

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, February 18, 1998
1:00 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Elayne Donahue, Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Robert Leik, Palmer Rogers, Tina Rovick, Craig Swan

Regrets: Avram Bar-Cohen, Thomas Johnson, Judith Martin, Adam Miller, Kathleen Newell, William Van Essendelft, Gayle Graham Yates

Absent: Kevin Nicholson, Jessie Jo Roos

Guests: Susan Van Voorhis (Registrar)

[In these minutes: NCAA certification; policy on missed class days for athletes; student evaluation of teaching; required retention period for exams; role of SCEP in classroom renovation; exam times; refusal to turn in an exam; academy of distinguished teachers]

1. NCAA Certification

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:00 and asked Dr. Donahue to report on the NCAA certification process.

NCAA certification occurs every five years, parallels accreditation, and is required to be an NCAA-approved institution. It reviews student academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and so on. The review takes place over the next year.

The chair of the review committee will be Professor William Flanigan, former chair of the Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics; Professor Flanigan wrote to Professor Koch about the role that this Committee should play. Professor Koch reported that of the four subcommittees at work, the one dealing with academic integrity was the only one of interest to SCEP. Professor Flanigan will provide information on how SCEP can participate.

It was noted that both Dr. Donahue and Dr. Hendel are on the subcommittee, and they agreed to serve as liaisons with SCEP.

2. Missed Class Days for Athletes

Professor Koch reported on a letter she had received from Mr. Schemmel, Associate Director of Men's Athletics, concerning the policy on missed class days and the conversion to semesters. The current

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policy provides that student-athletes may miss no more than 6 days per quarter; the proposal would increase that to 9 days for a semester (with a total per academic year of 18 days under either system).

Professor Koch said she was concerned about students possibly missing nearly two weeks of classes, and obtained data about the actual number of missed class days for each men's athletic team. Most teams do not miss anywhere near the 6 days now allowed; the major problems are in baseball, golf, and track. Baseball and golf would remain a problem with semesters, with hockey and track slightly less of a problem.

Following brief discussion, and given that most teams do not miss the maximum number of days, the Committee concluded it would concur with the recommendation to raise the limit to 9 days, with the proviso that no team could miss more than two class days in any one week.

3. Student Evaluation of Teaching

Dr. Hendel next distributed a mock-up of one of the teaching evaluation forms, including the 10 questions (that were subsequently approved by the Senate). He also distributed information about the perceived usefulness of the questions (from the standpoint of students and of instructors) and tables illustrating how little overlap there is between the 10 questions and the questions already used.

Dr. Hendel assured the Committee, in response to a comment, that there will remain space for individual student comments on all forms.

4. Retention of Exams and Papers

Professor Koch distributed to the Committee an email asking if there is a Senate policy concerning how long departments must retain copies of exams. Practices appear to vary across the University. It appears there is no Senate policy.

Professor Koch said she would contact the General Counsel's office to find out what advice they might give.

5. Classroom Renovation

It has been recommended by the Subcommittee on Facilities Management that SCEP play a role as the advisory group to a "classroom czar" that the Subcommittee is recommending be appointed to direct the renovation and remodeling of centrally-scheduled classrooms.

The Committee observed that those who use the classrooms should be the ones consulted, that chairs should be involved, and the possible use of the student evaluation data concerning facilities to set remodeling priorities. It was agreed that the Committee wished a more specific proposal for the role it might play before it reached any decision.

6. Exam Times

Professor Koch reported that she had been informed of student complaints about classes where

exams during the term were scheduled outside of the regular class meeting time (usually evenings). This has caused conflicts for the students when they have an evening class; they are forced to choose between taking the exam or going to class. The evening exam times are in some cases announced in the syllabus. It also appears that the number of outside-class time exams may be increasing.

One Committee member suggested this should not be permitted, and that there is an implicit contract between the student and the University about the time and place of an exam. On the other hand, there may be reasons to change. This is not the same as field work, or time-arranged classes, it was said.

It was agreed the Committee would gather information about the specific courses requiring evening exams and consider whether a policy should be adopted.

7. Refusal to Turn in Exams

Professor Koch reported she had received an email from a faculty member inquiring what to do about students who would not turn in their exams at the end of a final exam period and wanted to know if there was a policy to cover this. Committee members agreed that no policy was needed, and that when an instructor announces the exam is over, students who do not turn them in will be considered not to have taken the exam, and graded accordingly.

8. Twin Cities Undergraduate Curriculum Subcommittee

The Committee approved the language creating the subcommittee and a letter from Professor Koch calling for nominations from the college curriculum committees.

9. Academy of Distinguished Teachers

The Committee took up the academy once again. Some of the past winners have expressed dissatisfaction with the proposition that the academy will only consist of future winners of the award, and were dismayed that if they were to be members of the academy, they would have to reapply, even though they have already been recognized once. To have only new members admitted would also devalue the award for past winners. Other Committee members were also uncomfortable with the idea of only admitting new Morse and graduate/professional award winners.

Professor Koch adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand