

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee 2016/2017

Meeting Minutes 2/15/2017

10.00 – 11.30 AM

Senate Conference Room, Hall Dorm

Members present: Karen Bresciano, Stuart Brown (by phone), Susanna Cowan, Joe Crivello, Erika Elechicon, Holly Fitch, Hedley Freake (chair), Lawrence Gramling, Katrina Higgins, Jennifer Lease Butts, Jill Livingston, Ellen Tripp, David Wagner.

Guests: Sarah O’Leary (Director of Education Abroad) and Abigail Hastillo (Assistant Director)

1. The minutes from 2/1/17 were approved.
2. Hedley Freake laid out the background to the discussion on education abroad courses. The meeting in September with Sarah O’Leary and Abigail Hastillo had resulted in agreement that students taking courses abroad as part of a UConn Education Abroad program should be required to transfer those courses in onto their UConn transcript. However, subsequent discussions within the SSC had raised additional questions, primarily centered around whether students should be required to get preapproval for courses to be taken abroad and whether the courses approval system could be improved to put less of an onus on the students.

Abi explained the difficulties associated with requiring preapproval. Frequently, syllabi may not be available in advance in order to determine equivalency. Students may not know their course schedule in advance, due to the enrollment system in use at the receiving institution or simply that a scheduled course may not be offered. One solution would be to require students to get preapproval for 8-9 courses to accommodate first choice courses being unavailable but this would involve a lot of work for both student and evaluators. Faculty evaluators at UConn can approve course equivalence for any student taking a particular course abroad, but this has to be done with caution since courses change. There is a tension between having students enroll in a narrower range of familiar programs where course equivalencies are clearly defined and allowing students the space to pursue their own interests at less visited institutions where equivalencies remain to be determined. 70% of UConn students going abroad are in UConn led programs where the resulting courses are already clear.

Institutions that require preapproval tend to be the smaller ones. Abi reported that none of the larger universities that she investigated require preapproval. At UConn, preapproval is required for student athletes, but scaling this up for everybody is not realistic. The current on line system for course approvals is an enormous improvement over the old system for both students and evaluators. However, it is primarily based on transactions around individual courses and it is not easy to track the approval process for a student as a whole. The Education Abroad office meets regularly with faculty evaluators and it may be worth asking them about how well the system is working and how it might be approved. In general, while requiring preapproval does not seem realistic at UConn, more strongly encouraging students to seek preapproval and evaluating the on-line course approval system are reasonable goals. Sarah and Abi left the meeting at 10.45.

3. Karen Bresciano reported on a meeting she, Cathy Cocks (Community Standards) and Katrina Higgins attended with the Faculty Standards Committee to discuss the policy on Academic Integrity and in particular the lack of adherence to reporting requirements by many faculty. The question arose as to who owned the policy and who was responsible for education and enforcement efforts for it. The policy is owned by the Senate and was developed by the SSC. Community Standards has been playing a role in its enforcement but nobody has been doing any education for faculty about its provisions. Some faculty view the hearing process as onerous. It would appear to be time to revisit the policy and include in that recommendations for how it should be operationalized. There may be a role for CETL in education efforts, perhaps including the development of a required training module for faculty. The Provost's office may be a more appropriate venue for enforcement than Community Standards, which is part of Student Affairs. Karen and Hedley will bring these issues to the SEC.

A related concern is the process for dealing with academic integrity outside of the classroom in contexts such as student grant proposals or scholarship applications. In the view of Cathy Cocks, these are covered by the Behavioral Code for students and need not be included in the Academic Integrity policy

4. The meeting adjourned at 11.25 AM.

Next meeting 3/1 10 AM.