

RAC

December 7, 2009

Present: Gary Andersen, Deb Basarich, Frank Blalark, Sheryl Bolstad, Carolee Cohen, Pam Cook, Molly Diethelm, Santiago Fernandez-Gimenez, Tracy Fischer, Jennifer Franko, Teresa Fruen, Laurie Gardner, Jamie Gearhart, Kit Gordon, Stacey Grimes, Amanda Grimm, Kevin Havard, Andy Hill, Emily Holt, Pam Klopfleisch, Jennifer Koontz, Anne Lawrence, Linda Lindholm, Aileen Lively, Margo Mueller, Anya Norton, Ingrid Nuttall, Laurie Pape Hadley, Cindy Pavlowski, Andrea Raich, Jan Reifsteck, Genny Rosing, Cindy Salyers, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Pat Sherman, Clare Strand, Nathan Tesch

Announcements

Mary Koskan announced that:

- One Stop will be rolling out a new electronic kiosk and ticketing system for in-person visitors. This will go live in mid- to late January so that One Stop can work out all of the bugs before they move into the new building on August 1. Besides helping the lines go more smoothly, the system will allow One Stop to collect data on the types of questions they get during in-person visits.
- Twin Cities undergraduates who are applying to the Graduate School do not need to pay for a transcript to be sent to our Graduate School. This has been posted on the Graduate School Web site, and will also be posted on One Stop.

Sue Van Voorhis announced that:

- Fall semester grades are due December 30. Please take advantage of any opportunities you have to remind faculty and instructors of this deadline.
- On Friday, December 4, the revised policy related to the withholding of diplomas and transcripts went to the President's Policy Committee. The revised policy will now move forward to the 30-day review and comment period. If the policy revision does go into effect, the University will begin posting degrees for students with financial holds (a change from current practice), but the University will not verify degrees for the students, or issue diplomas or transcripts (which is consistent with current practice).

Service hours during ASR events, Tina Falkner

Tina Falkner updated the group with the following limited service times:

- Wednesday December 9, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.: Minimal staffing at One Stop because of ASR staff training. The classroom hotline and the student records training team will remain open during this time.
- Friday, December 18, 1:30 – end of business day: Because of an ASR staff appreciation event, there will be minimal staffing in One Stop Student Services, 200 Fraser Hall. The West Bank and Coffey Hall One Stop Student Services locations will be closed. The

classroom hotline and the student records training team will remain open during this time.

- December 21 – 31: One Stop Student Services will close at 4 p.m. daily (rather than 5:30 p.m.).

ASR Communication Request form, Ingrid Nuttall

Ingrid Nuttall showed the group an additional way to get in contact with the communication contact person from any area in ASR. Go to <http://asr.umn.edu> and log in. Then, under Work Support and Tools, go to Service and Support, and then click Communication Request. Most fields on the page are optional; just disregard what isn't clear to you. Fill the form in as needed. When you click submit, an e-mail goes to all of the communicators, and someone will get back to you. You can also e-mail communications@rt.asr.umn.edu to reach the same group of people, or e-mail us individually.

Project update, Jody Seiler-Peterson

Jody Seiler-Peterson updated the group on the following ASR-IT projects:

- The Education Abroad project went live on the Twin Cities campus, and many Twin Cities students have already used the system. It will go live in Duluth next week and in Morris by the end of the month. There will be a demonstration at the January RAC meeting.
- ASR and OIT are working together on the Quarter 3 workplan. This should be complete in January.
- The Office of Student Finance is preparing to run 1098T forms, and to run tuition set-up for spring semester.
- The Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) project continues to gather business requirements, and is on track to complete those by the end of the year.
- There are several enhancements in the works for the electronic financial aid award notice (eFAAN) application, or FA Steps. These should go live in December or January.
- The upgrade to the Pillar applications is ongoing. The launch of the redesigned application banners has been delayed until February. The function of the Web applications will be the same, but the new header and footer will meet University guidelines.

APAS issues, Margo Mueller

Margo Mueller apologized for the recent APAS issues, which were caused by a record number of users accessing audits at the same time. One fix for the issues has already gone into production: APAS used to run two audits (both the Web audit and the PDF audit) whenever a Web audit was requested. Now, only the Web audit will run when you request it. The PDF audit will run separately, so you may have to wait a few seconds to access this. Margo believes that this should alleviate some of the pressure on the system.

Margo reported that ASR and OIT are also looking at Graduation Planner and APAS, to see if there are ways the applications could run more efficiently. APAS currently runs on a server that is old, so they are looking into moving that to a new server. She is hopeful that these solutions will be in place before the beginning of fall 2010 registration.

Andy Hill from OIT also apologized for the issues, and indicated that OIT is dedicated to fixing these issues. They will be doing some performance testing on APAS and Graduation Planner to help identify issues, as well as looking into the new server. They will also be working with the creators of the DARS system to investigate possible solutions.

u.select front page, Margo Mueller

Margo Mueller showed the group revisions to the u.select home page (<http://uselectmn.org>). The login functions are now at the top of the page, and now it is possible to access features of u.select without having to create an account. Red Lantern made these changes in response to feedback from end users.

Probation/Suspension reminder, Frank Blalark

Frank Blalark reminded the group that probation/suspension information is now online (http://onestop.umn.edu/staff/student_records/probation_suspension_schedule.html). Reports will be generated nightly, from 12/13/2009 through 1/8/2010. P3 suspension holds must be placed by January 7, 2010. The Office of Student Finance will run the SAP process on January 8, 2010.

Repeat data, Frank Blalark

Frank Blalark worked with John Kellogg from the Office of Institutional Research to investigate how serious the issue of students repeating courses more than once might be. Frank summarized the data (a PDF of his presentation is attached to the minutes):

- In the Twin Cities, taking into account 1000-5000 level classes, there were 28,066 course repeats between fall 2002 and summer 2009.
- Of these repeats, 92% of courses were only repeated once, which is consistent with policy. 6% were repeated twice, and 1% were repeated three times.
- The top ten repeated courses were often prerequisites in math or science.
- Frank also showed how students who retake courses fare grade-wise the second time they take a course.
- When students receive a W in the class and then repeat it, only 11% also get a W the second time.

Several follow-up questions were asked about this data, including why would a student repeat a class S/N, when they earned an S the first time? Is it possible to find out about students who

repeat more than one course? And, are students who repeat courses more often degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking students? ASR will inquire about these questions with OIR.

Policy of the month, Tina Falkner

Tina Falkner brought the repeat policy up for discussion, because proposed changes to the policy were discussed at a recent Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) meeting. SCEP members are considering changing the policy to include courses in which a student earns a W as counting in the number of times a student has taken a course. In other words, if a student registered for a course and withdrew during the period when she would earn a W on her transcript, that registration will count as one of the “repeats” in the repeat policy. This would be a change from current practice, where only course completions count in the repeat policy. The rationale for this change would be to help advisers more strongly discourage students from dropping and repeating courses.

The group agreed that they would not recommend this change in the repeat policy. Reasons for opposing the change included the lack of ability to enforce the change in policy, lack of fairness (students can drop a class in the first two weeks without a W; a W earned in the third week has very different resource and academic progress implications than a W earned in the 13th week), an increased number of petitions from students requesting policy exceptions, complications when a student was given a “medical” W, and potential implications for financial aid (if students were forcibly withdrawn from courses when they violate the repeat policy). One individual wondered if this change was in the students’ best interest, even if it might serve four-year graduation goals.

Sue Van Voorhis stated that it might be more beneficial if we developed a report that could catch those students who are repeating courses they earned a high or a passing grade in the first time. Frank Blalark suggested that it might help to move date at which a W is given. Clare Strand commented that a policy that made students pay more for repeated courses might be a greater deterrent. Tina replied that a policy like that would not be uncommon among other institutions, but one argument against it is that it may disadvantage students who do not have the financial resources to pay the additional fee.

Another suggestion that has been discussed is awarding “W/F” for withdrawn/failing, and “W/P” for withdrawn, passing. Vice Provost Bob McMaster did not approve of this idea when it was first raised, but ASR is willing to propose it again if advisers think it would be helpful.

Sheryl Bolstad mentioned that the rationale for changing the policy—that advisers could discourage students more strongly not to drop courses—may not be applicable to the CFANS advising structure. Students work with faculty advisers, and they often do not consult their advisers before dropping a class.

Frank Blalark suggested that the University find out more about why students are repeating. Clare Strand suggested looking at the grade at the time the W was assigned and the dates that students tend to withdraw.

Tina Falkner mentioned that they have also discussed the idea of counting all of the grades for repeated courses in the GPA, rather than only the last enrollment. Emily Holt supported this option. Others questioned the current policy of counting the last grade earned. If competency has been proven once by a passing grade, should the student then have a failing grade on their record? There was some discussion about whether current competency is important, or competency proven at any time is sufficient. Also, is there a way to count the later grade in the GPA, but have the requirement marked as completed if a student has passed the class at some point? Clare Strand mentioned that, when a student transfers in a course as a repeat, the University of Minnesota grade stays on the transcript, but the requirement is marked as completed.

Clare Strand mentioned that, on the Morris campus, students who earn a C or better in a course may only repeat the course if space permits. Sue stated that the Institute of Technology follows this practice and can manually drop students from the course roster.

Mike Galegher asked if there might be a correlation between the number of withdrawals and the 13-credit policy. Students may be taking too many credits and getting into trouble.

The group also discussed the problems that the repeat policy is meant to address, including students who repeat courses multiple times, or students who repeat courses even when they have earned passing grades. This has an impact on tuition, if other students who need to take the class cannot get in. Sue thinks that if the problem is really associated with the “top 10” repeated courses (see the “repeat statistics” presentation, attached to the minutes), then there might be a solution to specifically address that. Pat Sherman stated that enforcing prerequisites might also be helpful. However, many departments seem reluctant to indicate “true” prerequisites; many courses are recommended, but not strictly required.

Sue Van Voorhis confirmed that courses students must pass to finish their degrees would be exceptions under the revised repeat policy, as they are under the current policy.

Margo Mueller stated that, though systems should not drive policy, it should be kept in mind that APAS will apply one rule to all of the active students. So any change in policy would become retroactive to past students' records. This could make implementation difficult.

Sue Van Voorhis and Tina Falkner recommended that group members talk to their associate deans about the recommended changes to this policy. Tina will forward the current draft language to the group when she receives it.

IUT Advising Group, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis reported that this discussion is on hold, pending next steps from Laura Coffin Koch.

PeopleSoft access, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis reminded the group that some individuals may have particular PeopleSoft access because of their job titles. However, it is still necessary to follow University policies. Just because it is possible to make certain changes, it does not mean that you are authorized to do so.

Graduate Education Updates, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis has been asked to serve on the academic issues work group, as well as the student administrative processes work group.

In the student administrative processes work group, they have been drafting a process document that summarizes how masters degrees would be administered in the colleges. This document is very high level, and it does not yet address multi-disciplinary programs, dual career students, or master's degrees that transition to doctoral programs. The document has been shared with the work group, and Mary Nichols will send it out when it is approved.

Sue stated that they will need a lot of feedback in fleshing out these processes. The "PRAC" group of graduate and professional student services staff, which met during the PeopleSoft implementation, will likely reconvene to work through the details and design processes. The DGS assistants will also be key to the effort.

The work group still sees a central role for graduate education. They still want students to apply for admission to a central point. The central office would know that each department has different application components and requirements, and work it out so that students only have to send in their application information and transcript once. An imaging center might also play a part. Needed records would be retained. All processes would be as automated as possible.

The transition may not be inexpensive. One estimate states that it may cost \$350,000 just to make changes to the student records tables in PeopleSoft. The committee may not understand the impact the changes will have on systems.

The high-level processes document will come out soon. Sue asked the group to not panic at what they might initially see, as she plans to work together with them on the details of implementing these processes.

Sheryl Bolstad asked if, in general, programs with masters degrees moving to the college are incorporating those student services into their existing undergraduate student services structure, or into their pre-existing masters degrees structure. Sue replied that this would probably vary. She would like to see masters degrees that do move to the colleges have processes that are in sync, in order to benefit students.

Tina Falkner commented that there have been discussions in SCEP about whether SCEP should look at the Graduate School policies. There are also questions about whether all masters degrees that transition to Ph.D.s should share a common process. There are several ongoing discussions in several locations.

Sue stated that she has tried to reduce the impact on this group. The work groups will basically conclude their work when this document is completed, though interdisciplinary programs still need to be worked out.

ETS update, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis reported that the University received stimulus funding to expand the CLA-developed Enrollment Tracking System (ETS) to colleges across the Twin Cities campus. Approval to move forward was given at a meeting with CSAA.

Tina Falkner is working with a steering committee to determine the project charge. A working/implementation group is also being established. Colin DeLong and Tina Falkner have meetings set up with college advising offices; as of December 7, almost all advising groups were scheduled. At each advising group meeting, there will be a demo. Then advisers will be allowed about two weeks in a “sandbox” instance of ETS, so that they can determine what they absolutely must have in the system to go live, as well as what they might like to have added to the system in the future. There will also be three open demos, so more people can attend—one on the West Bank, one on the East Bank, and one in St. Paul. Colin DeLong is scheduling those.

The steering committee is looking into policy matters related to using the tool. Tina will continue to update the group at future meetings.

Tina Falkner, Updating Sample Plans

Many members of the group will be contacted about updating sample plans for your college. Tina will send draft plans to members of the group for review (these were created based on actual course-taking patterns), and ask you to send them back by December 30. ASR will enter

the sample plans into PCAS for you, if you like (this will not happen without explicit approval from the college). Data entry in PCAS must be complete by early February, when the information will be extracted for the University catalog.

The first round of sample plans will be new plans with the old LEs. When there are more new LE courses in the system, the plans will be revised to include new LEs.

Tina also reminded the group to get back to the University catalog editors with your changes, if you have been asked to update pages.

Liberal Education update, Kasi Williamson

Kasi Williamson showed the group a page on the ASR Web site that has links to all of the new LE information for students, staff, and faculty: <https://asr.umn.edu/node/462>

She also reported that new liberal education courses for fall 2010 and later terms are being added to the One Stop Web site after each meeting of the Council on Liberal Education. She asked if the group had received many questions from students about the new LEs during recent advising appointments; no questions were reported.

Please contact Laurel Carroll at l-carr@umn.edu if you have any questions about LE courses, especially critical courses that have not been approved yet. Laurel can let you know the status.