

SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE
November 29, 2021, 2:00-3:30PM
Via WebEx
Minutes

1. Today's Meeting Schedule

2. From the Chairs

A. Rules of engagement (reminders)

- ✓ Electronic hands up to ensure – Holly/Robin run meeting/review hands up
- ✓ Agenda items will be prioritized
- ✓ Depending on the number of agenda items for a meeting, times may be allocated to make sure that we get through priority items.

B. Approval of the 11-15-21 Minutes (attached in email)

- a. H. Fitch moved to pass the minutes
- b. J. Crivello second to pass the minutes
- c. 1 abstaining
- d. Minutes approved

C. Chairs report – No action required – **Minimum requirements exception, II.A.1.**

The Minimum Exceptions By-Law change was presented at the Senate meeting November 1, and will be voted on at the **December 6 2021** Senate meeting. As a reminder, this ByLaw change extends the decision-making for exceptions to transcript requirements for *applying* students in unusual circumstances (6-12 per year) as regulated in ByLaw II.A.1. The change extends decision making for exempting transcript requirements from... "Director of Admissions [original]" to... "Director of Admissions in consultation with leadership from the Division of Enrollment Planning and Management [revised]" (includes financial aid, Registrar, etc). The change is intended to engage additional input including from faculty. No action required at this time.

D. Chairs Report – Action Required – **Resolution on Class Enrollment Caps (no ByLaw change)** – *SSC vote needed to send to SEC and present Dec 6 for vote.*

In response to SEC request, SSC drafted a resolution related to the protocol for requested changes to class enrollment caps. Members of SSC on 11/15/21 requested additional data from SEC including by whom, when and how often caps were being changed.

According to feedback at 11/19/21 SEC/Chairs meeting -- cases were brought to SEC in March/June last year (2020) mainly from faculty in CLAS. Some mention was made of Peter Diplock in Provost's Office changing caps on Winter intersession courses and Summer courses. There were also complaints from regional campuses and subsequent similar reports from School of Engineering. The incidence of these changes has been slowly increasing, and they seem to happen during the registration period as students are registering, or at the time faculty propose summer courses (i.e., caps on summer courses are changed to promote or repress specific summer classes). Also, several grievances have been sent to AAUP over major cap changes being implemented without faculty consent. When AAUP grievances were transmitted, Peter Diplock

was contacted, and the response was sympathetic, and/or to offer options like an additional TA or multiple sections but the caps were left. (Once raised and students register, the cap cannot be lowered again). The SEC wanted this Resolution for AAUP to use in negotiations and to make clear where authority over caps resides.

Based on additional input, the resolution has been lightly amended and is attached here (Attachment 1). The Co-Chairs propose it for presentation and vote at 12/6/21 Senate meeting.

- Enrollment caps, especially in summer and winter courses, were increasing.
- This resolution is to remind everybody that the enrollment caps are a combination to ensure students graduate on time and to address teaching needs.
- The person who is in charge of the enrollment caps will be the person in charge of communicating these changes.
- Vote:
 - **1 abstaining**
 - **16 in favor**

E. Chair report – Action required – **Academic Adjustments revised proposal (no ByLaw change)** – *SSC voted to send to SEC; will hold from Senate presentation until clarification on policy versus ByLaw.*

A revised proposal from Joe Madaus (Academic Adjustment Committee, Chair) and Donna Korbelt has been provided addressing clarifications raised at the last meeting (see Attachment 2, new text in red).

- Every year 30 to 40 undergraduate students who are registered with CSD request a course substitution for the language requirement or Q requirement.
- If granted the course substitution, students work with their advisor to meet the requirement through other courses.
- Donna Korbelt's group has been studying how peer institutions have been going about dealing with this type of situation.
- Proposal is amending who is engaged in which stages of the process. As amended, the people involved in initially approving substitutions would be CSD to determine if student qualifies. At that point, academic advisors and academic units are contacted.
 - This would reduce the number of steps students have to go through in order to get this accommodation.
 - Currently there is no need for more resources as there will be a shift in roles at CSD.
- Language has now been added to *clarify* the role of the academic unit in determining, once a student has been deemed to qualify, whether (1) Q or language are core elements of the major and therefore cannot be substituted, and (2) if allowable, what classes comprise suitable substitution.
 - The revision includes the steps students need to take when applying for this process, and the rationale for this process.
 - The Dean and academic advisor makes decisions about what courses can substitute.
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- **Question was raised by SC as to whether this a by-law or a policy and where should it reside?**

- If it is a policy, should this be sent to be voted by the Board of Trustees or Senate? SSC resolved to discuss with Cheryl Galli to determine why this is a policy and not in the ByLaws, given Senate has regulatory control over ByLaws (and all academic policy matters should reside there), whereas BOT has jurisdiction over other types of (non-academic?) policies. ***post hoc note, the policy has been forwarded to SEC and then sent to GEOC members Manuela Wagner and Suzanne Wilson to ascertain whether the Policy formatting is the correct one or whether the directives should be proposed as ByLaw under appropriate section pertaining to Admissions.*
- **Vote to forward to the SEC, defer formal presentation to Spring 2022 Senate meeting to allow resolution of whether this should stay a policy or be proposed as ByLaw :**
 - Abstaining: 1
 - In Favor: 18
- F. Chair report – No Action needed (discussion only) - **Related issue of Academic Adjustment/W – Action required, SSC to vote on whether sub-committee and further consideration is warranted or not**
 - The W course requirement is not included in the Academic Adjustment proposal accommodation (see D above and Attachment 2).
 - The committee noted that if students need to get a course substitution for their major required W course, then they can go through their college/school to get the substitution.
 - For the W course requirement that is for general education it will depend on the academic dean for approval.
 - Reasons why W was not included in the original policy could be: (1) because W is more amenable to accommodative supports, or (2) because writing is considered core and integral to any University-level degree.
 - The SSC left open whether reconsideration is needed regarding policy and General discussion about W course being included in the policy.
 - Notably, no significant number of students appear to have requested this accommodation and therefore the matter may be moot and perhaps should be left alone?
 - No action was taken on the matter, as the SSC still awaits guest visit with a first-year English W instructor to offer further insight (either Dec 6 2021 meeting or Jan 2022 meeting).
 - Topic deferred without vote.
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3. Today's Check-in

- A. *SSC Representatives on University Academic Integrity Initiative*
HF, JC, and KBR – Mission is to represent SSC on external Provost's appointed Academic Integrity Committee led by Vice Provost Kersaint. HF & JC will report on progress to the SSC.
Report:
 - KBR provided updates: Discussed at a subcommittee meeting about the procedures that should be part of a future policy.

- Faculty need to be part of the process of determining grades and academic misconduct.
- It is inappropriate for faculty to determine status sanctions (probation, expulsion).
- The first layer of the process should be between the student and the faculty member. (This needs to be formalized)
- If a student does not accept resolution, then the student can request a hearing. This consists of two faculty members and two students, with one faculty member who will lead but does not have voting rights.
- Hearing body has authority to amend consequences. Discussion ensued regarding whether this pertains to academic sanctions or whether the faculty member retains sole control over in-class grading matters. Concluded that hearing results in this case would be akin to grade-challenges, where results of a hearing can in fact alter student grades even where faculty does not agree (though quite rare). This issue will be discussed further by the AI committee, because it will likely require careful attention to details to ultimately obtain faculty support for adoption.
- Next meeting is already planned by AI committee to discuss further steps, e.g., thinking about how we are changing the culture.
- Questions:
 - Is the faculty not currently contacting students?
 - Currently, students get an email saying they are being accused of academic misconduct, and then they have the option of going to a hearing. We believe faculty should reach out to the student before the email gets sent out to the student.
 - What is done in cases when adjunct faculty work in the spring and cannot communicate after the spring semester is done?
 - Consider putting in a policy to ensure adjunct faculty must still be in contact with us after their time at UConn ends OR have Dept head appoint an alternative faculty rep, as with grade challenges that extend into summer or faculty sabbaticals.

B. *Subcommittee: Fresh Start/Academic Renewal*

CHAIR: LC

MEMBERS: EC., LW, NR, TL, SA

ACTION: Statement about the Fresh Start initiative, progress to date, and sub-committee agenda for Fall 2021, given an anticipated policy and/or bylaw change will be ready in Spring 2022.

Mission is to address the timeframe over which students who depart UConn with poor grades could later return and pursue renewed study with a "clean" transcript.

Report:

- No updates, will have more in the spring semester.

C. *Subcommittee: Military Transfer Credit*

CHAIR: LW

MEMBERS: Alyssa Kelleher (Director of the Veteran Military Program and Services), Michael Bradford, SCR.

Action: Statement about Military Transfer Credit, progress to date, and sub-committee

agenda for Fall 2021 – expected by-law change brought to SSC.

Mission is to address mechanisms to recognize credits for work completed in military service.

Report:

- No updates, will have more in the spring semester.

D. *Subcommittee: “No Attendance” Status for Financial Aid*

CHAIR: GB

MEMBERS: Carrie Fernandes (Program Manager in Financial Aid), HF, LSH, MA, NR, SCr, SZ.

Action: Statement about the “No Attendance” Status for Financial Aid, progress on the analysis of peers and aspirants, and sub-committee agenda for Fall 2021, given an anticipated policy and/or bylaw change will be ready in Spring 2022. Mission is to address scenario where a student attended class, but submitted no work and failed, to verify that they still qualify for financial aid. Concerns reflect UConn being a non-attendance University so Profs. may not have mechanisms to verify attendance in such cases where no work/assessments have been submitted/completed.

Report:

- Meeting with Hengameh (CETL, *Blackboard analytics*) to discuss use of *HuskyCT* to obtain "engagement" (attendance) info on failing students for financial aid. Will subsequently develop a draft to send to the group about how we will deal with non-attendance.

E. *Subcommittee: Sick Notes*

CHAIR: MA

MEMBERS: CW, LSC, RC

ACTION: Statement about “Sick Notes” related to by-law regarding final exams and assessments, progress to date, and sub-committee agenda for Fall 2021.

Mission is to address conflicting advice from Admin & Student Health discouraging requests for verification of illness, versus Prof. concerns about widespread abuse of "self-reported" illness to evade assessments. It was noted that DOS requires documentation to reschedule Finals, so expectation of a similar requirement for other assessment rescheduling is not without precedent.

Report:

- Draft will be sent out soon, as we just received control of qualtrics survey
- Discuss a timeline and who is going to be the target we send it to.
- More coming in the spring semester.

F. *New Item - Reconsideration of 26 credit limit for P/F conversion –*

At the 11/15/21 SSC meeting, the issue of the 26-credit limit on P/F was raised by EC - “the 26 credits seems very arbitrary and excludes many of our first year and even transfer students.”, and discussion ensued.

- ✓ What is the basis for the 26 -credit limit?
- ✓ Given that we moved the date for the P/F to mid-November, what is the basis for not allowing students to use P/F before they have completed 26 credits?

Relevant history of the current P/F By-law and history of the By-law are below:

The By-Law clearly states the rationale for the 26-credit limit – that is, because P/F may not be used to satisfy general education requirements (typically taken in freshman year). Thus, the 26-credit limit is not arbitrary:

Existing Senate By-Law restrictions on Pass-Fail Option. A student who has earned at least 26 credits and is not on scholastic probation may elect a maximum of 12 credits (not including credits on P/F recorded in spring 2020) to be distributed over not more than three courses, to be recorded as 'P' for Pass or 'F' for Fail on his or her permanent record. Courses taken Pass-Fail may only be used as electives; they may not be used to satisfy general education, school/college, major or minor requirements.

History of P/F By-Law (provided by Cheryl Galli): The pass-fail grading option was passed by the University Senate on **April 10, 1967**, and went into effect in **September 1968**. P/F was introduced "to enable students to explore subjects other than their major field of interest." The 26-credit requirement was included to ensure that freshman and sophomore requirements were met. A subsequent two-year study completed in **1978** found "the originally intended reason for instituting the pass-fail option is not the way it is being utilized." The Scholastic Standards Committee recommended to that the Senate that the pass-fail option be abolished. After much review and discussion, the pass-fail option was retained but would now require an advisor's approval.

In meeting, Co-Chairs Fitch & Coulter advocated that ***the P/F By-Law should stand as is*** for the following reasons:

1. The 26-credit requirement protects students, especially freshmen and sophomores, from converting required general education classes to P/F. The ramifications of putting core required courses and general education courses on P/F are significant, and evidence to-date suggests that students, especially freshmen and sophomores, are unlikely to understand the adverse effects and long-term consequences of putting core/required courses on P/F.

As an illustration, a student who in freshman year is getting a non-failing grade in Intro Bio (but believes a P is better than a C) and converts the class to a "P," but later decides on a Pre-Med track, would then need to take the Intro Bio class on repeat in order to register for any subsequent upper-level Bio classes, OR they would need to get permission numbers for every subsequent Bio course. The repeat renders the

2. The recent change delaying the P/F deadline to mid-November was to allow students to have adequate assessments in deciding to put at course on P/F. Thus the revised deadline does allow students to put courses on P/F because of their determined grade ("grade mitigation"). However, the deadline change as originally proposed by Fitch & Coulter was in no way intended to change the types of courses (e.g., core classes, gen ed, major/minor requirements) for which P/F designation would apply.

Additional discussion ensued restating reasons that elimination of the restriction would benefit students ("fresh start" while enrolled). Members raised possibility of eliminating 26 credit requirement but

concurrently lowering allowed P/F courses from 3 to 2. HF expressed concern that dramatic increases in P/F use, as well as W, will lead to large numbers of students effectively "losing" a semester (hypothetical 3 Ps and a W). The timeframe since P/F and W leniency implementation has not been adequate to determine impacts on graduation rate and time to graduation. If indeed students take an added semester to finish due to over-use of P and W for grade mitigation, it becomes a very expensive grade mitigation tool. Although no vote was taken, the support for reducing or eliminating the 26 credit requirement appears quite mixed (TL, RC and HF against; LSC, SCR, AE, MH, EC, LC, KBR and others seemingly in favor). SCR has offered to collate data from peer Universities to see how others are managing the P/F system. This is important because if few schools are continuing P/F leniency then graduate, medical, dental and other professional schools will not alter admission standards and UConn graduates will be disadvantaged. Matter will be discussed at subsequent meetings pending data obtained.

Updates from the 11/19/21 SEC meeting, the SEC Chair stated that USG has brought a proposal related to the 26-credit limit on P/F to SEC. Due to time constraints, additional information about the USG proposal was not shared at that SEC/Chairs meeting (*AE did send copy to HF and RC post-meeting*).

5. Adjourn Meeting

a. Meeting adjourned at 3:34 PM

SSC Committee Members Present: Robin Coulter (RC), Holly Fitch (HF), Karen Bresciano (KBR), Mason Holland (MH), Elaine Lee (EL), Thomas Long (TL), Joe Madaus (JM), Leslie Shor (LSH), Sherry Zane (SZ), Shoshanna Armington (SA), Kelly Bartlett (KBA), Gregory Bouquot (GB), Erin Ciarimboli (EC), Joseph Crivello (JC), Sarah Croucher (SCR), Lindsay Cummings (LC), Abbey Engler (AE), Jennifer Lease Butts (JLB), George Michna (GM), Daniel Pfeiffer (DF), Nathaniel Rickles (NR), Lauren Schlesselman (LSC), Ellen Tripp (ET), Larry Walsh (LW), Christine Wenzel (CW), Elaine Lee (EL), Kelly Bartlett (KBA), Sarah Croucher (SCR), Daniel Pfeiffer (DF).

Members Absent: Maureen Armstrong (MA), Leslie Shor (LSH), Shoshanna Armington (SA), Jennifer Lease Butts (JLB).

Minutes taken by: Erica Kareco (EK)

ATTACHMENT 1

***Proposed Resolution
from Senate Scholastic Standards Committee
on Class Capacity/Enrollment Caps
REVISED - November 19, 2021***

(For vote at SSC on November 29 and if passed for presentation at Senate Dec 6)

Whereas, Academic units determine class enrollment caps with attention to pedagogy, as well as to facilitate offering course requirements and timely graduation, address varying student interest in courses, recognize fluctuating instructor and teaching assistant availability (e.g., instructor vacancies, faculty sabbaticals, limited teaching assistant lines), accommodate delivery modalities (i.e., in person, online, distance learning, hybrid), and consider classroom availability restrictions (e.g., seat capacity and technology access).

Whereas, Evidence exists that class capacity has been revised by entities other than the academic unit.

Resolved, That Senate reasserts that course registration designations for Class Capacity (aka “enrollment caps”) shall be determined by department heads in consultation with instructors, and where appropriate, the Dean of the College/School (or Dean’s Designee).

ATTACHMENT 2

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

Background

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 four fundamental areas –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.

Currently, students with disabilities who are pursuing an academic adjustment need to meet with their representative from the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) and the designated Dean/academic advisor from their school or college to discuss their eligibility. If the student is determined to be eligible to petition, the student must then complete a petition packet that includes a personal statement, all past transcripts, and optionally, a letter of support from a professional who can attest to past second language or quantitative course attempts. The petition packet is then reviewed by a university committee that includes a chair, the student's designated Dean/academic advisor, and representatives from the General Education Oversight Committee, the CSD, the Math Department, and the Department of Literature, Cultures, and Language. If the petition is approved, the student works with the designated Dean/academic advisor to select courses that fulfil the university requirement. If the petition is not approved, the student can submit additional materials to the CSD and petition again.

The following policy seeks to modify the current process by which students with disabilities need to seek approval via a committee review, beyond the review of the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD). Instead, students will work directly with the CSD, and then their academic advising center. The review by the current Academic Adjustment Committee will be eliminated. This change will bring the policy into better alignment with current interpretation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and with practice at our peer and peer-aspirant institutions. 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.

Policy

The vast majority of students who experience difficulty in fulfilling the Quantitative Reasoning and/or Second Language Competency will experience success by employing any number of academic support and/or advising strategies. Academic adjustments are only considered for students with disabilities whose documentation and/or educational history provide compelling evidence of an inability to complete graduation expectations so 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 study, 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 eight-year rule.

Students who plan to continue their studies beyond the baccalaureate degree should be advised that approved adjustments may not meet the requirements for admission to a graduate/professional school (e.g., law, medicine, etc.).

Students requesting a course substitution based on disability should contact [the Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\)](#) and register through [MyAccess](#). The CSD will review the student's request and supporting documentation about the nature of and functional limitations imposed by the disability. If the student qualifies as a student with a disability, the CSD will then engage with them to determine if a substitution is warranted, using a deliberative, interactive process to establish appropriate academic adjustments on an individualized, case-by-case, course-by-course basis. ***The CSD will also engage with the designated Dean/academic advisor from their school or college to determine if the requirements under consideration are deemed to be an essential part of the student’s program or course of study. As noted above, if this is the case, a substitution is not permitted.*** If a substitution is deemed appropriate, the CSD Disability Service Professional (DSP) will notify the student and the designated Dean/academic advisor from their school or college to discuss appropriate course alternatives. ***The designated Dean/academic advisor will be responsible for determining which course(s) will fulfill the degree requirement.*** The CSD will also notify the Registrar and the Provost of the adjustment at the end of each semester.

At the end of each academic year, the CSD will submit a report on its activities to GEOC. The report will contain the number of cases reviewed in each category, and the outcome of each review.

Policy History:

Effective: December 11, 2006

Revisions proposed by the Senate Scholastic Standards Committee November 2017 and by the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee October 2017

Approved by University Senate December 2017