

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee Minutes
Monday, March 25, 2019
2:00-3:30PM
Hall 123

Present: Veronica Makowsky (chair), Stuart Brown, Hedley Freake, Holly Fitch, Greg Bouquot, Joe Crivello, Robin Grenier, Katrina Higgins, Jennifer Lease Butts, Jill Livingston (recorder), Sreenidhi Nair, Lauren Schlesselman, Jason Vokoun, Ashley Vrabely

Absent: Maureen Armstrong, Karen Bresciano, Thomas Briggs, Robin Coulter, Thomas Long, Kim McKeown, Delaruelle Tarpeh, Ellen Tripp, Larry Walsh

Guest: Caroline McGuire, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research

I. Call to Order

Veronica Makowsky called the meeting to order at 2pm. To accommodate member schedules, the order of the agenda was changed.

II. Minutes of March 11th will be available soon.

III. Pass/Fail Option (page 11): Katrina

Those individuals on SSC with roles in undergraduate education were largely unaware of the previous By-Laws changes to P/F, which permit students to take three allotted P/F courses during the same semester. When this information recently became known, Katrina spoke to the undergraduate advising directors. There were multiple concerns, particularly from CLAS, Business, and Education. Advisors are meeting with students close to graduation who are unaware they needed a letter grade for a class they took P/F. In these circumstances, the advisors are taking courses off P/F. They asked SSC to consider implementing a requirement that students need approval from a Dean or Dean's designee to take a course P/F.

Discussion: The committee discussed whether the approval process should first start with the academic advisor, with the Dean's approval being a second stage. This would mirror the approvals required to drop courses.

Pertinent background information: It is only after grades come in that an instructor knows a student is taking a course P/F; the Registrar learns how many courses a student has taken P/F when they conduct the degree audit; individual schools and colleges may effect restrictions on P/F; if the Dean or their designee is responsible for approval, the duty will likely fall to someone in the student advising center. Further, it was noted that in the School of Business, it is common practice for students to take a course P/F their final semester. Having to approve each of these courses would require resources and may not be a desired option.

Decision: Katrina thought that the best approach would be to leave it to the schools and colleges to implement desired restrictions. If approvals are implemented, it would be best to have two levels of permissions, with advisors being the first stage.

IV. Information Items:

A. A Committee from Advising and the Registrar's Office is working on a proposal for Fresh Start and Academic Forgiveness to be presented to the SSC in the fall.

B. MOOCs: Veronica is working with Kent Holsinger on forming a committee to consider MOOCs for credit. She is waiting to hear from him at this time about who he wants on the committee.

C. Additional Major Committee. Ashley said that they will first communicate with NECHE about the credit limit. If that approach is unsuccessful, they will need to figure out how to implement the approved language. The proposal will first go to John Elliott, and then NECHE.

D. Final Assessment sent to SEC via Hedley 3-12-2019.

E. There were no other information items.

V. Research and Experiential Learning (pages 6-11).

There are two distinct sections of the proposal: Course Definitions & Renumbering Proposal, and the Research Course Attribute Proposal.

Discussion: Greg and Nathan met with a student representative to the Senate. The student had discovered that Harvard's website provides more extensive information than UConn about courses. Every student used to get a copy of the catalog, which necessitated shorter course descriptions. The catalog has a very small print run now, as it is primarily online. The Registrar has plans to bolster descriptions and improve the search engine. They will likely go to a new student administration system, which will be more user-friendly, providing ease in building course schedules. PeopleSoft has character limitations for course descriptions. Version 9.2 will allow more flexibility.

Language in course descriptions is meant to remain consistent, not dependent on who teaches the course. In reality, instructors have liberty to teach in different ways, and it would be beneficial to students to have more information from the instructors.

The committee discussed concerns about the growing complexity of course options, with new Gen Ed requirements and potentially new common definitions and course attributes. The attributes were created upon request from certain schools and colleges.

Decision: The subcommittee will divorce the two sections of the proposal. The Course Definitions & Renumbering Proposal, which has been extensively discussed by SSC and vetted with C&C committees, will be provided to Veronica in formal By-Laws proposal format. Veronica will conduct a vote via email. Should the vote be in the affirmative, Veronica will request that the SEC put this on the April 8, 2019 Senate agenda. If the vote is not in favor, Veronica will put

this on a future SSC agenda. The language for the Research Course Attribute Proposal language with background explanation will also be provided by the subcommittee to Veronica. Veronica will distribute this to the C&C committees for feedback.

III. Grade Appeal Policy: Final version for SEC (pages 2-5)

Discussion: SSC discussed a newly proposed step in the grade appeals process. This would require that when a grade appeal reaches the Faculty Grade Change Review Committee, the committee first determines if sufficient grounds exist for the appeal, prior to proceeding with the hearing. This step is necessary, as occasionally appeals escalate that do not meet the allowable reasons for grade change requests, as defined in current By Laws (E.7). These include: “computational errors, clerical errors, and the discovery of overlooked components in a student’s body of work.” The Faculty Grade Change Review Committee is the third level of appeal in the process.

Decision: SSC approved the language. Veronica will the Grade Appeal Policy to SEC with proper formatting.

VI. New Business?

Discussion: Veronica asked whether SSC members had any known business to come before the committee this semester.

Robin hoping to have something from academic integrity subcommittee.

SSC also recognized there may be limited time on Spring Senate agendas and, thus, there is a need to prioritize its business.

Decision: Final assessments will be a priority over grade appeals. Research and Experiential Learning, if approved via email, will not involve a By-Laws change. This could potentially be added to the April 8th Senate agenda.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15pm.