

Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee
Minutes—April 26, 2018

Present (voting): Rodney Bransdorfer, Janet Finke, Christos Graikos, Dan Lipori

Present (non-voting): Lindsey Brown, Julia Stringfellow, Walter Szeliga

Absent (voting): Eric Bennett, David Martin, Megan Matheson (excused), Ke Zhong

Absent (non-voting): Gail Mackin (excused)

Guests: Tim Englund, Cody Stoddard

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 p.m. Minutes of March 29, 2018 and April 12, 2018 were not approved due to lack of quorum for a vote.

Chair Updates

Dan recently attending his third meeting of the new interdisciplinary studies workgroup.

Cody discussed some issues with the honors policy. AAC passed the policy in fall and Faculty Senate sent it forward from there, but then it disappeared for a while. It just passed UPAC in April so if it goes into effect now students who graduated in summer, fall, and winter will be following a different policy than those students graduating in spring. One option is to backdate the policy so that it would be effective retroactively. Another option is to have it go into effect next year. If the policy goes into effect next year, an exception will have to be made to the existing policy for transfer students graduating this spring, similar to what was done last year. The registrar's office recommends doing what's best for the students. AAC made the decision to backdate the policy.

Old Business

a. Class Attendance Policy (vote)

Previously, changes were made to reword the procedure so that any language that was unclear is now mentioned at the beginning.

Rodney suggested adding "responsibility" after "academic" in order to simplify so that one phrase appears. The current wording varies among "academic and tuition liability" or "academic and tuition responsibility" and is used three different places in the policy language.

Changes to the policy and procedure were moved and seconded. An official vote will be conducted via email.

b. Academic Freedom Discussion

This issue comes up every other year and comes back to earlier discussions about use of the word "must." However, it doesn't really fall under academic freedom. A large number of faculty do make exceptions for athletes, but one department doesn't. It would seem the instructor is the best person to make the call because they know what it will take for the student to make up the work. In many classes in the English department are taught by grad students or NTT faculty.

Most of them would probably be happy to make accommodations for students, but it's written into the course syllabus that make-up work will not be allowed even though policy states the student is supposed to make arrangements with the instructor.

Dan reviewed the official committee charge, which was to develop a philosophy or suggestions about academic freedom, or determine if any changes need to be made to what is already in place. Getting into this discussion could take a while and there are other things we could finish during remaining meetings. This seems to be more of an attendance issue rather than an issue of academic freedom. Cody indicated this charge originally came from the other attendance policy, and originally had to do with athletics. EC asked the committee to explore it and decide if there needs to be a policy put in place. One concern is someone might look for other avenues to get this through or change some of the code sections. A suggestion would be to work on having a problem-solving conversation between the involved departments with the intent of finding a solution or compromise, rather than work on putting language into policy. Lindsey indicated that language already exists in policy stating that instructors are encouraged to work with students to make arrangements; this language was changed about three years ago. Cody will talk with the provost, but it would be nice to have a statement from the committee to present.

c. Foreign Language Exemption for International Students

Lindsey is working drafting on policy language. At times we have students who start out in the US school system, go abroad for a number of years, then come back and graduate from a US high school, so they are speakers of another language as well as speakers of English. How would this be equivalent to college-level foreign language?

Rodney indicated his department usually considers three years of high school equivalent to one year of college. If students grew up speaking a language, then they are native speakers. However, do we want them to have an academic grasp of the language and be able to write it, or speaking it enough?

Lindsey will continue to work a draft of the policy language.

New Business

Lindsey presented a suggestion from the registrar's office regarding the Commencement Policy. The registrar's office is recommending changes to CWUP 5-90-050(7) to include "official commencement regalia....must be approved...." This means regalia needs to be approved to make sure nothing is offensive. Honors cords and veterans cords are the only ones that are officially approved but there are others (such as honor societies, clubs, etc.) that are not official, but students wear them.

Rodney moved to approve the changes; Janet seconded. An official vote will be conducted via email.

a. Cambridge International Exams & Transfer Credit Policy

Lindsey created one document to combine changes from various draft versions, and to align with changes from the state legislature. These changes follow what UW does for Cambridge. The IB changes were made to coincide with the new Gen Ed changes. We have also received new guidance from NWCCU regarding the experiential learning requirement so a decision needs to be made if we as an institution want to change our policies. The portfolio can't be more than 45 credits, but the other things mentioned (IB, AP, etc.) can be more than 45, as addressed in 1.D in the first page of the policy.

Dan moved to approve the changes; motion was approved. Official vote will be conducted by email.

b. Mid-term Grades/Mandatory Feedback Discussion (Charge AAC17-18.08)

Tim has a draft of suggested policy language but will send it to someone on the committee so they can initiate the discussion. Cody indicated he had discussed at Provost Council getting faculty feedback and having open forums.

c. CWUP 5-90-040(32) Course Requirement Overlap

To be discussed at upcoming meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Next Meeting:

May 10, 2018