

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee 2016/2017

Meeting Minutes 4/19/2017

10.00 – 11.30 AM

Senate Conference Room, Hall Dorm

Members present: Brian Aneskievich, Karen Bresciano, Susanna Cowan, Joe Crivello, Peter Diplock, Erika Elechicon, Hedley Freake (chair), Lawrence Gramling, Jennifer Lease Butts, Jill Livingston, David Wagner.

1. The minutes from 4/5/17 were approved.
2. The committee reviewed the motion to change the by-laws to better cover inter- and summer sessions. Language was added to cover credit limits in overlapping sessions. The motion was approved unanimously and is appended to these minutes. It will be forwarded to the SEC for consideration by the Senate, probably in the fall semester.
3. Erika Elechicon reported back from a meeting of the Academic Affairs committee of USG that had discussed the issue of reading days. Those present at the meeting were strongly in favor of reading days and did not consider the weekend between the end of classes and the start of final exams to be sufficient. Some considered the weekend to be break days and not reading days. Instructors frequently schedule projects and other assessments close to the end of the semester leaving little time for exam preparation. Students thought that reading days should be added to the Spring Semester to parallel the Fall, delaying graduation if necessary.

Some students favored the URI model, where exams are preceded by reading days, start on a Wednesday and then break for the weekend. Others favored a full reading week prior to the start of exams. An early, extended period can allow for decompression prior to finals and allow out of state/international students to take care of business for which there is little time once finals are complete.

Any changes should be made with sufficient notice to allow students to adjust start dates for summer activities. Effects on dining services/housing also need to be considered. Students would not be prepared to give up Spring Break.

The committee thanked Erika for her report and discussed ways of gathering more data. Erika, Dave, Susanna and Karen will work on a survey to be administered to students prior to the end of the semester, with the idea that this would inform a more comprehensive survey to be given next semester.

4. The committee reviewed the updated version of the document describing undergraduate research and related courses and determined that it was ready for sending to the SEC/SCCC. One matter arising from this document was the realization that the definition of a Special Topics course is not uniform across the university. While CLAS, CAHNR and UICC view it as a vehicle for piloting courses with the understanding that each offering requires approval and there is a limit to 3 offerings, other schools permit multiple offerings without permission. The committee may return to this discrepancy in the future.
5. The SSC Annual report was approved for forwarding to the SEC.
6. The meeting adjourned at 11.15 AM. Next meeting 5/3 at 10 AM.