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Scholastic minutes 03/29/2005

Scholastic Committee

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University of Minnesota, Morris
Scholastic Committee
Minutes #15, March 29, 2005

The Scholastic Committee met on March 29 at 3:45 p.m. in the Behmler Conference Room. The next regularly scheduled meeting is April 5, but members should be prepared to meet weekly until the end of the term.

Members attending: S. Aronson, B. Burke, K. Crandall, B. Fisher, J. Goodnough, W. Hunt, J-M Kim, P. Lawrence, N. McPhee (chair), G. Sheagley, K. Strissel, S. Haugen, K.Klinger (coordinator), R.Thielke

1. Minutes from March 22 approved.

2. Petitions:

#1150--Waive the Hum requirement of the GER based on completion of Engl 2993, Directed Study (4 cr). **Approved.**

3. Continuation of the discussion of removing the 12 credit limit on D grades applicable to the degree.

We again discussed points for (a) and against (b) lifting the limit on D grades. It was also suggested that we consider raising the # of D credits allowed from 12 to 16 or 20 credits. In the week preceding the meeting, Ruth Thielke, Dorothy De Jager, and Jen Goodnough gathered additional data.

- Thielke, UMM Registrar, contacted the DARS staff who write APAS software to ask whether software had been written to balance D's in the major. Among the colleges DARS serves, only UMM does this. DARS staff were not aware of colleges that limit the number of D's in the degree.
- De Jager had reviewed the transcripts of last year's graduates to see how many students graduated with more than 12 credits of D. [The data was presented without her being present. The following reflects discussion at the meeting, but a clarification of the data follows.] The discussion was based on an assumption that her tallies were of numbers of credits beyond 12. Students with more than 12 credits showed a significant spike at 4 extra credits and a scattering of students with additional credits up to 21. The student with 21 additional D credits (33 D credits overall) remained at UMM 8 years, retook many courses until he had earned an area of concentration, and would never have been allowed to remain here under the current academic progress requirements. Thielke pointed out that this summary of students who had graduated excluded those who were unable to graduate, perhaps because of their academic records. **Note: De Jager's tallies began at 0 credits of D on the transcript. Actual number of students with more than 12 credits of D was 8, only 2 of these had 20 or more credits of D.**
- Members of the Committee have suggested that the current academic progress standards based on the 2.0 term and cumulative GPA requirement would limit the number of D's a student could earn, even if the D limit were lifted. Jen Goodnough prepared three non-extreme examples of student records with no D limit (except as established in the major). Case one is a student with 8 consistently poor semesters who graduates with 36 credits of D and no grade higher than B. Case two is a student who made a bad start the first year, earned two grades higher than B, and graduated with 32 credits of D. Student three had a decent GPA the first two semesters (2.91), which carried him through to graduation, in spite of 44 credits of D. According to each of these scenarios, under the no limit option, students could graduate with large numbers of D.

The question was raised whether a D limit is the best way to control quality. Limits on D impose special burdens on professors, who may be reluctant to award a D, if that D will take the student over the 12 credit limit. One member thought that students who really want to raise their GPA's will find a way to do it. Under any D option we choose, all D's earned will appear on the record. Arguments were made that unlimited D's both help and hurt students. Though several felt that a C average should be acceptable, some professions and most graduate schools don't think so. Faculty who write in behalf of students want to give solid letters of recommendations, and a C average isn't helpful. UMM is known as an academically rigorous institution. Unlimited D's may not fit with that image.

McPhee asked for a straw vote. Five members wanted to lift the limit (a); one member supported leaving it but basing graduation on the cumulative GPA (b). Four characterized themselves as *not agreeing with A*. We debated whether we should take this to the Assembly this year, drop the topic, or continue the discussion next year.

After the meeting, McPhee and K. Klinger discussed how to approach the next discussion. Since we had generally agreed that we don't want to continue use of a *quality of work GPA* to determine whether a student can graduate, we will discuss whether we can move forward with a proposal that discontinues its use. The members of the Committee agree that we would like the graduation GPA and the transcript cumulative GPA to match at the time of graduation.

Karla Klinger