

Minutes
Senate Scholastic Standards Committee
November 14, 2007
(Approved 11/28/2007)

Members: (attending members in bold): **Andrew Moiseff (Chair)**, John Bennett, **Francine DeFranco**, **Gerald Dunne**, Gerald Gianutsos, **Lynne Goodstein**, **Lawrence Gramling**, **Katrina Higgins**, **Dirk Keaton**, **Jose Machado**, Diane Lillo-Martin, **Jeffrey von Munkwitz-Smith**, Yuhang Rong, **Lauren Smith**, David Wagner, Robert Weiner

1. The Oct. 31, 2007 minutes were approved.

2. INTD update

The committee was given a brief summary of the meeting between M. Darre (Chair, Senate C&CC) and Moiseff concerning revising the INTD review procedures. Darre invited Moiseff, and M. Lamb (Director, IISP) to their November 26 meeting to brief Senate C&CC about the discussions we have been having about reorganizing the INTD review committee, the separation of ‘affiliated’ and ‘non-affiliated’ courses into INTD and UNIV designated courses, and the review process that would be followed by these two types of courses. SC&CC will be asked to comment on the idea that they might take on the responsibility to review courses that were not affiliated with School or College academic programs, the so-called UNIV courses.

3. TNE dual degree update

TNE has informed us that they will be sending us their revised proposal to facilitate the ability of students enrolled in the Neag School to earn a degree in a specific content area in addition to their School of Education degree.

4. Posthumous degrees

In 1992, SSSC addressed whether or not it was appropriate to issue degrees posthumously to students that passed-away before completing all degree requirements. Their minutes indicate that the SSSC recommended that the administration develop an ‘alternative’ form of recognition. Senate Executive Committee requested that we research whether degrees have been awarded under such circumstances, and/or whether alternatives have been developed. The Registrar, Dana Wilder (Provost’s Office), and the Graduate School will be consulted so that we can learn about posthumous degrees/recognition.

5. Academic Integrity/Misconduct

The Academic Integrity/Misconduct Forum ran smoothly and should be considered a success. The panelists did a very nice job of putting Integrity and Misconduct Procedures and Penalties into a broader context. The attendees brought up several important points that we will need to discuss before finalizing our proposal. These include:

The importance of keeping the Deans informed, in a timely manner, about misconduct proceedings involving students within their Schools or Colleges. This was highlighted by the needs of the Professional Schools, e.g., Nursing.

Sentiments were expressed that we should first consider educating students who have engaged in misconduct, but have progressive penalties available to the Board if they decide that punitive action is appropriate.

We were reminded that when we speak of educating instructors and students about misconduct we must remember the important role of Graduate Students as instructors, and to be sure they are included.

At the forum, Cathy Cocks pointed out that when a student is suspended it is noted on their transcript, but the notation is automatically removed when they graduate. We should discuss whether we would want the transcript notation to disappear in a similar fashion?

The current proposal requires that students respond within seven days of notification. This time constraint may be a hardship for students, especially if the notification occurs at certain times of the year such as around finals. We should discuss whether we should provide a longer time for students to respond.

Comments from the Forum and comments received by EMail will be summarized and discussed at a future SSC meeting.

6. Honors GPA requirement

The Honors Program forwarded us a proposal to raise GPA criterion (from 3.2 to 3.4) for applying to Honors Program and for graduating as an honors scholar that was approved May 18, 2007 by the Honors Board of Associate Directors. Honors provided us with the relevant section of their May 18, 2007 Minutes which contained some GPA data and also summarized arguments for and against the proposal.

Arguments for and against were discussed. Arguments in support of raising the GPA criterion included: that many other universities have higher GPA requirements; that honors students should be significantly above average; and that Dean's list criteria in most Colleges is significantly higher than 3.2. Opposing arguments included: that some students, specifically 8 in 2006, would have fulfilled all requirements with the exception that they did not have a 3.4 GPA – these students would not have graduated with honors if the new criteria had been in place; it might be the case that students who extend themselves academically might have lower grades as a direct result of stretching their academic horizons. We considered the real impact on these other standards and speculated on how many students would be affected adversely. Current honors students have high GPAs (exceeding the higher proposed minimum) and therefore this would not affect most of them. Historically, honors dismisses ~ 50 students/year (based on the present GPA criteria), but these students have the option to petition to remain in the program for another year and thus can have an opportunity to get back on track.

There was a general consensus that the higher GPA sends a positive message about the seriousness of the Honors program.

The Scholastic Standards Committee voted to approve the Honors Program proposal to raise the minimum GPA for graduation as an Honors Scholar from 3.2 to 3.4 by a vote of 9-0-1. Approval was contingent on the following implementation details:

- 1) The earliest this change would go into effect would be Summer 2008.
- 2) Other GPA related benchmarks used by the Honors Program would be similarly increased by 0.2.

3) Honors students will be required to meet the GPA requirements listed in the catalog corresponding to their initial entry into the Honors Program. Specifically, this impacts students that admitted into the Honors Program under the 3.2 minimum graduation GPA requirement (and associated GPA related standards). Typically, if a student changes Schools/Colleges, they are bound by the Catalog corresponding to the year they change School/College. It would be unfair to change the minimum Honors GPA requirements of these students midstream. The Honors Program can ensure that students are held to the initial, rather than new standards since eligibility for the Honors Scholar designation is reviewed by Honors, rather than the degree auditor.