

**EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (SCEP)  
MINUTES  
MAY 6 2014**

*[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: Approval of amendments to two administrative policies, Approval of a request for alternate evaluation procedure, End of year updates, Discussion of evaluation of teaching policy and procedures]

**PRESENT:** Sue Wick (chair), Nicola Alexander, Gifty Amarteifio, Elaine Darst, Karla Hemesath, Ken Leopold, Keith Mayes, Alon McCormick, Robert McMaster, Thomas Michaels, Savio Poovathingal, Rachna Shah, Tisha Turk.

**ABSENT:** Erich Beckert, Noah Hall, Lauren Lindquist.

**REGRETS:** Michael Anderson, Gayle Golden, Hamza Musse, Henning Schroeder.

**GUESTS:** Suzanne Bardouche, Belinda Cheung, Leslie Schiff, Stacey Tidball, Kathleen Thomas.

**1. APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO TWO ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

Kathleen Thomas, member of the Graduate Education Council (GEC), said that she is serving on the subcommittee to review the graduate policies that are going through comprehensive review. Comments from the April SCEP meeting were brought to the GEC and the two policies are here for further discussion.

Administrative Policy on Credit Requirements for Students Earning Graduate/Postbaccalaureate Degrees

She stated that a few details that were unclear at the last meeting have now been addressed. The program will now determine when and if credits can be applied to meet degree requirements. If the program agrees, then those credits can be applied to the minimum number required.

Q: What about a situation in which a graduate student, who is close to graduating, follows their faculty advisor to the University from another institution?

A: This would be a special exception that is not covered in the policy but would be included in a FAQ.

Q: Can any courses taken at the undergraduate or graduate level be counted towards a degree?

A: No. The core minimum credits cannot have already been counted towards another degree and must be taken while the student is enrolled as a graduate student in that program. However, Master's coursework can always be applied towards a PhD.

With no further comments, the committee approved the amendment to the policy.

Administrative Policy on Credit Requirements for Master's and Doctoral Degrees

She noted that the few changes suggested by SCEP at the April meeting have all been incorporated in this draft. With no comments, the committee approved the amendment to the policy.

## **2. APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR ALTERNATE EVALUATION PROCEDURE**

Professor Wick presented a request from the Rochester campus to allow them to use an alternate evaluation form for one course that is offered in collaboration with Mayo. She noted that some Academic Health Center schools and programs already have a similar exception, as it relates to accreditation requirements.

Members made the following comments:

- Are standard evaluations required for promotion and tenure of the instructors for this course?
- It is possible that Mayo instructors do not participate in the promotion and tenure process, so a standard evaluation would not be necessary
- This is a reasonable request
- Any class can have additional questions added to the standard evaluation
- Rochester's evaluation seems to serve a different purpose
- Rochester could have students complete two evaluations, but the cost would be higher

Members agreed that they would like additional information regarding the promotion and tenure process before making a determination.

## **3. END OF YEAR UPDATE**

Vice Provost Robert McMaster provided updates on the following topics.

### Enrollment Management and the 2015 Freshmen Class

Confirmations for fall enrollment were due May 1 but there will still be a few this week. There were a record number of applications this year, over 45,000, and the quality of the applicants was unbelievable. Seven freshmen-admitting colleges have hit their target. The fall class will include 5500 freshmen and 2100 transfer students.

There will be meetings with each college in August and September regarding enrollment management for this year and into the future. One issue is that the University does not have the capacity to grow the freshmen class due to limits in housing and advising.

Q: Is the freshmen class in CLA shrinking?

A: No. It has been around 2450 for three to four years. The total enrollment depends on the number of students who list CLA as a first choice versus their second choice.

### Staff Changes in OUE

Professor Marvin Marshak has stepped down as the Director of the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) and Lynn Holleran, MAC Director, left the University so candidates are being sought for both positions. Kris Wright retired so Tina Falkner is serving as the Interim Director of Student Finance and Stacey Tidball has stepped into Tina's previous position.

On the faculty side, Professor Ken Leopold, SCEP member, has agreed to chair the Council on Liberal Education next year and Professor Sarah Hobbie will be the new chair of the Campus Writing Board. A new Campus Curriculum Committee chair is being sought as Professor Paul Siliciano stepped down.

### Status of Accreditation/Assessment

It is six months until the arrival of the accreditation team. The chair of the team is the Dean of Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The University's approach to this review has been three-prong – 1) Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Writing-enriched courses being infused into the curriculum, 2) Assessment, and 3) SERU data which includes the responses to the SLO questions. A retreat will take place in June and the final documents will be sent this summer.

#### Educational Advising Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative

The University joined the Student Success Collaborative which allows access to software on student success. The University is undergoing a deep curricular analysis of two majors and if it is successful, the University will become a full member and offer the same analysis for every major. He will have more to report on this next year.

#### Legislative Metrics and Disclosures

Last year the legislature gave the University three system-wide metrics to hit:

- Increase by one percent the 4, 5, and 6-year graduate rates, as an average over three years
- Decrease administrative costs by \$15 million
- Increase by three percent licensing disclosures

There were also two Twin Cities metrics:

- Increase by two percent the total number of STEM degrees awarded
- Increase by one percent the 4, 5, and 6-year graduate rates, as an average over three years, for low-income students

All of these targets were achieved. There is a sense from the legislature that the graduation rate at the University should be similar to that for private institutions. However he noted that the University's 4-year graduation rate is higher than that of Madison.

## **4. DISCUSSION OF EVALUATION OF TEACHING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Ole Gram, from the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, and Tom Dohm, from the Office of Measurement Services (OMS), joined the meeting to discuss evaluation of teaching after a new policy was implemented last year.

Ole Gram noted that students have been asking for more information to be released to them for years. There was a section of the previous evaluation sheet, the Student Release Questions (SRQs), that were put in place 10 years ago. However, because of the way that most of the questions were worded, referring to the faculty member instead of the course, release of the data required an opt-in from the instructor. However only about three percent of instructor provided this release. Additionally, some of the SRTs asked the same information as was in the core questions.

Work began in 2013 to rework the form. Questions were separated by those referring to the instructor and those referring to the course. Instructor questions were left on the core question list while course questions were separated and able to be automatically released to students. The compromise was 11 questions – five about the instructor and the same as the old core questions and six about the course which would be released. The open-ended question was also changed to invite comments and questions, and the demographic information was removed. A new software, eXplorance Blue, was also purchased.

Tom Dohm stated that the new software was necessary as the in-house system was falling apart. The Academic Health Center's site license for CourseEval was also ending so now there will be one system for the Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, and Rochester. A goal of the update was also

to reduce paper. The new software allows the evaluations to be scanned and uploaded for reporting, and is integrated with Moodle.

Online evaluations are available in the last two weeks of a class and the paper form is still distributed on the last class day. The new software is integrated with PeopleSoft to allow email reminders to be sent.

The questions about the course will be available to students, but the mechanism for this distribution is still being worked on and will not be set until fall. Questions about the instructor are sent to the instructor and the designated department chair. Open-ended questions are only sent to the instructor unless the department chair is authorized to see them. Previously if there were less than five responses for a course, no report was generated but this caused confusion for instructors. Now, all responses will be released with a warning about small sample size.

He noted that Morris and the Law School will be moving to the standard evaluation form, but the Medical School and Pharmacy will still be customized due to accreditation requirements.

73 percent of evaluations are still completed on paper as the online response rate is still low. However the new software allows students to respond on mobile devices and can track what type of device is being used.

Q: Can student grades be withheld until they complete an evaluation?

A: This would be a change in policy, and has costs to it, but it would likely be very effective.

Q: Will instructors and department chairs each receive a copy of the instructors responses?

A: This process has not yet been determined.

Q: How are evaluations done in team-taught courses?

A: If a course is set-up with separate instructors, then there will be responses sent to each instructor. Otherwise the responses are just sent to the one instructor who owns the course.

Q: For a course that was less than the full semester, the evaluation was sent to students early. Can this be changed?

A: OMS works with non-traditional courses to handle when the online evaluation is sent since it is triggered by data within PeopleSoft. If the evaluation is being done on paper, then the instructor can control when it is distributed.

Q: If evaluations are handed out in class, but a student is out that day, can they still complete an evaluation?

A: Yes. The department contact has the forms and they can still be completed until grades are entered.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

Professor Wick noted that in order for a student to graduate with honors, they must take their last 60 credits at the University. She had been forwarded a question asking why this 60 credit requirement is necessary. The response she had heard is that there is no way to tell how courses at other institutions were graded so it is necessary for a student to complete these courses at the University. A member noted that a dean can always make an exception if it is warranted.

With no further business, Professor Wick thanked the members for their service this year and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert  
University Senate