**Educational Policy Committee**

**October 31, 2018**

**Minutes**

**Committee Members Attending:** Watkins (chair), Lotto, Webb, Zhang, Hoelscher, Gunter, Bodzin, Li, Piispanen, Pascarosa, Moreida, Elroukh.

**Committee Members Absent:** Liu (RCEAS)

**Guests:** Bell, McClaind, Szczepanski, Tonkay, Wilson

The committee convened at 3:10.

The minutes for 10/17/18 were approved by consensus.

**First agenda item: Proposed Revisions to R&P 3.4 – Auditors**

Discussion continued from the previous meeting about changes to R&P 3.4 – Auditors. Consensus developed that because audit requests generally happen after course registration, the normal course registration procedures were adequate for managing course capacity and load balancing, so department chair permission was not needed for electing audit status. (At the previous meeting the committee had also agreed that that there needs to be a firm deadline for electing to Audit, similar to the pass/fall deadline, 15th day of classes). However, after some discussion, the committee concluded that the course instructor should be aware and approve admitting auditors in order to ensure adequate student participation in class, and that advisors should be aware as a check that students do not mistakenly audit a course that they might need to satisfy curriculum requirements; students may only audit a course outside of their curriculum

Additional discussion occurred about rationale for the prohibition in registering for the same course in the future. General agreement emerged that the main purpose of auditing should remain enabling students to explore topics and fields outside their majors but where concern for grades might prohibit that exploration, and that the policy should discourage dry-runs of courses students plan to take again later for grades.

Note related to current practice: EdPol recommends changes to current general practice of the RAS, which has required students to send all audit requests through SOS, inconsistent with R&P. EdPol believes these decisions should not rise to SOS, but rather rest at the course level, where local conditions should guide approvals.

The chair asked for and received consensus for the committee to recommend the following change to R&P:

CURRENT

3.4 – Auditors

A student who has incurred no scholastic conditions or failures during the previous semester may be admitted as a listener in not more than one course, which course shall be outside the curriculum requirements. Application for such admission is by petition approved by the departmental chairperson and the chairperson of the department concerned. In no case shall a student who has attended a course as an auditor be given an anticipatory examination for credit or register for the same course in the future.

PROPOSED

3.4 – Auditors

A student who has incurred no scholastic conditions or failures during the previous semester may be admitted as a listener in not more than one course, which course shall be outside the curriculum requirements. Application for such admission is by petition approved by the ~~departmental chairperson and the chairperson of the department concerned~~ ***course instructor and the student’s advisor*.** In no case shall a student who has attended a course as an auditor be given an anticipatory examination for credit or register for the same course in the future.

***A student must submit the audit petition form no later than the end of the fifteenth day of instruction. Summer/Winter session deadlines are prorated according to the length of the session.***

**Second agenda item: online course evaluations**

Professor Lotto raised the issue of whether the change to online course evaluations put into place 2 years ago has been effective, noting that he and other colleagues noticed sharp drops in response rates, which if widespread might raise questions about our interpretations of scores and their distributions. Faculty want to know if there are differences in the scores from the old to the new format. Could this affect tenure? What effect is there on male v. female instructors?

The chair asked for feedback on whether to request data from the Office of Institutional Research (OIRSA) comparing the scores and distributions from the online approach to the previous paper-based system.

Several questions arose surrounding the use of the scores – merit, promotion and tenure, etc. Student representatives noted they don’t complete them unless they like or dislike the instructor; previously time was allotted during recitations to complete the paper forms. The current survey is too long.

A member who was on the Course Evaluation Committee said it was not given the opportunity to choose whether or not the online form would be used; rather only to provide recommendations about the online version. The new evaluations have been circulated to departments for additional questions as they see fit.

The committee agreed that the chair should request that Institutional Research provide data on changes/information on the correlation to promotion and tenure (e.g. return rates, gender, scores, distribution information).

**Third agenda item: Clarifying policies re: fractional credits**

Discussion was held on the smallest divisible fraction a course could carry, and it was agreed .5 would be the lowest fractional option. In general, courses should not be offered for .5 credit; that is, no course should be less than 1.0. Variable credit courses need to stay at whole numbers. One idea was that perhaps only sequenced courses should include partial credit.

Should students studying abroad be eligible for additional .5 credit? This has been a longstanding conversation. Additional input from J. Jensen and A. Baker will be sought regarding transfer credit. This is a policy for RAS, rather than for R&P so can be treated in a parallel conversation.

Will RAS have any problems with implementation? No, RAS just needs sufficient time to ensure all systems, reports and documents will accommodate the change.

The chair will draft an addition to the section of R&P (3.1.3) that discusses course credits.

Meeting adjourned 4:20 p.m.