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Scholastic Committee

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Scholastic Committee
2017-18 Academic Year
March 6, 2018
Meeting Thirteen Approved Minutes

Present: Leslie Meek (chair), Judy Korn, Dan Magner, Jennifer Goodnough, Brenda Boever, Alyssa Pirinelli, Trey Goodsell, Elsie Wilson

Absent: Emma Kloos, Merc Chasman, Michelle Schamp, Ray Schultz, Sierra Brown, Harshita Kalidindi

1. Approve minutes of February 27, 2018, meeting

Minutes approved as amended.

2. Chair's Report

No report.

3. SCEP Report

SCEP is still going through the Grading and Transcript policy. They are working on solving the issue of inappropriate use of X & K symbols. The X and K symbols are to be used when a course is continuing and not for individual students who have not completed the work for a course. Students who need to complete work for a course should be assigned an I symbol and have a contract with the instructor.

Colleges and campuses will need to identify courses that will use X or K symbols in order to update ECAS.

SCEP is also working on adding a line in the Teaching and Learning: Instructor and Unit Responsibilities policy about informing students how group work will be graded. If there is one final product do all students earn the same grade? Or will they be graded on their individual contributions to the project? Goodnough offered to bring back to Scholastic Committee (SC) the final language decided on by SCEP.

SCEP is the policing body for grade inflation, but has no power to make changes. Goodnough demonstrated how to get to the Grade Distribution report through MyU. The path is: MyU>Key Links>Reporting Center>Student Services>Grading>Grade Distribution.

The intention is to track trends over five years. It's hard to know what to do with the information if it is out of context.

The data can be narrowed down by campus, term, division, discipline, and course level. Any class with less than 10 students are not displayed or included in the aggregate totals.

New faculty can use the data to get a sense for how they're grading their courses. Division chairs can look at the data and encourage conversation about grading.

Goodnough's intention is to call attention to the report.

4. Reorganization of the Office of the Registrar

On February 19, Jill Beauregard, director of Financial Aid/One Stop Student Services was informed of the One Stop/Office of the Registrar reorganization. On February 20, Judy Korn, Director of the Office of the Registrar was called up to the Chancellor's office and informed of the reorganization. The One Stop office is losing two staff members: one executive operations/student services specialist cut and one unfilled One Stop counselor position. The solution from the Chancellor and the Dean was to move two people from the Office of the Registrar (OTR) to the One Stop office with shared responsibilities between both offices. The staff members would report to the Director of Financial Aid/One Stop Student Services.

Diane Kill, Principal Office and Administrative Specialist is one of the staff members from OTR that will move to the One Stop office. Kill's position is a 75% appointment. She is responsible for athletic eligibility in addition to transcripts, verifications, and other OTR responsibilities. The main issue with this change is having someone who works on the official transcript not report to the Office of the Registrar. The idea is for Kill to work downstairs at the One Stop entry desk and do OTR work and report to Beauregard. The logistics of the setup will not work as most of Kill's work involves confidential information and the front desk provides no privacy. There are also concerns regarding financial aid federal regulations, FERPA regulations, and University policy.

After continued discussions with Beauregard, both her and Korn concluded that the new arrangement would not work. One Stop staff do not do any processing. One Stop staff guide students through the business processes, but do not process or update any financial aid, student records, or student finance work. It is for this reason that Beauregard feels Angie Senger, OTR transfer specialist, would not work as a One Stop counselor. Senger advises students, approves credit, and processes transfer transcripts in addition to degree audit encoding and other OTR responsibilities.

Korn and Beauregard have not received any guidance from either the Chancellor nor the Dean. They were told to "figure it out." Korn and Beauregard have been working on trying to find alternative solutions to the new arrangement, but both end back at the same place. It does not work.

Korn would like the committee to think about Scholastic Committee's role in the work done by Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar is the face of SC on a daily basis whether it's through petitions, transfer credit, etc. Korn noted the impacts of OTR SC responsibilities in a letter sent to the Chancellor and the Dean on February 28, but received no response.

Korn asked the committee to share any thoughts or ideas for moving forward.

It was suggested that Korn highlight the history of the Scholastic Committee. She was advised to share the SC's evolution and its flexibility in cuts to its support staff. Dorothy DeJager reported to the secretary of SC or the chair of SC. When the SC secretary was removed the Scholastic Committee refused to convene because the decision was made by administration without consultation.

It was noted that the Chancellor and the Dean might not know about SC's responsibilities. It was also noted that SC was against the creation of a One Stop office.

The Twin Cities One Stop office is much different than the Morris model. The Twin Cities counselors do a lot of self-service with students, but they also update the student's record. They make major/minor changes.

Members feel the reorganization of the Office of the Registrar and One Stop Student Services was an ill-informed decision that did not follow campus governance. The plan was not discussed with either the Planning Committee nor the Finance Committee and therefore was not made holistically. The decision was taken away from campus governance and approved in an isolated way. There was no consideration for long-term planning. How is OTR supposed to do succession planning with only three staff members left? Korn has been talking to the dean about succession planning since 2015.

Korn spoke with Steve Kaufmann from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Korn explained the reorganization plan for OTR and One Stop and having the transfer specialist report to the director of financial aid. The HLC does not have a guide book or best practices document for transfer credit. Kaufmann highly suggested that Morris's lead HLC person speak with the HLC liaison. Korn does not want to do anything that will harm the institution's accreditation, but is worried the reorganization might have that effect.

Korn also spoke with University Registrar Sue Van Voorhis who oversees the Twin Cities One Stop, Student Finance, Office of the Registrar, and Continuity and Compliance. In addition to the transfer piece, Van Voorhis is also concerned about degree audit coding being a problem for accreditation. Senger has been helping Korn with degree audit coding and it takes all summer to update all APAS reports during a catalog year. In addition to catalog updates, there are modifications that will need to be made to all APAS reports to include a Progress Toward Degree requirement that tracks courses not used toward satisfying requirements. The University has also started the process to upgrade the degree audit software. Van Voorhis is concerned that the person encoding programs would not report to the Office of the Registrar as the APAS report is how degree requirements are articulated to students.

Korn also spoke with the secondary education discipline coordinator, Michelle Page about the transfer specialist reporting to the director of financial aid. The OTR and the Division of Education have established procedures for new transfer course evaluations for courses being used toward licensing requirements as required by the Minnesota Department of Education. In addition, Korn contacted the US Department of Education, and a representative is investigating whether there needs to be a separation of duties between the Office of Financial Aid and transfer evaluation..

The Chancellor stated at the community meeting that the reorganizations would not impact academic programs nor the student experience, but both the One Stop and Office of the Registrar are all about academic programs and the student experience. Whether the two OTR staff members remain in the OTR or move to the One Stop office there will be a negative impact on academic programs and the student experience.

The reorganization is suppose to save money, create good working relationships, and include a relocation.

It was suggested that other student services offices could provide staff members to help in the One Stop office.

It was noted that when the Twin Cities administration decided to close the childcare center without consulting campus governance, faculty, staff, and students demanded consultation on the issue. The decision to close the center was postponed, and the issue is being discussed in the University Senate. With enough protests from other committees on campus, could the decision for the reorganization be delayed and brought to Campus Assembly?

Are decisions being made without proper research and vetting to make sure they don't violate any rules or hurt accreditation?

How will the Office of the Registrar manage all its work with the loss of two staff members? How will transcripts be processed? These changes will affect registration planning for incoming students.

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Senger