a 100-level course for a 400-level.

Dan suggested removing "must show clear programmatic goals and objectives..." out of the box. Dawn indicated that the registrar's office and degree checkout typically aren't going to expect a statement about clear programmatic goals when a course substitution just concerns transfer credit.

A consensus was reached that nothing on the form needs to be changed.

#### b. GPA Definitions

Back in October, Julia consulted with Richard DeShields in Student Success. At that time Richard said changing the decimal to two places would be fine. Walter indicated at Provost Council yesterday changing the decimal to three places was discussed but it sounds like would be a clerical change, which means it would not have to go through Faculty Senate.

On a related note, someone at UPAC wanted Interdisciplinary Programs applied to academic programs, not non-academic programs. There are concerns about other programs on campus trying to use the charter. Dan is now part of the group originally started by the provost to work on Interdisciplinary Programs. Janet indicated that this discussion came up somewhat in a labor management council meeting. Some interdisciplinary programs are not academic because they don't have a degree associated with them.

#### c. Academic Freedom

Every few years a group, often ROTC or athletics, requests that AAC look at the policy for excused absence. If students are missing classes for university-sponsored events, faculty are

not required to offer make-up work. English is one department that does not allow make-up work for any university-sponsored events, and this is a problem because every athlete or ROTC member will take an English class at some point while they are here. This issue came up again last year. The committee cited violations of academic freedom as a reason for not making changes to the policy, but the provost asked for a definition of academic freedom.

Janet looked up some statements online from different agencies. The original AAUP statement is from 1940. There is also an AAC&U Board of Directors' Statement, which addresses teaching in the third paragraph on page 1. Walter indicated that part of the statement seems to argue for curricular design rather than freedom in the classroom. Another thing with academic freedom is teaching styles, particularly online vs. in-person. Can instructors be told how to take attendance, or can you be told to teach online when you usually teach face-to-face? Dan suggested comparing the document from 1940 to the BOT statement on the CWU website, but does anything in the 1940 statement relate to not granting an athlete a make-up test?

Clem shared information he found online. Most of it deals with protection to search out the truth and voice your opinion to a point. It appears to be more contractual than an issue of free speech in that it's about the institution itself and a contract between the institution and the faculty so that the faculty is not speaking for the institution when out in public. An article from 2009, written by the provost of Idaho State University, discusses modern academic freedom as, first, the right of an academic institution to govern its own affairs without governmental interference, meaning that universities may set their own curriculum, admissions standards, etc. Second, faculty may engage in research on controversial subjects and discuss those subjects in the classroom without fear of reprisal. So if someone is being forced to teach online, when they usually teach face-to-face classes, it almost sounds like that would be a contractual issue.

Dawn indicated that the issues of make-up work for athletes aren't really issues of academic freedom because there is nothing in faculty contracts that says faculty are required to do that. The question is if the university is going to start requiring it. At the moment there is no policy specifying how "university-sponsored events" can be defined.

More research into academic freedom will be done, and discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Next Meeting:  
March 8, 2018