

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee Minutes
Monday, April 15, 2019
2:00-3:30PM
Hall 123

Present: Veronica Makowsky (chair), Maureen Armstrong, Greg Bouquot, Stuart Brown, Robin Coulter, Joe Crivello, Hedley Freake, Holly Fitch, Katrina Higgins (recorder), Jennifer Lease Butts, Sreenidhi Nair, Dela Tarpeh, Jason Vokoun

Absent: Karen Bresciano, Thomas Briggs, Robin Grenier, Jill Livingston, Thomas Long, Kim McKeown, Lauren Schlesselman, Ellen Tripp, Larry Walsh, Ashley Vrabely

Guests: Erin McConnell, UConnPirg and Avolyn Nieves, USG Academic Affairs chair

I. Call to Order

Veronica Makowsky called the meeting to order at 2pm.

II. Informational Items

Veronica reviewed SSC agenda items being carried over to the Fall:

MOOCs subcommittee: Jill Livingstone and Joe Crivello (as chair) will represent the SSC. Veronica will call the group together later in month to charge the committee to develop a work plan for the Fall. The committee will report its findings at the end of the Fall semester.

Grade Appeal policy is ready for presentation to the Senate

Research and Experiential will be ready for presentation to the Senate in the Fall

Recommendations for an Academic Integrity model will be ready for SSC review in the Fall.

Fresh Start: Katrina Higgins will work on this and report on possible models in the Fall

The committee agreed that there is no need for an April 29th meeting.

III. Assessments and Final Assessments

Veronica presented the proposal to the Senate and received what were mostly suggestions for editorial changes and calls for clarification where needed.

Discussion followed about the importance of disseminating the details of the policy widely and Joe agreed to meet with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to discuss how the details of the policy will be disseminated to instructors and how its guidelines will be implemented.

The topic of bunched mid-terms was also raised in the Senate and Veronica asked the committee to consider whether this was something that SSC might address at future meetings.

The topic of Reading Days was raised again and the committee noted that the elimination of the Fall reading day would help ease some of the pressure around bunched finals, although Hedley Freake reminded the committee that USG reports that students want more reading days, not fewer.

The Center for Students with Disabilities submitted additional wording which detailed their role in approving academic adjustments. However, the committee determined that the process for approving academic adjustments was procedural and did not belong in the policy.

The general consensus was to let the policy go before the Senate as proposed.

IV. Course Descriptions Prior to Course Registration Each Semester

The SSC has been asked to consider a proposal that instructors provide descriptions of their courses prior to registration for the following semester. These descriptions would be more detailed than catalog copy, but not necessarily as detailed as a syllabus.

Examples from other institutions, including Harvard, were supplied.

The discussion focused on who would be responsible for collecting course descriptions, where the information would be housed, as well as how the University would enforce/entice faculty to provide their course descriptions in a timely manner.

It was noted that of the 4800 courses scheduled for the Fall 800 of them do not yet have instructors assigned.

Greg Bouquot also noted that the Registrar is working to make the catalog more searchable, and his office is encouraging C&Cs to provide longer course descriptions in the catalog.

Veronica asked whether this is a topic for SSC to consider or should this be addressed by school/college and Senate C&Cs.

V. Textbook Price Transparency Campaign

Erin McConnell (UConnPirg) and Avolyn Nieves (USG Academic Affairs) attended the meeting to discuss their "textbook transparency" campaign, which is a program they are championing to have the University develop policies and procedures to encourage instructors publicize which textbooks they are going to be using before students register for courses.

They noted that students have the right to know before they are registering for courses, how much a class is going to cost them.

Veronica also reminded the committee that there is a State law in effect that requires that instructors to list their textbooks ahead of time, and that most instructors are complying.

Committee members also noted that not all instructors can (or want to) comply with the law.

A discussion ensued about what can and can't be done to get information about textbook prices out to students earlier.

The committee also questioned the role of the SSC in the campaign. Might not this be something that the VPAA works with department heads to implement?

Veronica asked if it should be raised in the Senate for debate.

Jennifer Lease Butts reminded the committee that we need to get clarification on who, according to the law, is the responsible agent? Is it the individual instructor or the University as an Institution? She also reminded the committee that this is a great opportunity to educate the University community on the resources that are available to help instructors minimize the cost of their course materials.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3.20PM.