

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee 2016/2017

Meeting Minutes 9/21/2016

9.00 – 10.30 AM

Senate Conference Room, Hall Dorm

Members present: Karen Bresciano, Stuart Brown, Susanna Cowan, Joe Crivello, Hedley Freake (chair), Lawrence Gramling, Katrina Higgins, Jennifer Lease Butts, Susan Spiggle, Gina Stuart, Ellen Tripp, David Wagner.

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

1. The minutes from 9/7/16 were approved with minor modifications. In comments on the minutes communicated by email, Robin Coulter noted that students' attempts to rationalize their schedules by clustering classes would inevitably result in bunched finals if they are scheduled by class meeting times. In the past, exam times were unrelated to class meeting times and it may make sense to return to this system, unless very specific student/faculty requirements demand otherwise.
2. Two motions from the SSC on Minors and on Scholastic Standing/Grades were presented to the Senate on September 12. There was some discussion from the floor on the Minors motion. Lisa Pane pointed out that the rule on no substitutions arose from the fact that the registrar's office would be deluged with substitutions, particularly if Minors included courses that were not regularly offered. Other senators questioned whether there should be limitations on the number of substitutions permitted or on the disciplinary overlap between Major and Minor. The answer given in the Senate was that these issues should remain the prerogative of the departments offering the Minors and the committee concurred with this position
Jill Livingston pointed out the reference within the Minors motion to the University Catalog was inconsistent with usual practice for the by-laws since it failed to define where the authority lay for the decision in question. The motion was therefore modified as follows:

h. *Minors*

A minor provides an option for students who want to add further breadth to their academic program. A minor is available only to a matriculated student currently pursuing a baccalaureate degree. Minors will consist of 12 - 18 credits of 2000+ level course work. Unless a higher standard is noted in the description of a specific minor program, completion of a minor requires that a student earn a 'C' or better in each of the required courses for that minor. The same course may be used to meet both major and minor requirements unless prohibited by the department or program offering the minor as specifically stated otherwise in the University catalog. Substitutions to minor requirements require the approval of the head or designee of the department or program offering the minor. The minor is recorded on the student's official transcript.

The original motion has already been presented to the Senate. Hedley will check with the SEC on the best way to effect this change.

3. Jennifer Lease Butts raised the question of undergraduate students taking graduate classes, earning a grade of A+ but not being able to receive it, since the maximum undergraduate grade is A. The committee discussed the differences between the graduate and undergraduate systems and determined that it did not want to tinker with the established and widely understood undergraduate grading system.
4. The committee welcomed Sarah and Abigail Hastillo. They came to seek the committee's advice on problems associated with students not transferring in courses taken abroad. When students participate in exchange or third party study abroad programs, the Education Abroad office inserts a 12 credit OFFC placeholder on their student administration record. In cases where the UConn equivalent of the course taken abroad is not known, the student is responsible for getting the courses accredited by the relevant UConn departments using an on-line system developed by the Education Abroad office. Upon receipt of the transcript from the institution overseas and determination of the equivalence of all courses taken, the office communicates this information to the Registrar. Sometimes students do not get one or more of their courses accredited, perhaps because they did not do well in the course and do not want it appearing on their UConn transcript. This leaves the OFFC entry on their transcript. Education Abroad's position is that students should be required to bring in all courses taken as part of a UConn Education Abroad program. The committee concurred with this viewpoint. It was suggested that the UNIV x993 International Study courses could be used as a vehicle for this. If students do not complete the accreditation process before the end of the semester following the study abroad, the Education Abroad office will administratively assign UNIV credits for any unaccredited courses using the grades received from the host institution. The Education Abroad office will consult further with UICC about this procedure and incorporate the new policy into the academic directions given to students studying abroad. They will also communicate the entirety of this policy/procedure document to the SSC for its comments.
5. The meeting also discussed withdrawal procedures for students studying abroad. Some institutions do not allow withdrawal from courses after the add/drop period, resulting in students failing courses. This differs from the policy at UConn that allows students to withdraw from a course up until the 9th week of classes. While abroad, students need to abide by the rules of the host institution, but upon return, it may be appropriate to allow students to replace the F with a W. As part of that procedure, Education Abroad will develop a process to allow students to notify their office of the intent to withdraw from a course, while remaining officially registered. Information gathered at that time will assist in the determination of whether the W grade is appropriate. It was suggested that somebody in the Education Abroad office should act as advisor to students while abroad and thereby assist with this process.
6. The committee thanked Abi and Sarah for bringing these issues forward and wished them well with their resolution.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10.30 AM.