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Scholastic minutes 04/21/2010

Scholastic Committee

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University of Minnesota, Morris
Scholastic Committee
Meeting #15

The Scholastic Committee met at 9:15 A.m. on Wednesday, April 21, 2010 in the Behmler Conference Room. Members present: C Cole, J Deane, A Earl, J Goodnough, D Magner, B McQuarrie (Chair), J Nellis, J Pelletier, Matt Privratsky, J Ratliff-Crain, J Schryver

1. Approved Minutes of April 1

2. Announcements:
- The Chair contacted the disciplines that were not in compliance with the PCAS statement concerning use of S/N grades in the major/minor. The disciplines agreed to submit modified PCAS proposals (Econ, ESci, Geol, Hist, Mgmt, Pol, Stats; CSci pending).

- Suspension practice for students in Summer Session (May and summer sessions I and II)
  - If a student has a PB hold following fall semester and is registered for May session, financial aid is not disbursed until grades are posted. If the student is suspended following spring semester, the financial aid is canceled.
  - If the student is abroad and chooses to complete May term, suspension will become effective the date following the end of May session; any financial responsibility is assumed by the student.
  - If a student enrolled in summer session I and/or II is suspended, enrollment and financial aid will be canceled.
  - Possible effect on minimum enrollment to offer classes will be monitored.

- Changes in registration restrictions for students on probation
  - Credit maximum for students placed on probation changes from 14 to a 12-16 credit range.
  - Students who wish to exceed 16 credits may submit a petition to the Scholastic Committee.
  - The petition requires consultation with the adviser, and a recommendation from the adviser is sent to the Committee.
  - Report will be presented for information to Campus Assembly on May 5, so that advisers are aware of that this change in practice will be in place next October when students register for spring 2011.

3. Academic alert report (final version of this report will be presented for information to Campus Assembly on May 5)

The U of M Midterm Alert system was approved in 2003: a once-per-student notification of academic difficulty that could be made once per term, during a 3-week period just before the deadline to withdraw Submitted by instructor, advisor receives copy.

UMM developed a pilot "early alert" system in 2004: multiple notifications as needed of difficulties to students all during the semester. Submitted by instructor, email responses sent to advisor, student and other campus agencies if needed.

The early alert (now academic alert) filled the need to provide intervention when needed, not only during a predetermined time of the semester. The coordinator monitored Midterm Alerts to find overlap with Academic Alerts. The system is labor-intensive, involving weekly triage meetings, correspondence with multiple resource providers, and follow-up. The Academic alert coordinator, the academic assistance coordinator, advising staff support, and the incoming coordinator all cooperated in managing the system.

The University of Minnesota planned to expand Midterm Alert to incorporate the features of UMM's Academic Alert, and make it available to all campuses beginning Fall 2010 (Early Notification). UMM staff cuts in spring 2009 eliminated half of the support, but the alert team agreed to continue short-handed for one year until the new system automated many processes. [Update: The restructuring of the graduate school and move of graduate programs into existing departments in the Twin Cities has changed the priority of projects in OIT; Midterm Alert has been bumped down.]

Problem: Too much work with the reduced resources which impacts timeliness of alerts and coordinator sanity. How can the program survive until Early Notification is built?

Proposal: Shift to encouraging use of the automated mid-term alert system for all routine alerting.*
1) Extend the dates the mid-term alert system is available at UMM** (after 2nd week until 2 weeks remain?)
2) Change mid-term alert system to allow more than one alert per student per class***
3) Academic Alert Coordinator would more closely monitor the mid-term alert reports****
4) All non-routine Alerts sent via Academic Alert.
5) Reduced data collecting and reporting. So what do we really need and want to know in real time and as a report?

* Problem 1) – Will faculty remember that student see what they enter?
** Problem 2) – in theory this can be done
*** Problem 3) – can this be done?
**** Problem 4) – Will Management Reporting do reports with an extended window?

The Scholastic Committee approved the proposal and recommended allocating staff resources to the Academic Alert program.

The committee discussed the original intent of alerts: to facilitate a successful transition to college. Addressing the issues listed below needs to be incorporated into Orientation and the first year experience.
1. Students are accustomed to fixing problems in high school in the last three weeks, to relying on extra credit, to get graded on effort, to having the final exam carry them to pass rather than count 10% of the final grade.
2. New students don't know that they do not have to stay in class if they are earning F's.
3. The alert system provides intervention at the time during the semester when help is possible. Timeliness is the key.
4. Use web-based notification system for first-year students in 1xxx courses. Use academic alert for non-academic, crisis alerts. Reducing the load on advisors will bring them on board and will cut the volume of the more labor-intensive program.
5. Use Midterm Alerts for 2xxx, 3xxx, 4xxx. Grades are sufficient notification to advanced students.

Scholastic Committee urges participation in the alert system in 1xxx courses, especially for freshmen. A flow chart webpage will be designed to make submitting alerts easier, and will be the point to page from other sites.

Scholastic Committee will design another point to page with links to things needed during registration advising. Suggested links: APAS, My Active Advisees, Class Search, list of discipline coordinators, alert page, selected policies--bring the list of what you'd like to see on that page to the next meeting—April 29, 3:00 p.m.

Submitted by Dorothy De Jager