

Minutes
Academic Policies and Standards Committee
October 3rd, 2019

In attendance: Agnieszka Szarecka (AS), chair, Jae Basiliere (JB), Robert Beasecker (RB), Suzanne Benet (SB) (ex officio, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs), Karl Brakora (KB), Nagnon Diarrassouba (ND), Paul Fishback (PF), Raymond Higbea (RH), Lori Koste (LK), Kay Lose (KL), Dianne Slager (DS), Pat Smith (representing university counsel), Kristen Vu (KV), Mikhila Wildey (MW), Raymond Higbea (RH), Jae Basiliere (JB)

1. The meeting began at 9:00 AM with brief introductions. Both RH and JB are joining the committee as new members.
2. PF made a motion to approve the minutes from the preceding meeting on September 5th. ND seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
3. Pat Smith from University Council has reviewed information for the Academic Forgiveness plan (AF) and shared with the committee her impressions regarding potential legal concerns.
 - a. She recognizes the plan is well intended.
 - b. She expressed concern about the impact an AF plan could have on those students with limited financial means, particularly low-income students on financial aid.
 - c. She addressed a concern raised by LK regarding the adverse impact could have on qualified students applying to selective academic programs with limited enrollments, e.g. nursing. She recognizes this concern and responded the committee might want to exclude certain programs from using AF.
 - d. With regard to financial aid implications, AS indicated that Michelle Rhodes from the financial aid office had been involved in early AF discussions. SB added that AF would be advantageous to students of limited means since they would not need to re-take courses in which they had done poorly. Additionally, AS also pointed out that several students in the first pilots were granted AF for courses they had already taken twice.
 - e. JB raised the point that the nursing program has moved to a more “holistic” admission policy, one which takes many factors into consideration, and that restricting AF might not be necessary since, “we can trust our colleagues in those programs to make decisions more holistically.”
 - f. PS also addressed a second AF policy concern raised by LK, namely that some departments might use AF as a marketing tool to lure students to their major with the reassurance that if things did not go well for them, they could switch to something else. She formed no conclusion whether that is an issue of concern but recognized it could happen, even at a subtle level.

- g. PS stated that the university, from a legal perspective, can implement an AF policy but acknowledged such a policy carries risks, could lead to unforeseen impacts, and might face legal challenge at some level. She acknowledges the APSC is facing challenging issues in its work.
4. AS would like committee members to look closely at data for students who applied for AF in the first two pilots and will assign each member a specified set of students from whom they should collect the data. Data for each student will be obtained from their AF applications as well as sources that indicate academic progress that has taken place since AF was granted. It was later decided that information will also be collected for students denied AF in an attempt to determine outcomes that may have resulted from such denials.
5. MW suggested conducting a survey among those students who applied for AF.
6. JB indicated several students who have been granted AF are enrolled in the Brooks College, are first generation college students, and are students of color.
7. SB will be speaking with Phil Batty about obtaining an aggregate demographic profile of students who have received AF as well as follow-up data for each student, e.g. GPA in new major.
8. Out of a concern for security, information for students applying for AF or who have already applied will be stored solely on Blackboard and not shared via email.
9. AS asked the committee what data should be included for each student. Suggestions made during this lengthy discussion included the following:
 - a. GPA and academic standing at time of AF application.
 - b. Total completed credits at time of AF application.
 - c. All classes for which students sought AF and all classes for which AF was granted.
 - d. Progress in new program/major, e.g. updated GPA. (SB indicates Phil Batty may be able to help with this.) Currently, only about 20 students have completed at least one semester of coursework since being granted AF
 - e. Current GPA if AF had not been granted (if possible to obtain).
 - f. Elapsed time (number of semesters) that transpired between each forgiven course and AF application.
 - g. Time to graduation, using the plan created by the student in consultation with their new program advisor.
 - h. Whether the student has switched majors again and whether they are following the course plan made in consultation with their new program advisor.
 - i. AS wants to look closely at applications from students who applied for AF while in good academic standing.
10. A discussion took place as to how data obtained from all students as described in 9 above will be combined into one spreadsheet. It was decided that each student will be assigned a specific log number. A spreadsheet will be shared among committee members but will list log numbers and not names.
11. Questions arose as to how the data could be used to judge success of an AF policy. The ensuing discussion led to no definitive answer. However, AS did ask all committee



members to read her final 2018-2019 report to the ECS and consider whether any changes should be made to the AF goals as stated there. Clearly defined goals will make it easier to design metrics to assess whether those goals are being met.

12. It was decided that the committee will meet again on October 17th to analyze AF data and to develop the survey described in 5.
13. At some time, results from the first AF pilots, which will include analysis of data performed by committee members, must be shared with the ECS. AS had hoped that would take place during the Fall 2019 semester. However, it now appears any such presentation must be delayed until Winter 2020.
14. A brief discussion followed as to what a survey should include. Example questions might ask students about positive and/or negative effects of being granted AF, whether they have met with their professional advisor since being granted AF, when they intend to graduate, etc. AS asked committee members to send her ideas for survey questions prior to the October 17th meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:00 AM.

Minutes submitted by Paul Fishback