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Scholastic Committee

Campus Governance

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### Scholastic minutes 10/23/2003

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University of Minnesota, Morris  
Scholastic Committee  
Minutes #5, October 23, 2003

The Scholastic Committee met on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12:30 p.m. in the Community Services Conference Room. The next meeting will be on October 30<sup>th</sup> in the same location. Chancellor Schuman, Vice-Chancellors Schwaller and Olson-Loy, and Professor O'Loughlin have been invited to attend. The letter Chair Meek writes to them will form the basis of our agenda.

Members present: L. Burbank, W. Cox, K. Crandall, K. Ellis, B. Fischer, R. Heyman, N. McPhee, B. McQuarrie, L. Meek (chair), J. Ropp, T. Faux, K. Klinger (coordinator), R. Thielke

The entire meeting was spent discussing the two sets of academic progress criteria--UMM's Academic Progress criteria and the new federal financial aid rules for suspension and probation (SAP). The Scholastic Committee has been encouraged to consider whether one set of criteria could apply to both or, as one member noted, whether we would accept the financial aid criteria in place of ours. In preparation for the meeting, the Committee received three questions Chair Leslie Meek had raised with the administration together with a possible solution, posited by Dorothy DeJager and Lynn Schulz, to solve the notification problem. DeJager and Schulz have key roles in the suspension process.

Meek opened the discussion by summarizing, along with K. Klinger and R. Thielke, the progress that had been made this week in delineating and addressing our charge. Dean Schwaller had expressed concerns to Klinger about student notification and about the use of staff time in two offices rather than in one to implement these suspensions. Thielke had told us last week, after participating in an all-Campus meeting, that each of the four campuses has different standards for scholastic academic progress and financial aid academic progress. There is no all-University expectation that all campuses will have one set of criteria. In a response to emails from Dean Schwaller, both Craig Swan, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Sue Van Voorhis, UMTC Registrar, state there is "No need to bring the academic policies in line with financial aid policy." Van Voorhis recommends against "changing the academic policy to match SAP because it is too restrictive for students." Concerns about the calculation of the course completion ratio for SAP are being addressed at the all-University level. Van Voorhis writes, "All campuses have agreed on a consistent SAP process and programming will shortly begin." After receiving these emails, Dean Schwaller expressed support "for the dual evaluation route, but with a single letter" [integration of the notification process].

Several related topics were touched on briefly:

Meek noted that she has not yet had a satisfactory answer to how using one set of criteria rather than two will reduce the number of students UMM loses because of federal financial aid academic progress requirements. Is there a compelling reason to have only one set of academic progress requirements? Do we know how many students whose financial aid is suspended will continue to attend UMM?

Klinger explained that during the past years, the Financial Aid staff has been able to use the academic progress standards set by the Committee to make suspension decisions. This is no longer true. Thielke noted that the cumulative completion ratio disappeared from the transcript. In addition, the formula for determining completion was no longer useful. It is true that the Financial Aid office has had to expend staff time to make their own determinations. We can review the formula developed at the all-University level to determine how useful it would be for our purposes.

Crandall called the current scholastic academic progress criteria "the most accurate and most fair that we have had for 7 years." As coach, he needs to monitor student progress against different sets of criteria.

The athletes come to understand them. It was noted that we are going through a culture change, and students and staff need both time and familiarity to adjust.

There was a strong preference in the group for maintaining two sets of criteria. We also agreed that the two suspension processes must be in sync, and the letters to students must specify clearly why they are being suspended.

There was strong sentiment that both processes shouldn't be called academic suspension and probation. Perhaps the word *eligible* could be used. If UMM is required to use the financial aid terminology, perhaps consistent use of other descriptors could be used as well.

The Committee wants students to have easy access to information about both their academic and financial aid academic status. Perhaps a web site could be developed.

We struggled with differences in interpreting the new financial aid criteria. Because they will affect when and whether students withdraw from a course, academic advisors need to refer students to financial aid advisors, if they are anticipating withdrawing from a course.

Meek will write to Schuman, Schwaller, Olson-Loy and O'Loughlin, making sure that all of us have the same background. Klinger will work with DeJager and Hagen to edit the solution section so that it refers to the all-University SAP formula Hagen will use.