

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee 2016/2017

Meeting Minutes 10/19/2016

9.00 – 10.30 AM

Senate Conference Room, Hall Dorm

Members present: Karen Bresciano, David Clokey, Joe Crivello, Lauren DiGrazia, Holly Fitch, Hedley Freake (chair), Lawrence Gramling, Katrina Higgins, Jennifer Lease Butts, Jill Livingston, Steven Park

1. The committee welcomed Steve Park as a member, providing cross-representation with the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee.
2. The minutes from 10/5/16 were approved using a range of laudatory adjectives and expressions.
3. A further modification of the language in the policy for Academic Adjustments for second language and quantitative requirements was presented and approved and is appended to these minutes. This specified that new evidence could be brought to the committee for consideration, which might then reevaluate its earlier decision. Since the original policy had been presented to the Senate in 2006 by the Curricula and Courses Committee, it was decided to share this new language with that committee, prior to bringing it back to the Senate.
4. Discussion continued on the charge from the SEC to consider the possibility of including 2 October non-class days in the fall semester to lessen stress on students. The report of the Calendar Task Force, led by Cameron Faustman and Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, was discussed. That committee had recommended the inclusion of a 2-day October break and shortening of the Thanksgiving break by holding classes on the first 2 days of that week. However, the May 2010 Senate meeting voted down those proposals. Karen Bresciano reported that the Student Welfare Committee has been in contact with Student Health Services and Counseling and Mental Health Services to collect data on student stress and illness. However, those data may not be available by the December 12 deadline set by the SEC. The committee engaged in a broad discussion on the calendar, student stress and whether a 2-day break was a good and effective solution. Would a break from assignments be more effective than a break from classes? The possibility of a non-class day with a focus on wellness was suggested. This might include minute clinics and could also be used as a university assessment day for collection of data (e.g.NSSE).

A clear identification of the problem to be solved is needed. Namely

- Data on stress and illness across the year at UConn
- Analysis of the underlying causes
- Best practice solutions to stress including but not limited to calendar options
- Data from peer and aspirants on how they handle these issues
- Better understanding of the issues facing lab classes, in particular the consequences of starting a new lab on a day other than Monday

It became clear that a full consideration of the issues could not be achieved by Dec 12 and that changing one part of the calendar should only be done with full understanding of its effects on the calendar as a whole. Hedley will report the state of the discussion to the SEC and seek further guidance from them.

5. The committee reviewed its discussion from the last meeting on expedited appeals to dismissal for certain categories of students. It determined that the current procedure, which gives authority to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to oversee and to expedite appeals as she sees fit was sufficient and so no changes are recommended.
6. Katrina Higgins suggested that Rowe 331E might be a better venue for committee meetings in particular because of its superior technology. Hedley will ask Cheryl to investigate.
7. The committee considered a request from Residential Life to clarify the housing of dismissed students. Their practice has been to allow dismissed students to return after one semester, space permitting. However, the by-laws (II.E.13) state that “Dismissal involves non-residence on the university campus...” and that they may “matriculate no sooner than two semesters following dismissal...” In the view of the committee, the by-laws are clear in that return to housing should await readmission. Katrina and Karen will communicate this finding to Residential Life. It is possible that this policy should be reconsidered and so it will be added to future business for the committee.
8. The meeting adjourned at 10.35 AM.

POLICY ON STUDENTS SEEKING AN ADJUSTMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS OF QUANTITATIVE REASONING OR SECOND LANGUAGE

The University Senate enacted General education requirements to ensure that all University of Connecticut undergraduate students become articulate and acquire intellectual breadth and versatility, critical judgment, moral sensitivity, awareness of their era and society, consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience, and a working understanding of the processes by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge. A critical element of General Education is demonstrated competency in five fundamental areas – computer technology, information literacy, **quantitative skills, second language proficiency**, and writing. The development of these competencies involves two thresholds: establishing entry-level expectations and meeting graduation expectations.

In cases involving a significant disability, the graduation expectations for the quantitative skills and/or second language competency may be a barrier to degree completion. The University has established a policy for considering academic adjustments to the University General Education Requirements and individual school/college requirements in an effort to respond to the extraordinary circumstances of students while maintaining academic integrity. In all cases, justification of an academic adjustment requires evidence of the disability's impact upon the student's ability to learn the course material.

Academic adjustments are only considered after a student has demonstrated that he or she is unable to complete the competency. In these cases, this situation will involve a student with a significant disability whose documentation and educational history provide compelling evidence that an academic adjustment is warranted. Each academic adjustment will be based on an individualized, case-by-case assessment and should not compromise the academic integrity of the requirements for a specific major or degree. Academic adjustments may include an exception to an academic rule, such as allowing a student to complete a required course(s) on a pass/fail basis or substituting an alternative course(s) for a required course(s).

The following rules will apply:

- If quantitative or second language competency is deemed an essential element of a program or course of student, then a substitution is not permitted. The question of "essential element" will be decided by the Dean or designee of each school or college.
- Academic adjustments will not reduce the number of courses/credits required to complete General Education requirements. **Waivers of General Education requirements are never granted.**
- If the student changes his or her school or college of enrollment, academic adjustments will be reviewed by the appropriate Dean's office in the new school or college of enrollment.
- Academic adjustments will be subject to the 8-year rule.
- For students who plan to continue their studies beyond the baccalaureate degree: Please note that, while approved adjustments will be adequate for graduation, they may not meet the requirements for admission to a graduate/professional school (e.g., law, medicine, etc.).

The Academic Adjustments Committee will convene to review requests and make final decisions. The committee will include the following individuals:

- Designee from the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education and Instruction (Committee Chair)
- Designee from the Center for Students with Disabilities
- Designee from the Department of Mathematics (in the case of a quantitative request)
- Designee from the Department of Literature, Cultures and Languages (in the case of a second language request)
- Designee from the General Education Oversight Committee
- Designee from the Dean's Office of the petitioning student's school or college, or the Director of the Bachelor of General Studies Program and Academic Center for Exploratory Students (ACES), as appropriate

Students may appeal the decision of the Committee to the Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs within 30 days of the date of the decision. This appeal is a review of the record furnished by the Committee for the purpose of determining whether all applicable procedures have been followed. It does not include an opportunity to submit additional evidence or documentation. **If, at a later date, a student wishes to furnish additional evidence or documentation to support their adjustment request, they may resubmit a petition for committee review.**