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Scholastic minutes 03/16/2004

Scholastic Committee

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University of Minnesota, Morris
Scholastic Committee
Minutes #14, March 16, 2004

The Scholastic Committee met on Tuesday, March 16, at 9:00 a.m. in the Community Services Conference Room. The next meeting will be held March 23rd, rather than March 30th, to accommodate Chair Meek's expected absence.

1. The minutes for February 10th and 24th were approved. There were no petitions.
2. Professor Paula O'Loughlin asked for time to discuss with the membership a proposal to create a special advising pilot program for undecided majors. The proposal was distributed electronically prior to the meeting and has the support of the Advising Office. Retention data show that among the non pre-professional majors, students who are undecided about a major when they enter UMM are more likely to leave than students who have made that decision. This pilot project will try to address that problem by placing about half of the incoming undecided majors with a small group of faculty (15 at most) who have expressed a special interest in working with them. These faculty will *either specialize or semi-specialize in undecideds*, while continuing to advise students in their majors. The number of undecided advisees assigned per adviser will be no more than 7. The remaining students will be assigned as usual, following a plan worked out with the division chairs to assign undecideds to faculty in disciplines with low advising loads. K. Klinger suggested some minor editorial changes to clarify current practice. The committee members supported the proposal.
3. The Proposal for Early Alert Intervention was discussed and will be brought back to the Committee for action March 23. This early alert system is intended to increase retention and to decrease probation and suspensions. Chair Meek explained that the *ad hoc* sub-committee had been formed after the October 2nd Scholastic Committee review of suspension data. Our case will be stronger, if it is approved by the Scholastic Committee and presented by a sub-committee we are willing to claim. Most of the discussion focused on anticipated concerns from the faculty, if they are asked to identify students who may be in academic difficulty during the first few weeks of the term. Not all faculty will be willing to participate and they will be unevenly affected. For example, professors of classes with 200 students can't be expected to take attendance. J. Ropp asked us to think of alternatives, such as having teaching assistants in large classes take attendance, or asking faculty to identify students in the bottom 10% of the class. Perhaps quiz scores can be used to suggest performance. B. McQuarrie noted that faculty don't want to be told how to report but could be asked to share information about performance, if they have it. N. McPhee advised that the expectation should be presented as part of what faculty usually do. He also expressed concern about where the information about students would live, so that data would not be following troubled students throughout their UMM careers.

Several advised us to gain student support before going to Assembly. B. Fisher said there is no one more important to a new freshman than his/her advisor, and that it's important for students to know that advisors can provide this kind of help. He asked how the early alert system would work. Meek explained that the notifications would be distributed from the Academic Assistance Center to the faculty adviser, who would contact his/her advisee. The adviser and the student will meet to work out a plan and/ or to familiarize the student with other resources. If the first contact is unsuccessful, a second will be initiated by the Academic Assistance Center staff. K. Klinger noted that we don't have a dean of students to follow through at the individual level as many colleges do. Several offices, such as the Scholastic Committee office and the Vice-Chancellors' offices and the Academic Assistance Center offer what help they can. This proposed system could provide administrative support for systematic intervention. We agreed that this proposal must go to the Assembly, just as the mid-term alert system did. McQuarrie advised that we be up front about faculty workload as well as how the new financial aid guidelines are

affecting retention.

4. Resident credit for study abroad: Last month, the Committee approved this policy change on resident credit for consideration by the Assembly: *Credits earned through study abroad programs that are sponsored, co-sponsored or official exchange programs affiliated with the University of Minnesota (all campuses) will be treated as resident credit, be posted on the transcript, and will count toward the UM transcript GPA.* Klinger announced that the Twin Cities staff of the Learning Abroad staff has away from granting resident credit for study abroad credits earned through official exchange programs. They have many exchange programs with which they have little contact. She will consult with Tom McRoberts and Ruth Thielke to edit the statement and to explore whether there is a way to assign UMM residence credit to credits earned through our two exchange programs. Kansai Gaidai University in Japan and Yonsei University in Korea are reputable programs with whom we have a ten year relationship..

5. Ropp expressed a desire to make progress with the agenda. We set the meeting dates listed above. The meeting was adjourned.