

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
Monday, November 18, 2013, 3:45-5:15pm  
Hyde 349

**MINUTES**

*Attending: Deb Tobine, Roxana Wright, David Zehr, Christin Chenard, Stephanie Halter, Jamie Hannon, Roger Blake, George Gilmore, Annette Holba, Zhizhang Shen, Jim Hundrieser*

- I. Approval of October 21, 2013 minutes (see attached)- approved by affirmation.
- II. **Motion** – International Admission Criteria (Jim Hundrieser)

This item is discussion only (Jim provided a handout): new proposed admission criteria look more holistically at candidates- it would involve disaggregating the language proficiency scores, calling students to clarify various aspects in the applications, considering the strength of the applicant’s college preparation program, using new tests (such as MELAB for English proficiency). The sub-scores for English proficiency tests required for international applicants may provide much better information on their ability. The Language and Linguistics Department is currently considering a “Semester for Success” program (a set of credit bearing courses) for students that would be admitted with an English language attribute.

Conceptually, the committee members expressed support of the new admission criteria. Jim will bring a formal document/complete package including courses for the “Semester for Success” program to the Academic Affairs Committee for voting in December. The courses/program will need to be submitted to and approved by the Curriculum Committee.

- III. **Discussion** – Academic Integrity Panel Process (Roxana Wright)

After a recent Academic Integrity case, a professor raised the following issues:

- 1. Having teachers evaluated by students convicted of a violation of academic integrity in their classes.

The default penalty is an “AF” for the course, unless there are mitigating/extenuating circumstances.

- 2. Asking the accusing professors if they wish to recommend a sanction to the committee during the hearing, in front of the accused, before the verdict is rendered.

Faculty do not have to offer an opinion.

David Zehr and Roger Blake will have a conversation about the need of a policy/process change or lack thereof. They will share their findings with the committee at a later date.

- IV. **Discussion** – Attendance Policy (Stephanie Halter/sub-committee discussion)

“The instructor reserves the right to determine when the number of excused absences exceeds a reasonable limit.” The policy may disadvantage students. The policy may be appropriate for allowing faculty desired flexibility.

- V. **Discussion** – Report on NSSE data (especially pertaining to advising) (David Zehr)

Data (attached to agenda) shows that PSU recorded similar levels of student contentment with advising, but there is also room for improvement. Jim noted that Provost Bernier will follow up on discussions and task forces recommended during Faculty Day that refer to first year students.

VI. **Discussion** – Investigation of minors philosophy – follow-up based upon discussion (Annette Holba)

Should we study the minor philosophy with faculty? George noted that we are currently not able to audit minors in Degreeworks. David suggested that we keep the conversation internal (in this committee) as to what a minor ought to be.

VII. **Discussion** – Firing an advisee (Annette Holba on behalf of Scott Coykendall)

Deb stated that a faculty can “fire” an advisee.

VIII. Old Business (anything from the issues discussed last meeting?)- None.

IX. Announcements- None.

X. Adjournment

**Meeting dates for Fall 2013:**

Monday November 18, 2013 3:45-5:15pm

Friday November 22, 2013 2:30-3:30pm (I will be out of town) – CANCELED

Monday December 16, 2013 3:45-5:15

All meeting for fall 2013 are in Hyde 349.

1. Dates for Academic Probation and Severance:

- 1/7/2014 Probation advisories – Center Lodge, Granite Room.
- 1/17/2014 Severance appeals – Center Lodge, Granite Room.

Attachments:

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XI. Approval of September 27, 2013 minutes (see attached)

Approved.

XII. **Motion** – Proposed Revision for Early Evaluation Policy (Six Week Grades) (David Zehr) (see below)

David Zehr believes that it is a matter of fairness to all students and spoke to Provost Bernier about bringing this to the Academic Affairs Committee. A number of students with more than 47 credits are looking for their six week grades (at the Registrar's, with the advisor, etc.). Jim noted that a 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year retention drop was observed; six weeks grades may be a very useful tool to correct it. A few committee members agreed with the value of six weeks grades for advising. Deb recommended a reminder to faculty submitting the six week grades about their purpose. Six weeks grades are a snapshot of how the students are doing for future planning, a tool to foster communication and a feedback measure upon which students can make decisions. Many students are confused about how to calculate their grades. On the other hand, faculty may be concerned that the students do not learn to advocate for themselves.

Motion passed 8-1.

XIII. **Discussion** - Attendance Policy (David Zehr)

Would it be valuable to track attendance with technology?

Pros:

- New ID card will have more possibilities for tracking (e.g., swiping the card when entering the class).
- How the faculty reflects attendance in the grades would still be up to the faculty.
- Will identify students who may need intervention.
- Will help create systems to implement intervention.
- Used by a number of institutions (to track international students' attendance for visa status, to apply a common attendance policy and penalty process, etc.).

Cons:

- It may be beneficial for faculty to take attendance without technology (learning names, establishing rapport).
- Faculty will be required to take attendance.
- Students may engage in courses in other ways: Moodle, etc.
- May have "Big Brother"-like features, depending on the technology used.
- Faculty seems forthcoming currently with information about students who are missing classes.

Other considerations:

- The issue may be controversial with the faculty. It may raise questions about our identity as an institution (e.g., small versus large classes, online courses, etc.)
- Banner has the ability to store attendance information but has no self-service front end currently. This may be something that could be developed.

Next: Roger, Stephanie and Jim will work with David as a subgroup on this issue.

XIV. **Discussion** – International admissions standards (Jim Hundrieser)

External consultants have suggested looking at sub-scores (as well as the composite score) in the international applicants' English proficiency tests. May potentially increase the barriers for international admissions, but PSU would

consider applications more holistically, looking at the scores in connection to the transcripts also. The group is receptive of the idea; the admissions team will work on it and Jim will present something to the committee in the next meeting.

XV. **Discussion** – R+30 detailed report (Jim Hundrieser)

Regionally there is a shift away from vocational courses and towards courses that prepare high school students for college. This year there was a decrease in admissions. PSU maintained the admission standards. More denial appeals were seen this year- generally from out of state applicants for whom a sport was a driving aspect and from transfer students who were not prepared to transfer. Data indicates that more initiatives need to aim to connect better with commuter students and students who move out of campus. From an outside branding study, it seems that academics are the driver to come to PSU and location is the driver to stay. New financial aid model is forthcoming.

<Jim handed out detailed report>

XVI. Old Business (anything from the issues discussed last meeting?)

XVII. Announcements

Friday October 25, 2013 2:30-3:30pm, meeting canceled. Next meeting will be Monday November 18, 2013 3:45-5:15pm.

XVIII. Adjournment

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