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Scholastic minutes 02/22/2012

Scholastic Committee

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Minutes
Scholastic Committee 2011-12, Meeting #14
February 22, 2012

Members attending: Michelle Page, chair, Allison Wolf, Luciana Ranelli, Dillon McBrady, Dennis Stewart, Steve Gross, Jen Zych Herrmann, Peh Ng, Peter Wyckoff, Tammy Berberi, Hilda Ladner, Clare Dingley, Erin Christensen, Chad Braegelmann, Judy Korn, executive staff, guest Brenda Boever, Advising coordinator, Absent: Holly Gruntner

1. Approved February 15, 2012, minutes
2. Approved Petition 1205
3. Chair report

The Chair states that she will be contacting the director of Disability Services this week and also notes that Korn has completed the website review and update initiated by Dorothy DeJager, retired executive assistant. The updated Scholastic Committee website is now live.

4. IC course discussion continued from February 15, 2012

The Chair suggests organizing the discussion, focusing on recommendation for the Dean, around three “prongs,” noted below with suggestions generated noted as bullets.

Prong 1—Education/Prevention:

- Work with IC instructors—if you see someone “missing” or “disappearing” notify someone (do an alert, notify advising, etc.)?
- Tell students it’s a bad idea to drop IC without speaking with their adviser (syllabus statement); Dean’s Office also should create handout or materials to be given to students in the course. Add info to brochure available online and used in new student registration.
- Have IC instructor cohort meet; educate IC instructors—for example, faculty need to understand core components of IC class.
- Educate faculty advisers doing summer registration; use search function to make sure a class meets IC.
- During advising sessions (during orientation) check students’ APAS, talk to them about importance of IC and why they should not drop.
- After summer registration, Advising checks to make sure that students are registered for IC; this may not prevent dropping later, but we know students get registered.
- Maybe we need to reevaluate IC in general and its distinct criteria?
- Add text to IC category on APAS (and in catalog?).
- Put info in advising syllabus. Provide “boiler plate” syllabus language.

Prong 2—Preventative Mechanism:

- Once students are registered they do not meet the prerequisite attached to the course and cannot move (this doesn’t prevent dropping but prevents adding).
- Use Morris Academic Alert to communicate with advisers and students.

Additional comments: IC faculty and advisers need to be aware of IC requirements. Good communication needed. Have students meet with advisers before dropping. Only 30 percent of faculty use academic alert.

Discussed the number of sections and idea of leaving one seat open in every section. Noted that the planning “pattern” appears to reflect budgeting on the low end, and we should expect courses to be full. Students may choose IC courses based on schedules instead of topics.

Students are responsible for graduation. We need to communicate this responsibility to students. It will be impossible to for Prong 1 and 2 to be 100 percent successful. We need Prong 3 planned.

Prong 3—Response:

- Students who do not successfully complete IC should take it the next semester on a space available basis (how do students get permission, how are students tracked who don't complete)/ *some committee members leery of retaking—how is the environment affected, how does this establish cohort, etc.?*
- Special petition for IC exception (“Tammy Proposal”)
- Take non-credit bearing course or special alternative course to fulfill requirement? (This would need to be created to meet IC criteria)

Additional comments: We do not want to encourage “folklore” that suggests IC is “easy” to replace with another course. We need a formal mechanism in place from the Scholastic Committee requiring students take another course. It is the responsibility of this committee to “figure it out” and come up with a plan “before the fact” in the spirit of the requirement. We need guidelines and alternatives to give guidance to the campus.

The Curriculum Committee stated that IC was a more important requirement than getting on track for a major. IC takes precedence. This is the only requirement that has to happen in the first year. It is odd to say we have requirements on this campus that need to be repeated until you get it. Sends a message that failing is ok. If you fail in IC, you are done. Registrar notes that retaking an IC for grade replacement is not ideal. It's noted that students who fail may be placed in a cohort of other students who have failed.

If IC is not repeatable, that is the punishment. If a first semester student drops or fails, could you make a requirement that they take a 098 course, no credit. That would send the message that it is not ok to fail. We would have to create a course...and we really don't want to create a remedial course.

Why do students fail or drop out? International students come from a different culture in regard to participation and discussion. For some students, speaking in class is a “big deal.” We expect them to speak to the faculty...and they are being graded on this. Maybe it would be better if some students took IC in the second semester.

Reminder from the Chair, three ways the Scholastic Committee historically has approached petitions that could possibly guide us with IC: a student meets the spirit of the requirement; institutional responsibility; and extreme hardship for a student.

The Chair calls for recommendations. “On the table” as suggestions to the Dean:

- Communicate with IC instructors the importance of students completing the course in their first academic year. Educate the instructors and make sure the four objectives are clear. Have IC instructor cohort meet. Include information/statement in course syllabi.
- Use academic alert.
- Dean's office could create handout or materials to be given to students in the course.
- Educate faculty advisers doing summer registration; use search function to make sure a class meets IC requirements.

Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Korn
Executive staff