

Minutes of January 22, 2018

Attendees: Veronica Makowsky (chair), Brian Aneskievich, Greg Bouquot, Stuart Brown, Jennifer Lease Butts, Robin Coulter, Susanna Cowan, Joe Crivello, Hedley Freake, Gretchen Geer, Larry Gramling, Robin Grenier, Katrina Higgins, Jill Livingston (recorder)

Absent: Robert Bosco, Karen Bresciano, Nithisha Chittajallu, David Clokey, Peter Diplock, Holly Fitch, Jean Main, Ellen Tripp, David Wagner

Guests: Brian Rockwood, Associate Registrar

I. Approval of the Minutes from December 13, 2017

Joe Crivello made a motion to approve the minutes. Hedley Freake seconded the motion. It was approved by all, with one abstention.

II. Plans for Information Gathering about Academic Integrity Issues

Discussion:

The main issue regarding the Academic Integrity policy is that there is that not all faculty are reporting academic integrity violations to Community Standards. This may be due to lack of faculty awareness about the process and/or faculty disagreement with the process.

When academic misconduct occurs, faculty must follow two processes—handling the violation within their class and reporting the conduct issue to Community Standards.

Are there opportunities to better communicate protocols to faculty and other instructors, as well as students? This would be in addition to the following communication points:

- Community Standards Reporting Form (see item 4):
<https://community.uconn.edu/academic-misconduct-procedure-review/>
- References for Syllabi Links found on the Provost's website:
<https://provost.uconn.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/syllabi-references/>

Does the definition of academic misconduct need to be refined, such that it is broadly encompassing and inclusive of new forms of misconduct? Faculty themselves are responsible for defining what constitutes academic misconduct in their classes.

To what extent do students understand the policy and the definitions of academic misconduct? From the student point of view, should the policy be revised and more widely disseminated?

Decisions:

Veronica will raise this issue at the SEC chair's meeting on Friday, asking if Faculty Standards should be involved. The Graduate School is also considering academic misconduct at this time and we may be able to release information in tandem.

Veronica will invite Cathy Cocks from Community Standards to a future meeting. If a taskforce is formed, it should include someone from Student Welfare and undergraduate students.

III. Report of the Registrar on Possible Final Exam Schedules, followed by questions and discussion

Discussion:

Students are considered to have bunched finals if they have: two finals at the same time, three finals on the same calendar day, three finals in consecutive blocks spanning two days, or four finals over two calendar days. If a student is scheduled for three finals on same day, the instructor of the middle final is asked to reschedule.

An external vendor provided an assessment of UConn's final exam schedules. They determined that if UConn had 8-day exam schedule, there would be no bunching conflicts. Software is available on the market that could schedule finals by the student, eliminating all conflicts. UConn's scheduling software does not do this.

The Registrar schedules finals according to the meeting pattern of the class; however, not all classes follow the standard meeting pattern. For example, students may have one class 8 am on Tuesday and a different class 8 am on Thursday. The Registrar tries to schedule M/W/F classes on the M/W/F exam schedule. They also try to schedule evening classes in the evening. They further consider how many students take classes in a particular block, distributing the most densely populated blocks more broadly. Chemistry, Accounting, and Math have blocks specifically designated for their classes. After the finals grid is populated, Brian Rockwood looks at conflicts to identify patterns. He will adjust 20-30 classes each semester that have 10+ conflicts in each class. Approximately 500 sections of classes opt out of finals, and are not included in the finals schedule.

In Fall Semester 2017 (Storrs campus), there were 319 direct conflicts, 1,899 3-in-a-day, 23 3-in-a-row, and 685 4-in-2-days. About 10% of population had conflicts, but it is uncommon for a student to have more than one conflict. The class breakdown is different (e.g. more FYE's) and bunching occurs more often in the Fall Semester. This would be worse sans Reading Day.

General points to consider in finals discussions:

- USG indicated last year that Reading Days are highly desirable. Any reduction to Reading Days would necessitate reaching out to USG.

- Many faculty do not like Saturday finals.
- Saturday finals can cause religious conflicts.
- The majority of students already have free days during finals week when they have no finals scheduled. These, as well as weekend days are de facto reading days.
- Faculty prefer exams to be scheduled early, which gives them more time for grading.

Alternate model 1: Brian Rockwood presented a proposed 8-day finals schedule, which includes a free block from 1-3 pm each day and a Day 4 Reading Day. This schedule would reduce the total bunched from 2,926 current to 1,614. The schedule could start on any day, though the example showed a Monday start. The free block may allow faculty to make arrangements for rescheduling with students. Another benefit is built-in flexibility for winter weather rescheduling.

Alternate model 2: Classes would be held Monday and Tuesday during the last week of classes. Students would have a Reading Day on Wednesday. Finals would run Thursday and Friday. Saturday would be a common day and Sunday would be a Reading Day. Finals would then continue Monday through Thursday. Friday would be formally scheduled for make-up exams. This model would include the free daily block from 1-3 pm. This proposal would cut days from the academic calendar, reducing class meetings from 42 current to 40 or 41.

A related issue is final-exam like tests given last week of classes. These do not qualify for bunched finals provisions. When considering a final examination (an in-person or online test as opposed to submitting a paper or project), would defining what a **final** examination ameliorate this problem? Definitions might be an examination that is weighted more than any other exam in the class or a specific percentage of the weight, such as 30%.

Decisions:

SSC is interested in considering these two alternate finals models further.

When Brian Rockwood computes statistics for Spring 2018, he will provide information to SSC on how many students currently have days with no finals during finals week.

Brian Rockwood will provide a table of the alternate model 2 to SSC.

SSC members should reflect on both the models for finals week and the definition of a final exam. They are encouraged to seek feedback from colleagues. This discussion will be continued at a future meeting.

IV. Next Meeting:

Monday, February 5, 2018, **School of Business 302**, 2:00-3:30 PM:

Guests from the Center for Career Development: Jim Lowe, Ana Blesso, Beth Settje to answer questions and discuss "Academic Credit and 0-Credit Internships and Experiences."