

## Academic Affairs Committee Minutes – May 24, 2018

Present (voting): Rodney Bransdorfer, Janet Finke, Dan Lipori, Ke Zhong  
Absent (voting): Eric Bennett, Christos Graikos (excused), Megan Matheson (excused)  
Present (non-voting): Lindsey Brown, Gail Mackin, Walter Szeliga  
Absent (non-voting): Julia Stringfellow (excused)  
Guests: Cody Stoddard

Meeting was called to order at 3:33 p.m. Minutes of May 10, 2018 were approved. One vote was submitted via email.

### *Chair Updates*

Dan put together the end-of-year committee report over the weekend. AAC worked on a lot this year and some of it got approved. An addendum will be added to the report following today's meeting.

### *Old Business*

#### a. Chair Election

Janet was nominated at the last meeting. She is willing to be chair but is unsure if the workload will be approved.

An official vote will be conducted by email. (Email vote passed May 29, 2018. Janet was elected chair for 2018-19.)

#### b. Mid-Term Grades

Lindsey put together some sample information about a system that could work with MyCWU. This would modify the Early Alert system to include a button for mid-term grades. There is also a hybrid option, which would include a button for Behaviors of Concern, as well as a button for mid-term grades. PeopleSoft also has the capability for mid-term grades, but it is not a perfect system. In PeopleSoft, faculty have to select the mid-term grade option. There are also potential training issues with bringing back the mid-term grade button in PeopleSoft. Additionally, the mid-term grade is not visible on students' transcripts unless it is approved to show up. Students can view the mid-term grades by clicking "mid-term grades." Advisors can also view the grades in the same way, and can create notifications based on that. Lindsey recommended creating a hybrid of the system for reporting mid-term grades and reporting Behaviors of Concern because the hybrid model allows for including comments; this system is the same as Behaviors of Concern but introduces mid-term grades. This approach would also help with the issue of notifying multiple advisors.

Committee members expressed a number of concerns:

- Would it be possible to put "in-progress" grades?

- Students are already aware of their grades in Canvas. This new system would create an extra step for faculty who already use Canvas in their classes. By putting something into policy, it will force faculty to do what they are already doing. Is the intent of the new system and/or policy so advisors can see students' progress and track how they are doing?

- Entering mid-term grades creates extra work for faculty who already provide progress reports for students throughout the quarter. Instead of a mandatory mid-term grade policy, make a policy to require faculty give students a more general progress report, especially if they are already inputting grades into Canvas.

- It seems inefficient to force faculty to do the same thing twice if there is a way achieve the same result by uploading something to or from Canvas.

- Enforcement mechanisms are a concern. Also, with the number of required tasks accumulating for faculty, it is easy to miss deadlines.

- Is there data to show if making this change is worth it? Are we trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist?

Gail indicated an advantage of having a mid-term grade system is that it allows intervention for students who think their grades are better than they are. It also helps with retaining students. Our retention rate is 72% and is likely to continue dropping. Advisors aren't always aware when students are struggling so this system would help. Academic Early Alert doesn't give the same information unless tied into PeopleSoft. Another concern about Early Alert is that students often have multiple advisors and some of those advisors aren't following up. The plan is to work with MapWorks in order to identify which students to target, how to triage them, and to track them as they move through the system. Aaron Brown in Student Achievement has been asking for this and agrees it is best practice for retention.

Rodney indicated he would like to see more data documentation. While this makes sense, he would still like to see the documentation. He would also like to see documentation and/or data on instructors who aren't using canvas to give feedback/enter grades. Gail explained there are inconsistent records on faculty side so we don't know how many faculty are advising students because there are no records in the system. There isn't data unless faculty and/or advisors put the notes in the system.

Dan suggested that, on the surface, the mid-term grade policy sounds like a good thing, but a lot of the things we have been discussing aren't really related to it. We can invite Aaron Brown to come in to talk about it first thing next year. In the meantime, we can discuss wording and language of the preliminary draft. There is a typo on the first page: "form" should be "from."

Timeline is another question. The mid-term grade should be posted before the 6-week withdrawal deadline, but there should be at least 4 weeks for the quarter to get underway. If the mid-term grade is posted in week 5, students won't have enough time to talk with their advisors. However, main concerns appear to be about the implementation of the policy, not the written language itself.

Gail indicated if the policy draft can be improved in fall, it could be implemented with a soft start or a pilot for a while. The mechanism of Early Alert could be modified in some way.

One option might be having a student progress report that is open during a certain period of time.

Creating a pilot might be one possibility. While it wouldn't be possible to structure a pilot for some faculty and not others, we could design the program, ask certain people to use it, and then collect their feedback, similar to a randomized study. The only question would be whether to use the hybrid design or use what is already in the system. Dan suggested using what is currently in the system.

#### c. Class Attendance Policy

EC made to the Class Attendance policy. The changes involved changing some numbering and changing Section A to include numbered information. AAC agreed with the changes.

Walter discussed some EC issues with the changes to the course overlap policy. Main concerns surrounded the language "field of study." EC came up with five different examples of departments or programs where this language would cause problems. They removed the new part C: "...no major and minor in the major field of study" but kept the editing changes to the existing parts A and B, and kept the removal of mention to Gen. Ed. Walter will get more explicit feedback from EC. Dan indicated he does not want to send the policy forward at this point.

#### *New Business*

##### a. Military Exigency Policy

Lindsey indicated this initially came about because the Veterans' Office submitted a change for the catalog and pointed out this other policy. This policy change originated from a law passed in 2013. Our current policy is not in compliance with the new law. However, the new, mandated language goes beyond our existing policy in that it allows students to make up work for classes that are missed. This is in direct contrast to the current sections D, E, and F of the Class Attendance Policy.

Rodney questioned if part C (beginning with "continue...") is part of the law. It ignores the part of the policy where students can't complete the course if they miss 30 days or more. It also says they can be excused but doesn't say how they can make up the work. Walter indicated students have three options, so it seems like advisors would help them choose something else. If we are required to have the wording, then we have to keep it, but we can advise students to do something different. We could also say "student options may be found in the RCW."

Dan suggested leaving out the second sentence from A.2.C. The policy cannot be voted today so discussion will continue at the first meeting of fall quarter. We will have to do something with it since it is a state policy.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Sept. 27, 2018 – Location TBA