

General Senate Meeting 8 March 2012

Minutes

i. Call to order at 11:02am

ii. Vineeta Dhillon, Diversity/Unity Council

The Diversity/Unity Council deals with diversity issues and works on leveling the playing field for underrepresented groups on campus. Vineeta has been the chair for about a year. The Council has drafted a charter that has been submitted to the Vice President of Finance. Current charter says one faculty representative shall be Vice Chair of the Council and the second faculty member shall be a liaison with Webmaster, in order to simplify and clarify their role, in conjunction with other responsibilities.

Question: How is Chair appointed? By Vice President of Finance. Vineeta's term will end in September.

Question: Are any other members of the Council given designated roles? No.

Concern that designating faculty in this way prohibits faculty from serving in other roles, such as Chair. Vineeta suggested the Charter could be written so that Faculty Rep One shall be either Chair or Vice Chair.

Any opposition? No hands raised.

Is everyone ok with the charter going forward as described? No objections.

iii. Revision of Academic Standing policy

Dean Pronchick summarized the proposed policy, which has been revised since the December 2011 Academic Senate meeting (see attached). Based on feedback of previous meetings, this proposal changes good academic standing minimum for freshmen, from 2.0 to 1.8; for sophomores, 2.0 to 1.9. Any student below these GPA minimums would be placed on academic probation with no appeal. Students in intermediate range (1.8-2.0 or 1.9-2.0) will receive a warning letter and required CETL study skills class. Once a student is on probation, the sliding scale is gone. The following semester they are required to get a 2.0; if they do not, they would be disqualified.

Comments:

1. Why lower standards? I don't agree with this. Midterm letters already serve as a warning. Grades on tests and assignments also serve as a warning. Using multiple GPAs to determine probation is a good idea. I think if someone has failed a class three times, they should be done at CMA.
2. There is a problem with being unable to appeal probation. In the past, athletes have been granted appeals. Clarification by Dean Pronchick: under this policy, athletes can appeal to play sports but will stay on probation.
3. Agreement expressed with Speaker 1. Question: How do you retake a course if you have been disqualified? Debbie Fisher: Open University. How many academic faculty do we hire to teach students who have repeatedly failed? Debbie Fisher: Open University is on space-available basis. Comment: In the ET department, faculty are pressured to add extra students to sections, many of whom are Open University students.
4. Concern that curriculum in ME major gets harder as semesters pass, plus material is cumulative. If you have failed early courses, you won't be ready for later years. I think we'll end up putting a lot of sophomores on probation, and waste the time and money invested to that point. What does this change do for students or us? What's driving this change? Dean Pronchick: New students coming to college don't start with a level playing field, due to high school or family issues. This policy gives them a little slack in the first year in order to improve study skills.
5. Comment that sometimes study skills or academic ability aren't the issue; it's a behavioral or maturity issue, and requiring trip to CETL does not address that issue.
6. Comment that this doesn't solve any problems. Suggestion made that we instead implement a "College 100" course. This policy won't help the graduation rate; it will instead cause more problems.
7. In the Senate Executive Committee, the point was made that currently many appeals are granted. This policy simply reflects current practice.

The Vice Chair asked for a show of hands: majority of faculty expressed opposition to the new policy.

8. Comment that mid-semester warning letters need more teeth, i.e. a requirement to consult with someone, not just a suggestion.

Dean Pronchick thanked the faculty for their input and civil discussion. He requested that any objections to new policy proposals be accompanied by suggestions for improvement.

iv. Update on presidential search by Tim Lynch

The comments at yesterday's meeting with the search committee ranged from insightful to banal. Please send candidate recommendations to Ms. Sharon Tanabe, Search Consultant at 323-260-5045 (o) and 562-208-1103 (c) or s.tanabe@storbeckpimintel.com.

We have the potential to have an impact on the selection of the next president.

Question: Why was the maritime component de-emphasized in the job announcement? Tim: I don't know. The comments at yesterday's meeting emphasized maritime needs, while academic aspect of institution was ignored.

The Provost told the Executive Committee that the current announcement is very similar to the one used for the last presidential search.

Comment that not all sea service is the same.

Tim: The Search Committee will receive candidate names in three categories: A – yes; B – maybe; C – wild cards. The committee can change these ratings. After this initial review, the committee's job is to narrow the A list to 12, then 6 to interview.

Feedback should be given to Tim Lynch, Mike Kazek, and Bill Schmidt.

v. Announcement by Dean Pronchick: The Print Copy Solution (i.e. charging students for photocopies and print jobs) is happening next Wednesday.