

Wayne State University Academic Senate
Curriculum and Instruction Committee
December 11, 2020 – Meeting Minutes

Present: Ewa Golebiowska (Chair), Juliann Binienda, Kelly Dormer, Darin Ellis (Admin. Rep.), Tom Fischer, Manoj Kulchania, Sandra Oliver-McNeil, Richard Pineau, Brad Roth (Policy Committee Liaison), Stella Resko, Clay Walker, and Pramod Khosla. Rajon Varmon

Absent: Affi Kadadu (Student Senate),

Guests: David Strauss (Dean of Students), Kristen Cook (Office of General Counsel), Krystal Tosch (Office for Teaching and Learning), Nikolina Camaj (Student Conduct Officer)

The meeting began at 1:01 pm.

- I. Approval of October 28, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Sandra made the motion and Juliann seconded. Richard mentioned a few typos.
- II. Appointment of Session Secretary was made with Richard Pineau agreeing to record this meeting's minutes.
- III. The Committee next heard a presentation made by David Strauss, Dean of Students and Kristen Cook, Office of General Counsel regarding updates to the Student Code of Conduct.

Ewa reminded the group that last year there was a discussion about updating the Student Code of Conduct. Part of the concern centered on a faculty member's role in the process of academic misconduct.

Dean Strauss introduced Nikolina and Kristen to CIC. He provided an overview of Academic Misconduct process. Currently section 10.1 addresses academic misconduct. There are two paths: 10A and 10.1B. 10.1A provides an instructor the authority to sanction a student (up to failing a class) and the student may appeal. The dept chair would review the case (can speak with faculty member) and issue a decision. If the student is not happy with the decision of the dept chair, he/she may take it to the School/College Dean or designee, of where the course is housed. Section 10.B is for cases that would go beyond failing a class, something like a suspension, transcript note, etc. This would be a formal charge. To be clear, Section 10.1A is not a formal charge against the student. These are not reported in any way. A section 10.1B, if issued, goes right to the Dean's Office for review (does not involve dept chair).

Nikolina added that she is involved in a 10.1B case and conducts a formal investigation, speaking to all parties involved.

Dean Strauss added that Maxient is a platform that is used to help simplify the submission process and also serve as a repository for submissions. This has also allowed his office to adapt the form to include Student CARE Form, and other forms; almost like a database of sorts. Housing, Title IX, Provost's Office all

use Maxient for various things. There are protections that limit who can see what forms. Other schools and colleges have used it as well. There is an unlimited data plan associated with it.

Ewa opened the discussion for questions. Sandra asked about the type of misconduct fall under 10.1B. Dean Strauss clarified the difference between 10.1A and 10.1B. Nikolina mentioned that if a student is a repeat offender, they are filed under a 10.1B. Richard asked a follow up whether DOSO can move someone to a 10.1B if they are a repeat offender. Nikolina lets the instructor know they are a repeat offender, as well as Dean and Dept. Chair so all parties are aware and the instructor may amend their decision to 10.1B.

Dean Strauss indicated that grade appeals can go to Provost's Office, conduct issues stop at Dean's Office. He also offered that using this Maxient system allows for a connecting of dots so to speak, that allows them to view CARE Reports, Academic Misconduct, and other forms and can intervene if needed for the students.

Tom added that this process worked well. He likes that 10.1A is formal enough because it is serious enough for the student to take notice. Tom moved the conversation to the concern that the faculty member does not have appeal process if a dept chair makes a decision on a grade appeal surrounding academic misconduct.

Brad added we seem to hear about the cases where the faculty member is overruled. No criteria are mentioned in the Student Code of Conduct which mention a faculty's role in this process beyond reporting the issue. Their sanction can be overruled. This raises concerns for faculty because they are not involved in the process and some decisions are overruled for reasons that are not always clear or may be motivated by other interests.

Juliann brought up that faculty were left out of the loop to the process. A report is filed and generally no follow-up occurs. Ewa supported this observation. Nikolina explained the communication process which involves copying multiple people.

Clay added his concern that the role of faculty is not sufficiently clear beyond reporting the incident and that they may be included in discussions with the dept chair. Faculty need to be involved more in the process. He asked why appeals for grades go to the Provost's Office and why academic misconduct stops at the Dean of the college/school. Dean Strauss made a note of Clay's point.

Ewa asked about the process for updating the code since it has not updated since 2006. Kristen explained the General Counsel's involvement since any changes requires BOG approval. She explained that COVID-19 has forced some changes already. Dean Strauss has indicated that any changes would be channeled up through the cabinet, specifically through the Provost's Office and Office of General Counsel. He agrees that this is a good time to revise the Code.

- IV. The Committee had a presentation by David Strauss, Dean of Students about the student difficulties with the online learning environment.

Ewa asked for an update on Student CARE Reports. Dean Strauss discussed the learning environment challenges. Technology remains a big challenge for students. There is no charge for webcams, WiFi hotspots, calculators, Chromebooks, etc. and have authorization for ordering more. C&IT now have Dell computers for loan for students. Students have expressed concerns with communication issues with

instructors. Students like Canvas and some complaints have come in that some instructors do not use Canvas. And there is a preference for synchronous classes over asynchronous.

Nikolina shared the emotion and physical health toll this has had. 475 Care Reports have been created since Aug 26 until Dec. 10. This is doubled from last year. Nikolina indicated that some students are paralyzed by their anxiety. Some students are facing homelessness, financial issues, and death of family members. The main issues are anxiety, depression, and stress on students.

Nikolina has seen a decrease academic misconduct reports, but more CARE report. There were 16 noncompliance reports for COVID. All conversations went well and no charges filed. So far this term, 42 academic misconduct reports were filed, with 3 moving to 10.1B (as of Dec. 10). She anticipates more cases coming forward which is typical for the end of the term.

Sandra asked about the calls regarding stressed students. Nikolina said that the pandemic is taking its toll. Students having to work full time due to financial issues, etc. Dean Strauss added that the isolation has been hard on students. He indicated that when students are called, they ask if students want to receive a call from CAPS or another office, and then someone reaches out to the student to talk. This has worked better than simply telling the student to call CAPS, for example.

Stella asked how CAPS was coping with the demand. Dean Strauss said that CAPS Director Jeff Kuentzel reported that cases were down initially but have been gradually increasing. Students are not comfortable with telehealth. They want a confidential, safe place to share what is happening. CAPS has been trying to figure this out. Students are worried that family may be listening to the conversations, etc.

Ewa suggested having Jeff visit CIC to talk more.

Kelly commended Dean Strauss and Nikolina for their hard work. It is important to realize what students are going through to make sure they complete their coursework. For example, she knows one student who is living in a hotel to get his internship hours in. Others are working multiple jobs to support their families.

Richard added that faculty need to provide more flexibility and compassion toward students. If a student wants to turn in an assignment late, by a few minutes, fine.

Dean Strauss indicated that student complaint form submission have been minimal. The main issue is wanting to hear back from their instructor. Communication is key. The WSU Pantry remains open, as an essential operation, and technology is distributed there.

- V. Next was a discussion led by Kelly Dormer, CIC Member and Disabilities Specialist with SDS, and Krystal Tosch, Web Accessibility Coordinator.

Ewa introduced Krystal and Kelly for their presentation. Kelly discussed how her and Krystal has worked together between OTL and SDS to put on seminars on accessibility. She shared how important it is for captioned videos, real-time captioning, for example, for hearing impaired students. This has been a growing concern this term.

Kelly talked about how to make accessible document (PPT, Word, etc.) and other cost-free tools that can be used.

Krystal talked about inclusive classrooms. She explained the Design Sprint courses offered through OTL. These are 3 week courses that breakdown how to build an accessible course, including elements like captioning, Echo360, Canvas accessibility (headers, colors, etc.).

Kelly talked about how faculty need to be better prepared for students with accommodations. Students can request accommodations at any time during the term, and the faculty has to be ready to accommodate them. The challenge is raising awareness for faculty. She also talked about how captioning helps all students, especially those who may live in a busy home and need captioning. Universal Course Design is key. Kelly posed the question of how do we engage more faculty in this discussion and how do we raise awareness to these things.

Ewa explained that she has not had any issues with accessibility. She asked Kelly and Krystal whether courses have to be accessible for everyone, even though we don't have an accommodation letter. Krystal explained that captions, for example, benefit everyone. Additionally, being proactive allows for you not to have to scramble when an accommodation letter is presented. Kelly added that Zoom has automatic transcripts that can be applied for a captions. This gives you a starting point at least.

Ewa asked about the quality of the transcript from Zoom. Kelly said many factors can influence it.

Tom mentioned that to get faculty buy-in, one needs to broadcast this out a lot more. He talked about taking training courses through OTL, and how he uses YouTube for captioning. He suggested having a one-sheet with directions as an example. He also added how he has learned how to give accommodations for extra time on exams.

Richard added that sharing resources through the departments is a good idea. It may allow for more traction versus through a normal WSU email.

Sandra talked about faculty and the need to immerse themselves in technology a lot more.

Krystal added that everyone's comfort with technology is different. Some are willing to jump in, while others are far more reluctant to do so. Sandra shared her experience with Echo360 and the problems with understanding the settings, and the ensuing frustrations. Tom supported this observation.

Ewa shared her experiences with Zoom recordings. Sandra shared that she supports the idea of a seminar where faculty can share their ideas, problems, and remedies for technology issues.

Kelly added that Richard will be presenting on lessons learned in February. Krystal added that perhaps a panel discussion would be a good idea too.

Brad argued that seminars cover a lot of material that may not be entirely needed. Sometimes faculty need remedies for issues versus pedagogical insights, which can be dealt with later.

Juliann mentioned the need to Canvas 1-page guides. Several members indicated that this exists. Krystal will provide the links in the chat. Ewa suggested Googling problems too. She has found some helpful information.

Kelly moved the conversation to discuss the requirement about having cameras on during lecture. She provided an example of a student who has Crohns Disease and has to step away to use the restroom. The student was told by the instructor to take the computer in the bathroom; that's the beauty of being at home. She also cited another example of a student who had back surgery and the instructor wanted the camera on. The student was not in the most flattering position to do so. Kelly was concerned that SDS would become a dumping ground for accommodations for cameras being left off. Brad indicated he has heard frustrations from colleagues saying that they would require having the camera left on. He shared his frustrations with wanting them to have their cameras on, from a pedagogical perspective. Darin added that his best semester was when he studied his students' pictures and on Day 1, identified all of them by name. Faculty have to appeal to students and wanting to know them by name. We need to draw them into that intellectual relationship. Juliann added that students prefer synchronous courses for structure, etc. Kelly added that it was amusing to see Academic Senate and many people with their cameras off. We cannot be heavy handed in requiring cameras on, but be supportive and explain its importance.

Richard added that we need to appeal to students through conversation versus syllabus language. Sandra shared her experiences about asking for cameras to be turned on.

Ewa shared her evolution of instruction this term. She has used both synchronous and asynchronous formats in her classes to provide flexibility for students. She did not require cameras on and they kept them off. She has observed that some students appeared disengaged during discussions. She was not sure whether students simply set the computer up and walked away.

Richard talked about his classes during fall term. For his asynchronous STA 1020 classes, he requires students to participate either by attending office hours or by completing a discussion board. During office hours, students leave their cameras off but interaction does occur. In his synchronous MAT 2860 course, students leave their cameras off but do participate by unmuting and using the chat. Richard explained that he has moved to using cold calling on students as a way to keep conversations going.

Ewa explained how students turned on cameras during formal presentations in her class and that it was an interesting observation.

Pramod added that he thinks that success depends on the type of class faculty has. The size can make a big difference in determining the dynamics of a class.

VI. New Business

Ewa wanted to return to the discussion about the role of faculty in the grade appeal process. Ewa explained the discussion from Policy Committee this week. CIC, FAC, SAC will be a joint committee who each will nominate 2 people to draft language on formalizing faculty role in grade appeal process. The Policy Committee wants to take the lead on this initiative.

Juliann asked about what the specific concern is. Brad explained that the concern is that the Dean has nearly absolute power to amend any sanctions without faculty input for decision rendered on academic misconduct issues. He thought it best that a more formal role for faculty should be discussed.

Ewa asked for nominations. Richard asked who would chair the committee; that was not decided as of our meeting. Ewa indicated that Policy will issue a charge. Sandra and Richard volunteered to serve on this committee.

No other New Business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 pm.

Next meeting: TBD.

Respectfully submitted by: Richard Pineau, Senior Lecturer, Mathematics