

**EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (SCEP)
MINUTES
JANUARY 21, 2015**

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

[In these minutes: Discussion of undergraduate retention and graduation; Discussion of the Graduate Student Financing Task Force report; Discussion and Approval of Amendments to two Administrative Policies – Directed Study, Directed Readings, and Directed Research Courses and Providing in-progress notifications on academic performance; ESUP Presentation]

PRESENT: Sue Wick (chair), Nicola Alexander, Elaine Darst, Gayle Golden, Ken Leopold, Alon McCormick, Robert McMaster, Thomas Michaels, Savio Poovathingal, Henning Schroeder, Rachna Shah.

ABSENT: Erich Beckert, Karla Hemesath, Lauren Lindquist, Tisha Turk.

REGRETS: Gifty Amarteifio, Michael Anderson, Noah Hall, Keith Mayes, Hamza Musse.

GUESTS: Belinda Cheung, Tina Falkner, Leslie Schiff, Sue Van Voorhis.

1. DISCUSSION OF UNDERGRADUATE RETENTION AND GRADUATION

Vice Provost Robert McMaster reviewed this year's data on retention and graduation rates, noting the changes that have been made over the last 10 years (available at:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1q6u_7gAi99k6PWY7xwzvcKuqxKgTDA4PFco-oqkf6T8/edit?usp=sharing). He highlighted the following points:

- There was a decline in applications before increases in 2013 and 2014
- There is a natural limit to the number of applications that the University will hit at some point
- Applications are ahead by 3.5 percent this year
- University needs to make more offers since students have multiple options and the University needs to be competitive
- There is not significant capacity to increase the freshmen class size, although there has been small increases in CSE, CBS, and CSOM due to the quality of the applicants
- Students of color in the freshmen class is 20.6 percent, almost the same percentage as the Minnesota graduates of color
- Minnesota residents still account for 62-65 percent of the freshmen class
- Reciprocity students are decreasing while students from other states are increasing
- International student population is stable, but recruitment is needed from Europe and South America. If the population were to increase additional resources would be needed, maybe through an international student fee, to allow colleges to pay for more services
- Students of color have been at 18-21 percent over the last decade
- Minnesota high school graduates are declining
- Most transfer students come to the University with 60 credits
- Student Achievement Measure includes students who have graduated from the University and other institutions

Q: How does reciprocity affect enrollment?

A: The largest percentage of reciprocity students is from Wisconsin, with one percent from each of the Dakotas. About 10 percent of Minnesota student attend school in Wisconsin, which is a stable percentage over the years.

Q: What is the yield rate for freshmen applicants?

A: It varies by college and is influenced by a variety of factors.

Q: Has the international enrollment increased?

A: Yes, between one to six percent in the last 10 years.

Q: What is the status of the four-year graduation rate?

A: The target was 60 percent which has been reached. Now the Regents need to consider an increase, while taking the student experience into account. Given the current trajectory, 65 percent is possible in the next few years, but it is possible that 70 percent may never be achieved.

Q: What are the drivers behind the increased retention rates?

A: The quality and motivation of the freshmen class is a large factor. The first-year experiential course in each college also plays a part.

2. DISCUSSION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCING TASK FORCE REPORT

Vice Provost Henning Schroeder said that he wants to reinvigorate the discussion of graduate student financing now that there is renewed interest in the high cost to graduate students and for grants. He referred members to the Graduate Student Financing Task Force Summary Report.

He noted that graduate students have the most expense at the beginning of the program and the cost then drops after a student takes the oral preliminary exam. To reduce this cost, many students are being encouraged to take the oral preliminary exam early which does not allow time to research early in a program.

His office is working with the Office of the Vice President for Research to begin a series of meetings to tackle these issues. One option would be a flat fee or constant tuition so that students would not be incentivized to take the oral preliminary exam early. Assessing the value of the Masters or PhD depends on if it is driven by the credits that a student must complete or the research and mentoring that a student receives. He noted that this is not just a concern at the University, but conversations are taking place across the country.

Q: When can a student register for their 24 these credits?

A: If the advisor deems that a student is research-ready, the student can be allowed to register at any time.

Q: Is there a way to lower graduate student tuition?

A: That is unlikely, which is why equalizing the amount throughout a program is being considered.

Q: What was the original intent of thesis credits?

A: Thesis credits are a way to account for faculty time when they are not teaching but serving as an advisor. However they are also a revenue stream for the University.

Q: As a principal investigator on a grant, the total cost does matter and there is currently a revenue stream that goes to support students. Is there a way to reduce this cost?

A: There are many components to this cost that would need to be assessed, including health insurance and a stipend.

Members made the following comments:

- If an advisor allows a student to start these credits early, that student could try to complete all their coursework in the first year
- Any change should not force a student to do research before they are ready
- Programs still require 24 these credits and a number of independent credits
- Faculty do spend large amounts of time with advisees
- Graduate studies is an individual journey for each student
- The basic cost of being a graduate students is required to see where changes could be made
- Faculty grants pay for graduate students but they do not always see how it benefits them

3. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO TWO ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Administrative Policy on Directed Study, Directed Readings, and Directed Research Courses

Tina Falkner stated that while most of the language in this policy looks new, it is actually more of a restructuring of the policy. The new requirement is that any contract between a faculty and student must be shared with the academic department as a protection to both parties.

Members made the following comments:

- CBS has a specific process to ensure that one instructor is not teaching a directed study course that is similar to another offering
- Uniformity is needed between colleges to eliminate any abuse and to make sure that the same information is being included in each contract
- Department oversight should be adequate; sending contracts to the college should not be required
- Programs can have limits on how many of these credits can count towards a degree

Q: How is the information stored in CBS?

A: The contract is submitted electronically and sends the data to a spreadsheet.

Q: Is there are limit to the number of these credits that a student can take?

A: Permission is required from the Director of Undergraduate Studies if a student wants to take more than a certain number in an academic year.

With no further comments these policy amendments were approved.

Administrative Policy on providing in-progress notifications on academic performance

Tina Falkner noted that the changes to this policy include a revision to the title and removal of time limits for providing notifications to allow faculty to do them when they are most helpful for the students.

Q: Are notifications allowed for summer courses?

A: They are not done now but will be possible in PeopleSoft 9.0.

Q: Do notifications allow a student to challenge a grade if they are doing well enough to not need a notification but then their grade declines?

A: No. Notifications are sent as a courtesy to students and may not be an indication of the final grade.

With no comments these policy amendments were approved.

4. ESUP PRESENTATION

Sue Van Voorhis noted that the last ESUP reported provided to SCEP was on February 5, 2014. Today she would be focusing on what had changed since that report, as well as the faculty center in PeopleSoft.

During testing in fall semester it was determined that the go-live date needed to move from February. The next window without a significant business impact will be April. Once the system is updated, all users will enter through their MyU portal. This will not replace the University's homepage or One-stop, but will be an entry point for PeopleSoft services.

The PeopleSoft portal will start with basic information and can be added to later. The parts to the portal for all users will include in-time notifications as well as when action is needed, a research tab, and the faculty center to consolidate all faculty resources in one area. The teaching information will include current and past courses.

She did note that the course guide is being eliminated with the upgrade as students prefer the new offering within PeopleSoft. However, APlus will not be replaced during the upgrade.

The other functionality in PeopleSoft relates to human resources and research – vacation, pay, and benefits; manager information; purchasing; and a new reporting center.

She noted that there are faculty go-tos in each department that can answer basic questions after go-line.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business, Professor Wick thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate