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Scholastic Committee

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**Scholastic Committee
2016-17 Academic Year
October 11, 2016
Meeting Six Approved Minutes**

Present: Roland Guyotte (chair), Joe Beaver, Judy Korn, Elsie Wilson, Colin Wray, Dan Magner, Merch Chasman, Leslie Meek, Jennifer Goodnough, Steve Gross, Ruby Debellis, and Emma Kloos

Absent: Brenda Boever, Ray Schultz, and Michelle Brownlee

Guests: Ramitha Rupasinghe and Khondoker Prio

1. Approve minutes of September 27, 2016, meeting

Tabled for further discussion.

Approve minutes of October 4, 2016, meeting

Approved as amended.

2. Chair's Report

Roland Guyotte announced the student guests who will share their experiences with A-Level exams.

3. SCEP Report

Jennifer Goodnough provided an update on the Makeup Work policy regarding Student Senate meetings. While the committee generally supported adding Student Senate meetings to the list of legitimate circumstances it was concerned about adding it as a separate bullet point. The proposal for the Student Senate meetings was sent back for clarification. It was noted that the Provost on the Twin Cities campus does not usually provide any excuses and refused to provide any excuse for Student Senate meetings last year.

Goodnough also provided an update on the proposal by Boynton Health Service to add "for prolonged or recurring absences" to item number seven of the Makeup Work policy. Goodnough informed Dean Bart Finzel about the proposal from Boynton and he felt such a policy change should not be imposed on faculty.

It was noted that Health Service on the Morris campus does not experience the same problem as Boynton on the Twin Cities campus because Morris students have the option of calling or emailing Health Service a request for an excused absence.

SCEP understands the spirit of the request, but it was not happy with how the language was proposed. SCEP will continue discussing the issue.

Becky Hippert, Office of the President, on the Twin Cities campus is looking for student volunteers to participate in the Student Academic Integrity Committee. The committee meets monthly via conference call. Goodnough requested any suggestions and volunteers be forwarded to her.

4. A-Level student experiences

The first student guest speaker, Ramitha Rupasinghe, shared his experience with A-Level exams taken through the examination body Edexcel which is owned by Pearson. Rupasinghe began with O-Level curriculum and exams in grades nine and ten followed by A-Level curriculum and exams

in grades eleven and twelve. Students in his school must pick a path from either business or science; Rupasinghe chose science. The first year of AS and A-Level curriculum (first half of the book) is comprised of material for the AS exams. After the AS exams follows the A-Level curriculum (second half of the book) and the A-Level exams. Students can take all the exams at one time or take the AS exams at the end of the first year (grade eleven) and then continue on to A-Level curriculum and take the A-Level exams at the end of the second year (grade twelve).

Rupasinghe explained that the chemistry A-Level exam is composed of four exams: organic, inorganic, analytical, and lab techniques. The lab techniques portion of the exam in Sri Lanka schools is a written exam where students must explain the techniques rather than demonstrating the techniques because the labs in Sri Lanka schools are not optimal.

Rupasinghe also explained the components of the computer science exam and the mathematics exam. The exams are allotted between 7-10 hours each. The testing environment is very intense with students being checked by security before entering, every student seated five feet away from each other, and bathroom breaks require an escort by a moderator.

The students were asked if they received official transcripts after taking their exams and if they were provided with any instructions on how to transfer their A-Level exam credits. Khondoke Prio replied that students are provided transcripts by their school, but are not advised on how to transfer those credits to schools in the US. He feels the exams are aimed for students staying in the country. Prio is a physics and pre-engineering major and was able to go on to the U of M Twin Cities website and see how his A-Level exams would be accepted by the Twin Cities campus.

It was noted that the Twin Cities campus is also new to A-Level recognition having just completed their evaluation this past summer. The Twin Cities differs from Morris on how they handle transfer credits in that the Admissions Office is in charge of determining how credit is accepted and determining if it meets general education requirements. On the Morris campus the SC is in charge of transfer credits. Also, the Twin Cities has different levels of transfer between departments and colleges.

Members explained that the SC can review A-Level exams for credit and general education requirements, but it is the purview of the disciplines to determine if a transfer course/exam matches a Morris course or if it can be used in the major.

When the chemistry discipline reviewed A-Level exams last year they had a difficult time comparing how other colleges recognized A-Level exams because every college seemed to have a different process. Every college awarded credit differently, some awarded credits based on the exam score.

Rupasinghe was able to take a chemistry placement exam based on his A-Level exams, but he did not receive credit for the placement exam. Members noted that if A-level exams are worthy of college credit students should receive credit for the exam instead of taking a placement exam. Again, the disciplines will determine if the exams can be used for the major.

Rupasinghe and Prio mentioned they knew of three other students who have taken A-Level exams who do not know of the transfer nor placement exam options. The committee agreed that students

need to be informed about their options for A-Level exams and the process of how to transfer their credits.

Rupasinghe and Prio explained there are many examination bodies that offer A-Level curriculum and exams to schools. They believe there might be a political connection to how schools decide which examination body to use.

Prio described his experience with A-Level exams and noted that the exams were updated from A-Levels to International A-Level which provides a broader view of the topic. He also explained that the exam time depends on the unit being tested as some units within a subject require more time. The grades that appear on the transcript are the overall grades for a subject not each individual unit in an exam.

Prio mentioned that many in his graduating class of 160 students applied to study at universities abroad. Many who attended schools in Canada and other universities abroad received college credit for the A-Level exams. He knows of about ten to twelve other students who came to the US to study. They are mostly in the Massachusetts and New York area. He knows of only one other at the U of M Twin Cities campus. That student at the Twin Cities campus was awarded 18-24 credits for his A-Level exams and was able to begin courses taken during the second year of their major.

Prio and Rupasinghe explained how the mathematics syllabus kept changing and the exam had many components including core mathematics, pure mathematics, statistics, and mechanics. They believe the statistics portion is equivalent to Morris' statistics and the core mathematics is very similar to Morris' Calculus except the A-Level curriculum does not cover limits and the program Mathematica. The students also feel that the chemistry A-Level exam is equivalent to Morris' General Chemistry I and the physics A-Level exam is equivalent to Morris' General Physics I course.

The students were not told by their sending institutions to send any documentation for their A-Level exams to the University.

Further discussion will be continued at a later meeting.

5. Students dropping study abroad courses procedure

Tabled

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Senger
Office of the Registrar