

Ed Pol Minutes 11/13/2019
PA 303, 3:10-4:30 PM

Attendees: Ed Webb (Chair); Frank Gunter (COB); Katrina Zalatan (COB); Mary Beth Deily (COB); Ginny McSwain (CAS); Susan Szczepanski (CAS); Linda Bell (RAS); Greg Tonkay (RCEAS); Ed Lotto (CAS); Lori McClaind (DOS); Al Bodzin (COE); Kadia Hylton-Fraser (COE); Zachary Vinik (student, COB); Evan Chansky (student, RCEAS); Julia Adamson (student, CAS); Jennifer Jensen (Provost's office); Steven Wilson (secretary).

1. Approve minutes from 10/30/19

Approved without amendment.

2. Vote for official time change for start of meeting

Approved to 3 pm, rather than previous 3:10 pm.

3. Update on Common Exam discussion in Faculty Senate (Webb)

Faculty Senate referred to Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) subcommittee, which is now studying the issue.

4. Update on formative student assessment (action item carried forward from October 30 meeting). [Webb]

Quoted from the October 30, 2019 meeting minutes:

“Proposals for approach were brainstormed, including: Pilot program for select courses; opt-in comments according to faculty; and, rather than electronic tool, “old-fashioned” periodic face-to-face review sessions (as part of class). Chair will review technical possibilities with LTS, and report back to EdPol at a future meeting.”

Ongoing review by Chair.

5. Discuss creation of a “clear written policy” regarding excuses from exams due to athletic competitions (action item carried forward from October 30 meeting). [Webb]

Quoted from the October 30, 2019 meeting minutes:

“Mixed opinions of creation a uniform, university policy. Faculty would prefer to have flexibility and policy developed specifically for their own courses. Current practice is for Athletic managers to proctor, as possible and appropriate. Student reps concerned that not all sports treated equal. Chair will draft possible language for policy for future discussion.”

Ongoing review by Chair.

Further discussion of scope and purpose of the proposal. Sports not the only concern; also, concerned with academic competitions, conferences, etc. Yet, final exams are clearly the primary issue, as are athletics (E.g., Finals conflict with Patriot League playoff schedule). General consensus that SOS will remain involved in solution. Student reps strongly suggest that the faculty would be required to offer make-up in the appropriate/approved circumstances.

6. Discuss the Student Senate proposal to, “allow a minimum of a week’s worth of classes to be excused from every class (for example, a MW class would allow a student to miss 2 total classes without penalty); any absence beyond this would be at the professor’s discretion.”

- Relates to broader concepts of missing class, class meetings outside of the regularly scheduled course period (passed to Ed Pol by Fac. Senate Academic and Student Affairs Subcommittee)

Quoted from the October 30, 2019 meeting minutes:

“Faculty reps were against setting such a minimum, citing both Middle States rules and, to a lesser extent, what might be called a “moral hazard” for students. Mixed opinions of creation a uniform, university policy. Faculty would prefer to have flexibility and policy developed specifically for their own courses. Student reps suggested standardized rule would assist students in making decisions. Chair will draft possible language for policy for future discussion.”

Ongoing review by Chair. (Chair noted to be leaning against the student proposal for minimum of a week’s worth of classes as safe harbor).

(RAS suggested R&P 3.2.5 should be referenced for this and previous item.)

Further discussion of scope and purpose of the proposal. Student reps described variations in practice (some faculty have standard attendance allowances, others are ad hoc, still others have no “missed class” policy at all). Existing R&P provisions (and Dean of Students forms) do not seem adequate to the current needs of the students or faculty.

Whatever format the “Best Practices” proposal ultimately takes (that is, via R&P language, “Dear Colleague” memo, or vignettes from Provost), EdPol consensus is that faculty should be encouraged to be clear regarding their own consistent practices.

Chair will continue to draft possible language for policy for future discussion.

7. Discuss proposal on requirements for good academic standing. [Webb, McClaind, Jensen]

Note: This item was tabled by EdPol in the spring 2019 meeting.

Academic Standing for Undergraduate Students (proposed language): “To remain in good academic standing, undergraduate students must demonstrate that they are passing courses at a satisfactory rate to earn a bachelor’s degree in a reasonable period of time; that is, they are required to show a reasonable rate of progress toward their degree. Students in all schools must maintain a satisfactory grade-point average. Academic progress is reviewed at the end of the fall and spring semesters. If students fail to maintain satisfactory academic standing, they are subject to dismissal. For detailed information on how academic standing is computed, see Section X.XX.XXX.”

Jensen led general discussion of need for a decision rule (for SOS?) beyond minimal GPA for probation or dismissal. Members expressed concern that number of credits/semester, GPA, or other metric may not be enforceable, or may be too complex for easy review. Student reps proposed review of NCAA rules as reference for this discussion. Discussion of technical solutions to collecting list of students not meeting certain metrics of interest.

Action item: Jensen, Bell, McClaind, and Wilson will review and report at a future meeting.