

Academic Policy Council
Minutes
November 8, 2007
10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
471 Grinter

Attendees:

Saeed Khan
Andy McCollough
Jack Mecholsky
Carol Murphy
Mark Rush
Anita Spring
Danaya Wright

Robert Agrusa
Henry Frierson

Guests:

Yumiko Hulvey
Jamie Lewis Keith
Rick Yost
John Leavey

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

The council reviewed the General Education Committee's Gordon Rule recommendations to separate the grades for writing and content. The recommendation was brought to the APC during the 2006-07 academic year and the APC had concerns which were presented to the General Education Committee.

Andy McCollough, chair of the General Education committee, discussed the General Education committee's rationale for the recommendation and addressed the APC's concerns.

The concern regarding a double grading burden on instructors was determined to be marginal by the General Education Committee. The General Education Committee also addressed the concerns related to how the information would be disseminated by stating that the information would be disseminated through normal channels. The General Education Committee agreed that it would be possible to pass the writing but not the content portion or pass the content but not the writing portion. The council discussed the General Education Committee's response and expressed concerns about separating the grades.

John Leavey stated that the University of Michigan had a dual grading system that they abandoned in 2006 because they did not find that it worked and so they switched back to requiring a C- in courses to meet the upper level writing requirement and knowledge of course.

The council discussed skills vs. content.

Danaya Wright stated that there should be writing courses within disciplines so that students learn to write appropriately for their discipline.

The council expressed concern about the recommendations meeting the BOG's writing requirements. Andy McCollough stated that the recommendations were submitted to BOG and if they are approved by University the recommendations will be satisfactory to meet the BOG's writing guidelines.

Mark Rush stated that the quality of student writing is a concern for the entire university, not just CLAS.

The council agreed that the issue is not ready for the Senate.

Carol Murphy asked if monitoring writing courses using the UC Davis model, or some other appropriate method, and providing oversight would help to fix the problem.

The council also noted that the professors who teach the writing courses should be surveyed regarding the recommendations and they have not yet been surveyed.

Dr. Frierson acknowledged that writing could be improved at the graduate level as well.

Danaya Wright moved to create a task force to address writing at the university, including Gordon rule and writing at the graduate level. The task force will conduct a survey of the people who teach writing courses. The motion was approved.

Rick Yost suggested that the task force be provided with a history. Andy McCollough and Carol Murphy agreed to create the histories.

Conflicts of Interest and Assignment of Course Materials

Danaya Wright presented a draft executive summary on the conflict of interest and course materials.

The council discussed the price of books on the executive summary.

Robert Agrusa stated that the biggest problem faced is that the bookstores don't have a monopoly like many professors think. The main topic of the textbook affordability bill is putting the information in a public format all of the bookstores in Gainesville can get the list, not just the UF bookstore. When professors provide bookstores with exclusive book lists it increases the price of books because they have no competition. Anita Spring stated that she does not think the university should be in a position to determine the appropriate prices for books.

Jamie Keith suggested that professors should consider price and availability in relation to reasonable access in choosing or making available course materials.

The council will review the executive summary and Carol Murphy will look at the issue of customized text books as a related issue. The council will send all recommended changes to Danaya Wright and she will revise the draft accordingly before the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.