

Educational Policy Committee Minutes October 10, 2024

Fully remote

Attendance: Fathima Wakeel, Angela Brown, Nandini Deo, Joanna Mishtal, Linda Bell, Andreea Kiss, Terry-Ann Jones, Lucy Napper, Kelly Austin, Michael Gusmano, Michael Dills-Allen, Ahmed Rahman, Stacy DeVivo, Henry Odi, Wenyan Feng, Megan Stratton, Stacy DeVivo, Yue Yu, Tom Hammond, Paolo Bocchini

We have three new undergraduate members. Megan Stratton introduced herself to the committee.

1. Approval of September 26 minutes

The minutes were approved.

2. Discussion about R&P 3.7.1 (Final examinations)

A revised version of this section has been prepared, with a final sentence specifying that papers, presentations, and other graded assignments may be given during the last five days of classes.

There was some discussion about whether this contradicts section 3.7.3.1 item 3, which states that a final project, presentation, or paper considered equivalent to a final exam can be due no later than the last day of the final exam period.

There was additional discussion about how this might affect capstone-type courses, in which the final presentation sometimes must occur during finals week because of scheduling with sponsors and other reasons.

Should we try to distinguish between new assignments given during the last week of class vs. assignments that have been included in the syllabus that students have known about all semester.

We were reminded that this section of R&P was revised in 2018 to specify “no more than 5% of the final grade” to address student concerns.

We noted that there are three primary issues that should be addressed separately:

- How much of the entire grade should be determined based on work that’s due during the last week of the semester?
- What types of assignments can be due during the last week?
- How do we differentiate planned vs. surprise assignments in our revision?

A subcommittee was formed to work on this and bring to the full committee
Derick Brown, Lucy Napper

3. Discuss whether adding an honors section to an IC program is a substantive change

There is currently no clear definition about what makes something “Honors” other than how it is entered into CIM.

This question arose in relation to the new Business/Health intercollegiate program. The goal is to run this program as a cohort program, and it was suggested that by making this an “honors” program, they could prevent students from transferring into the program without a cohort.

It was determined that the best approach would be to define the program as a “cohort” based program, which would be a substantive change. If they want to add a minimum GPA, they can do that as well, which would be a better approach than defining the program as an “honors” program.

Suggestion that we should revisit the concept of “Honors” in the future to put in place a formalized definition.

4. Check in with committee working on policies relating to 4+1 programs

No update.

5. Updates on Faculty Senate responses to R&P 3.14.5.1 (Apprentice teaching) and R&P 3.11.2 (Departmental Honors) revisions From Faculty Senate:

Section 3.11.2 (Departmental Honors) – this is going into the second reading, no feedback.

Section 3.14.5.1 (Apprentice Teaching) – The Senate would like us to have a larger discussion about undergraduate grading. For example, what is current practice? What language is needed? What are the benefits and drawbacks? The Senate would like for us to talk to all departments about how they use undergraduate graders to determine how this could best be done.

It was mentioned that Lehigh has a new FERPA policy and required training will be required of all students who interact with sensitive student information, including TAs, GAs, Gryphons, etc.

We decided to continue our discussions about undergraduate grading and to focus on Independent Study in the meantime; Fathima will work on revisions to the section about Independent Study for our review at the next meeting. We can send these to the Senate while we continue discussing undergraduate grading.

6. Discuss revising R&P 3.2.3 (Process for transferring colleges)

Currently students can only transfer between colleges after completing 12 credits and achieving sophomore status.

This is a problem for several colleges. Students sometimes receive advice to apply to colleges that are perceived as easier and then transfer to other colleges later. For example, COB requires calculus, but CAS does not; sometimes students are advised to apply to CAS and then later transfer into Business. This takes up “seats” and resources (advising time, seminar courses, etc.) for students that really want to be there. Also, this messaging can be misleading. Some students aren’t able to pass calculus and therefore aren’t able to transfer into Business. These students often aren’t able to graduate within 4 yrs.

We discussed concerns about students who legitimately have a change of heart. Does this rule force them to take classes in a college that they are no longer interested in, thereby delaying their progress? It was suggested that an appeals process, perhaps consisting of Associate Deans from each college, might be useful to determine if the change of heart is legitimate. This would allow an individualized and personal response.

There was discussion about how this appeals process should be conducted, including timing (before the end of the first 10 days of the semester? start of the spring semester?) and whether this needs to be a separate panel or could be part of SOS’s responsibilities. Some members questioned whether we need the appeals process since we already have people within each college who review these applications.

One member highlighted that even with an appeals process, as long as Business requires calculus, this type of transfer is likely to continue to happen. It was suggested that Business might be able to determine quantitative ability in another way, without strictly requiring calculus.

It was mentioned that Admissions allows these types of changes, but we should discuss this with them to find out when and under what circumstances changes are allowed. It’s important that if we do suggest an appeals process that this be done in coordination with Admissions so that the actual numbers of students in each college match their numbers.

It was decided that we would invite a representative from Admissions to join our next meeting so that we can discuss this issue with them. Fathima will send an invitation.

4:13 PM Meeting adjourned.