

Wayne State University
Proceedings of the Student Affairs Committee
March 21, 2012

Present: Tasneem Ahmed, Chardin Claybourne, Cheryl Dove, Moira Fracassa, Avril Genee Holt, Barbara Jones, Liza Lagman-Sperl, James Martin, Jason Mateika, Victoria Pardo, Robert Reynolds, Michele Ronnick, Brad Roth, Naida Simon, David Strauss, Kevin Tatulyan, Keith Wadley, Mary Width

Absent With Notice: Michael Horn, Mary Width, James Woodyard

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 pm.

The minutes of February 15, 2012, were approved unanimously.

Grade Appeal Discussion:

A concern was brought to this Committee by the Student Senate. Several students had difficulties with a grade appeal at the end of Fall 2011 term.

The University Undergraduate Bulletin 2011 – 2013 states the following:

Appeal Procedures, College/School Grade

Students should first seek to settle grade disputes informally with the instructor. Each College and School has established formal grade appeal procedures. These procedures are available from the Dean's Office of the College or School. In most instances, formal grade appeals must be filed within thirty days of the time the student has or should have received his/her final grade.

Appeal Procedure, Academic

In matters where a College's signed final decision is based upon the evaluation of a student's academic performance, and when review procedures available to him/her within the College have been exhausted, the student may request the Provost to review that decision on the record. A written Request for a Provost Review must be made by the student himself/herself, with a copy to the Dean of the College, postmarked within thirty calendar days of the postmark of the College's final decision, which is to be sent to the address provided by the student in the College's review procedures. The Request for a Provost Review should outline any additional arguments the student wishes to be taken into consideration by the Provost's review. The Provost's review of the College's decision will proceed as soon as practicable after notification by the student of his/her wish to seek review.

The student may also file with the Provost a Request for a Postponement of the effect of the College's final decision. Such a Request must be postmarked within seven calendar days of the postmark of the College's final decision, and a copy must be sent to the Dean of the College. Upon receiving a Request for Postponement, the Provost will immediately contact the Dean. Unless the College demonstrates clearly and convincingly that the injury to the College or to third persons that would result from such a postponement would outweigh the injury to the student from denying the postponement, the effect of the decision rendered by the College must be postponed until the date that the Provost issues a decision regarding the underlying Request for Provost Review. The Provost will inform the student and the Dean of her/his decision

regarding the Request for Postponement within three school days after receiving the request. Exceptions to this procedure may be granted by the Provost upon a showing of good and sufficient cause. (Page 39)

A lively discussion followed. Several key points were made:

1. A member of the faculty pointed out that while faculty tend to be resistant to the grade appeal process because they associate it with second-guessing of academic judgment, there are grade-appeal issues that do not implicate academic judgment. For example, there can be technological issues, such as flaws in electronic systems to which student work is uploaded.
2. The issue with the grade appeal in question was that an assignment needed to be handed in on line. The website (not a WSU one, but a third party one) was down. The student could not turn in the assignment, the syllabus stated DO NOT EMAIL the instructor. The student adhered to the deadlines, but the appeal is still pending nearly three months after the semester has ended.
3. There is a sensitivity issue. The appeal process should be for legitimate appeals not frivolous ones.
4. When are final grades actually due? The Chair called and according to the Office of the Registrar, final grades are due seventy-two (72) hours after the last final exam. Reminders are sent to faculty members after that time. There was a difference of opinion among the faculty on the committee whether this was helpful.
5. Action Items:
 - a. Advocate for a more open and transparent process.
 - b. Encourage a channel of communication between student and faculty member
 - c. Make sure that rules and deadlines are enforced on both sides.
 - d. Clarify that the grade appeal process is not one-sided and is not a tool to dissuade or quiet the student's voice.
 - e. Contact the Orientation Office to hand out the information at Orientation. The Bulletin is not uniformly handed out.
 - f. Have the Office of the Registrar give a date certain for final grades to the faculty.

Report from Jim Woodyard:

Here is a copy of the report that Jim sent by email prior to the meeting:

1. I met with the following on [February 22nd](#) to discuss a WSU survey: Michael Wright, Chief of Staff and VP for Marketing and Communications; Lyke Thompson, Director of the Center for Urban Studies; Carolyn Berry, Director, Strategic Planning & Marketing and Operations; and Rachel Orłowski, Research Assistant, Center for Urban Studies.

2. Recall that Michael Wright headed [2010-2011](#) WSU Customer Service Survey that I reviewed at the [January 18th](#) SAC meeting. He has been asked by President Gilmour to collaborate with the Academic Senate on matters related to a WSU survey.

3. I emphasized that SAC was interested in collaborating with the Administration if a "stakeholder" approach was employed and ALL administrators and administrative units fully cooperated. I stated this was not the case with the [2010-2011](#) WSU Customer Service Survey, and that it is not a good use of SAC's resources to participate if the same approach is used in future surveys. There was discussion in adopting SAC's position but I believe there is now a clear understanding of what is meant by a "stakeholder" approach and the rationale for it.

4. Timing of the survey is an issue with the Administration. The Administration would like to conduct a survey ASAP. I presented SAC's motion to schedule the survey next fall (passed at the [January 18th](#) SAC meeting) and discussed the rationale for it, namely, time is needed to involve stakeholders and produce a quality survey, as well as for the budget cuts and Huron Group recommendations to be implemented. I believe the Administration agrees the need for a quality stakeholder-based survey should be considered in the timing of the survey.

5. The meeting ended with Lyke Thompson agreeing to develop a two-page survey proposal for discussion purposes.

6. Upon receipt of the proposal, I will circulate it to SAC for comments, suggestions etc.

The Committee agreed with #6. When a proposal is received, members are willing to comment, make suggestions, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

The next meeting is **Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 1:30 pm in 3339 FAB (Large conference room near the elevators).**