

Minutes
Academic Policies and Standards Committee
October 17th, 2019

In attendance: Agnieszka Szarecka (AS), chair, Jae Basiliere (JB), Karl Brakora (KB), Nagnon Diarrassouba (ND), Paul Fishback (PF), Lori Koste (LK), Kay Losey (KL), Mikhila Wildey (MW).

Members not in attendance: Robert Beasecker (RB), Suzanne Benet (SB) (ex officio, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs), Raymond Higbea (RH), Kristen Vu (KV), Dianne Slager (DS).

Misc. Acronyms: AF – Academic Forgiveness Policy

1. The meeting began a few minutes after 9:00a.m. PF asked if a quorum was present. Seven of the eleven faculty members were presently in attendance, and the meeting proceeded. MW entered a few minutes later.
2. *Agenda Item I (review of minutes)*: LK made a motion to approve the minutes from the preceding meeting on Oct. 3rd. Approved 6-0-1. PF abstaining. MW not yet entered the meeting.
3. *Agenda Item II (concerns of legal office)*: AS indicated that she has contacted Michelle Rhodes (Associate Vice President for Financial Aid) regarding disparate impact of the AF policy and is waiting on receiving answers. In addressing questions of disparate impact, the question is posed as to whether representatives of Inclusion & Equity Division should be included in future discussions. Agreed by popular assent.
 - a. LK suggests Jesse M. Bernal (Vice President for Inclusion and Equity) or Kathleen VanderVeen (Associate Vice President for Equity, Policy & Compliance).
 - b. KB suggest Marlene Kowalski-Braun (Associate Vice President for Inclusion & Student Support).
4. *Agenda Item III (inclusion of undeclared and other students in AF)*: AS asks whether undeclared students, exploratory status, pre-professional status, and non-degree seeking students should be included in the current AF policy draft. PF moves to table the discussion. KL seconds. KF asks for discussion. Vote to table approved unanimously 8-0-0.
5. *Agenda Item IV (treatment of remedial and hidden prerequisites)*: AS introduces student applicants who might like forgiveness of remedial courses which they may have been advised to take.
 - a. Discussion on what constitutes a remedial course: KL mentions that WRT098 (Writing with a Purpose) is a university rather than a program requirement. PF mentions MTH110 (Algebra) is a Gen. Ed. requirement, and always required for graduation. JB indicates CHM109 (Introductory Chemistry) can be a prerequisite

- to science classes. KL says CHM109 might be a forgivable pre-req for AF. MW indicates that CHM100 (Preparatory Chemistry) is the remedial course, not CHM109.
- b. LK states that forgiveness in remedial courses is not a good outcome.
 - c. Discussion on students performing badly in remedial course who take subsequent courses: LK mentions student who gets D+ in CHM109, takes CHM231, has CHM231 forgiven. She believes that students who make bad decisions should not be excused in AF policy. PF says taking courses after poor performance is a common. KL concurs with a story from student data of communication major with a C in WRT150.
 - d. LK makes motion to not alter AF policy to address remedial, preparatory courses, recommended courses (hidden pre-requisites). Second by AS. Approved 7-0-1, JB abstaining.
6. *Agenda Item V (AF application denied):* Case of student automatically rejected because his GPA was too high and indicated major has not been declared in transcript. Student wrote letter to committee with list of grievances, particularly a “loss of opportunities.”
- a. LK indicates that help for this student would come at the expense of other students who did not request forgiveness. This is followed by a long discussion on this point. JB stresses value of educational procedural rather than outcome. AS uses blackboard graphics to illustrate difference in student performance levels (drawing resembles a semiconductor energy band diagram). KL says we should recognize that making good choices is an element of success, and AF should not forgive floundering students. AS identifies three types of floundering: choosing many majors without a path, grossly underprepared, choosing one wrong major and wanting to change. AF only helps the third category.
 - b. There is an extended discussion of the worthiness of students earning a degree, largely between LK and AS.
 - c. KL suggests separating group IV from the jeopardy of dismissal group. Discussion as to language of motion. There is no second to a motion.
 - d. LK moves to reject petition. PF seconds. It is unanimously approved 9-0-0 (RB, not in attendance, submitting his vote by email to chair).
7. *Discussion of Employers and Recruiters:* How do employers look at GPA?
- a. Extended discussion of who to ask, what to ask them, and what information to gather. Several suggestions of good recruiters to ask and which questions to ask them.
 - b. Discussion on what effect fiddling with GPA will have on GVSU’s reputation. LK and KL believe it will adversely affect GVSU. JB and AS believes that it will not.
 - c. PF asks about the purpose of answering the question. KB opposes gathering information because it is necessarily biased.
 - d. Idea of employer survey scrapped by chair without objection.
8. *Discussion of student data gathered independently:* AS, PF, LK, KL and NG present some of their finding regarding student performance.
- a. AS observes

- i. Student (initials DW) benefited from AF when not technically eligible.
 - ii. Student (initials AR) was rejected because courses were not eligible, was in jeopardy of dismissal (pilot 2). Did not return this semester. Did not seem to know what classes were required for major
 - iii. Remaining students: all transfers, all did okay for a time, then started going downhill over several semesters. The students appear to be doing better in their new majors.
 - iv. AS states that she does not believe the credit cap will work and it is good that it is abandoned in AF pilot 3.
 - v. Number of retakes are low. Retaken classes appear to be failures.
- b. PF observes
- i. All students in his assignment are in good standing and have been following their plans for new majors.
 - ii. All have switched majors at least 3 times
 - iii. 3 of the 6 were in jeopardy of dismissal.
 - iv. All are doing well in their new majors.
 - v. One student who retook 6 courses at GVSU.
 - vi. Phase I students took between 94 and 124 hours, Phase II students had 26 and 83 hours.
- c. LK observes
- i. 5 of 6 students had transfers of 47 to 70 credits from community college.
 - ii. One student had a GPA boost from 1.62 to 3 because they had only one semester. Others, from 0.2 to 0.5 points.
 - iii. One student who was given forgiveness, took two courses W19 received F, and A-, was dismissed.
 - iv. Forgiven course spread over several semesters, exhibiting chronic weaknesses.
 - v. One student left for 3 years since W16, returned SSu19, has GPA 3.9 since returning. May indicate some benefits from leaving and coming back.
 - vi. Not sure transfer students have the necessary advising coming in. Preparation might also be poor. Opportunities for additional advising upfront.
 - vii. One student had very unclear academic plan, unclear how to evaluate how to determine if student is following academic plan.
 - viii. Many students not as prepared as they need to be in order to succeed at GVSU.
- d. KL observes
- i. Phase I student getting all A's, left for several years, getting A's again.
 - ii. Second Phase I student is following the new academic plan, getting grades in the C+, B- range.

- iii. Third Phase I student went from EGR to STATs, doing great, but does not appear to be on the plan. Is taking 3 gen-eds and 1 CJ. No classes registered for winter.
 - iv. Fourth, a Phase II student, rejected for AF because of a confusion of majors, going into communications.
 - v. Fifth, a Phase II student, Psych to English. Appears to be on the plan. Don't know grades yet.
 - vi. Only one student seemingly off the plan.
 - e. NG
 - i. Phase II student, denied because he was not eligible.
 - ii. Student, log 29, already changed from their new major (premed to CHP), had 28 credits with a 2.67 GPA. Chem 115 taken in W19 received a C-.
 - iii. Last student, log 51, received F in MTH123 in F'17, ACT 218 got a D+, MGT268 got an F. Student changed to History. Student appears to be taking a new major.
9. *Discussion of data gathering columns:*
- a. AS will compile a semi-uniform sheet for everyone to compile data into.
 - b. Members can send additional columns to AS to add to sheet.
10. *Survey of students:* AS asks if it is worth sending out the survey.
- a. LK, should ask students about financial aid, because GVSU financial aid might be unaware of external sources.
 - b. MW leans toward not surveying.
 - c. LK, okay with not surveying.
 - d. KB, prefers not to survey.
11. *KL: When will we discuss the AF rationale?*
- a. AS says that she previously asked for everyone to review the end-of-year report. She says that she received no comments. The spreadsheet is posted spark discussion regarding the rationale of the policy.
 - b. KL notes that the Sept. 14, 2017 meeting minutes state the initial charge from ECS. She notes that "retention" was the initial rationale for AF, but "success" was a rationale added to the 2018-2019 end-of-year report.
 - c. AS states that member who have not filled out the "rationale spreadsheet" on the Blackboard site should do so.

The meeting concluded at 11:05 AM.

Minutes submitted by Karl Brakora