

Wayne State University
Academic Senate
Minutes of the Curriculum & Instruction Committee
October 14, 2009

Present: W. Brusilow, A. Cobbs, C. Collins, V. Dallas, K. Feathers, A. Furtado, J. Ku, J. Moseley, R. Reynolds, A. Saperstein, E. Young, H. Shapiro, A. Retish.

Absent with Notice: T. Austin, S. Baskin, V. Bielat, A. Vlasopolos.

After introductions, H. Shapiro proposed several topics for consideration this year each of which involves multiple issues:

Transfer Students

One issue is the preparation transfer students have prior to their admission at WSU and whether or not that preparation is equivalent to that offered at WSU. A second issue is the grade that should be acceptable for transfer courses and whether or not we should accept courses in which students have a grade lower than C.

Also discussed, but not related only to transfer students, is the question of when a degree audit should be completed. H. Shapiro indicated that the semester of graduation might be too late and that the degree audit should take place the semester before graduation. Some students now believe that they have completed all course work and go through the graduation ceremony when in reality they have not fulfilled all requirements.

Curriculum Approval Process

Currently there is no University committee that considers and approves changes in curriculum. It was suggested that a University committee that is representative of faculty is needed as well as a clear set of procedures to follow at the university level. Such procedures exist in some (if not all) colleges, but not the university level. It was indicated that members of such a committee should be members of their college curriculum committees.

It was also suggested that learning objectives and assessment of these objectives be part of the consideration.

Admission Standards

President Noreen is developing a task force to work on admissions. H. Shapiro would like the C&I Committee to be involved in the work of this task force on admissions. One major issue to be addressed would be standards for admission and whether or not changing standards would benefit students and WSU.

The issue of avoidance of duplication of courses and/or programs was raised as something that could be addressed by a university curriculum committee. It was suggested that achievement of representation of each college on that committee would need some discussion as well as the suggestion that members should be part of their college C&I committees as college C&I committees are elected positions. If the Academic Senate C&I Committee were assigned the

task of curriculum approval, membership on college curriculum committees could be even more problematic.

Asked how the partnership with community colleges fits with the issue of admission requirements, H. Shapiro discussed measurement of completion. Time to degree is the average number of years it takes students to graduate. The average at WSU is approximately 5.8 years. An alternative measure would consider time from beginning to completion for each student.

A. Saperstein raised the issue of the withdrawal policy and recommended changing the withdrawal date to earlier in the semester, for example mid-semester. It was asserted that the current policy does not help students as they continue to register for and then drop classes that they are failing. Students need a clear message that they need to expend effort in courses. It was pointed out that such a drop policy could create problems for students with financial aid as they lose all aid for the semester if they drop before completion of the ninth week of class.

It was also suggested that students may not know at mid-point how well or how poorly they are doing; the number of assignments and value attached to those assignments varies depending on the instructor. Additionally, the importance of guiding students who are doing poorly at mid-point was raised as a possible way to decrease end of semester withdrawals due to poor grades. It was suggested that we should determine the original justification for the current withdrawal policy.

V. Dallas indicated that the Policy Committee recommended setting the withdrawal date after the ninth week of class. A question was also raised about the withdrawal policy for unique courses such as online courses or those that are shorter than a semester. V. Dallas was asked to identify, if possible, the rationale of the Policy Committee for their recommendation of withdrawal up to the ninth week of class, and bring that to the next meeting.

A final issue raised was the time frame for late registration which currently allows students to register until the end of the second week of class. That policy means that students can miss the first two weeks of a class and begin during the third week. V. Dallas thought that issue was also addressed by the Policy Committee and will report back at the next meeting about that recommendation.

R. Reynolds suggested that we, and other committees, need to keep in mind courses that are not the traditional on campus classes (for example, online courses) when considering policies.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm