

Academic Policy
January 20, 2015

Present: Sarah Ash, Montse Fuentes, Alton Banks, Jo-Ann Cohen, Richard Spontak, Roy Borden

Absent: Harriett Edwards, Kevin Brady, David Auerbach

Guest: Louis Hunt

1. Issue of concern: Consistency, fairness and rigor in grading across the university.

Update from civil engineering: Department head met with faculty whose courses had disparate grade distribution (easier grading appeared to be driving student course-taking behavior, including looking for “easier” classes taught in other departments). Had some changes in grade distribution in one course in particular, which has changed enrollment numbers in that class.

Department head wants to create course coordinator for each multiple section classes to create more consistency across sections. Most faculty seemed interested and willing to make changes.

How can this be addressed across the university? Best approach is to do it at the department level. However, need to have easier access to information to inform actions. Question to Louis Hunt: Can R and R facilitate that process by creating a portal for the data?

Example of data to gather: Course preferences for students registering early (e.g., athletes, honor students).

R and R is already gathering data re grade distributions and course-taking behaviors for athletes. How should the data be delivered and what should it be? Most of the data is public access, though will be limited by the total number of students in the section.

Should it be on the web, send it out at the end of the semester, create a query (not easy for people to access)?

J. Cohen: Would want to be able to look across years.

M. Fuentes: Not all department heads think they have a problem. May need the data to demonstrate/identify examples.

Will be hard to get faculty and/or department heads to go along, but can present the Civil Engineering example to the heads. Serve as an example for how to proceed.

ABET has driven some of this within departments.

How to force the issue in departments currently not interested in pursuing this issue? Should the issue be forced? Maybe the first step is to provide the data. Need to have buy-in from upper administration.

Roy willing to do similar analysis for other departments that he has done for his own, as long as R and R can provide the data.

Louis: Be careful not to create forced distribution. Better to have transparency and then decide what to do with the information.

Next step: Roy will work with R and R to ID appropriate data and process for accessing it.

2. Issue of concern: Credit for military experience/coursework.

In the past NCSU did not give credit for "life experiences" and that still applies. But have started awarding military credit for some classes such as PE and some foreign languages.

Are there other experiences/courses from military experience that could count towards free electives (generic transfer credit)? Many of the courses are quite rigorous. And many other schools give credit. Are not A,B,C graded.

If recommended for "upper level" (4-year institution) credit per the ACE recommendations, could award free elective credit (how many total hours would be allowed, e.g., 12). Could also allow departments to make additional determinations on a case-by-case, course-by-course basis (e.g., ethics or history class).

Policy? Would put note on transcript where course(s) came from (e.g., MIL***). Would automatically count towards free elective credit. But what is the total number that would be allowed?

Motion: A maximum of 12 hours of free elective credit will be allowed, based on ACE recommendations for upper level courses, with more at the discretion of the department. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Issue of concern: Consistency of biennial program review process.

Ultimately want a resolution to present to the Senate.

David Auerbach provided a draft for the committee to consider. Only concern raised: does the UCCC need to be involved? Maybe better for there to be consultation with relevant departments. Could be that UCCC gets inundated. Also may not be able to handle the quick turn around time. Sense of the committee: remove the UCCC step.

The committee will ask David to turn current draft into draft resolution to circulate to the committee before the next meeting. Would then provide the revised draft to the provost ahead of the next meeting, which he will be attending.