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Scholastic minutes 10/02/2003

Scholastic Committee

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University of Minnesota, Morris
Scholastic Committee
Minutes #3, October 2, 2003

The Scholastic Committee met on October 2 in the Community Services Conference Room beginning at 12:30. The next meeting will be October 16th in the same location.

Members present: L. Burbank, W. Cox, K. Crandall, T. Faux, B. Fisher, R. Heyman, N McPhee, B. McQuarrie, L. Meek (chair), J. Mullin, R. Richards, J. Ropp, R. Thielke.

Agenda

1. Minutes: The minutes from September 18th were approved.
2. Petitions: There were no petitions.
3. Jeri Mullin presented comparative suspension data for the last 6 years in which suspensions are broken down by gender, in-state/out-of-state, ethnicity, ACT composites and High School Rank. This data has been collected in an attempt to determine whether there is some characteristic of suspended students that might predict that they will not do well at UMM. To date, no one characteristic seems to stand out as a predictor for future suspension. The group discussed the data for the entire meeting and discussed how students who are not doing well at UMM might be helped early enough to let those students succeed. Some suggestions that were made included: 1) that all students on probation be required to take Learning to Learn; 2) that advisors need to take the initiative to actively help those advisees who are not doing well; 3) that all incoming students need to attend study skills workshops during Orientation and that further workshops on how to study should be offered by Student Affairs or as Floor Programs in on-campus residence halls during the course of the year. In addition, the students discussed the problem of coming to UMM as an undecided major and that the advice received at summer registration and from their advisors once they got to UMM was not very helpful. Both students emphasized the importance of an involved, caring, knowledgeable, creative advisor and said that students who do not have that kind of advisor suffer. The students indicated that freshmen need to understand early in their academic career that they can switch advisors if their assigned advisor is not helpful or involved, since that relationship is of fundamental importance to the success of many students. The group asked for detailed information about what kinds of services are offered on campus for students who are not succeeding and the Chair agreed to collect that information. Ken Crandall noted that his 3 year study of his advisees indicated that first year students have a great deal of difficulty with some 1000 level courses, including Introductory Psychology, Chemistry and Pre-calculus and Calculus. He wondered how well prepared many of our incoming freshmen are for college-level teaching and the group discussed this in depth and what, if anything, UMM should do to remedy the situation.
4. The Chair indicated that the agenda for the next meeting would be a discussion of federal financial aid rules and whether UMM's academic probation and suspension criteria should be changed to fit with federal guidelines. The Chair requested that committee members talk with their discipline/division colleagues and get a sense of how the faculty feels about this issue.