

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, April 9, 2008
1:30 – 3:30
238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Cathrine Wambach (chair), LeAnn Alstadt, William Bart, (George Green for) Gail Dubrow, John Kieffer, April Knutson, Richard McCormick, Robert McMaster, Claudia Neuhauser, Peh Ng, Jane Phillips, Emily Ronning, Molly Tolzmann, Joel Weinsheimer, David Zeller

Absent: James Leger, Paul Siliciano, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Douglas Wangenstein

Guests: Tina Falkner (Office of the Registrar)

[In these minutes: policy revisions]

Policy Revisions

Professor Wambach convened the meeting at 1:30 and announced that the meeting would be devoted to reviewing the policy reorganization and revisions recommended by the joint SCEP/FCC subcommittee.

Highlights of the discussion follow.

-- The Committee agreed to new language in the syllabus policy governing extra credit: "If an instructor wishes to offer what is commonly known as extra credit opportunities for students in a class to allow them to improve their grade, those opportunities must be announced and made available to all students. This provision does not address the option of increasing the number of credits a student may earn for the course."

-- The Committee agreed to more specific language governing the use of the I (Incomplete) for a course (new language in brackets): "The I shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, the student [who has successfully completed a substantial portion of the course's work] was prevented from completing the work of the course on time." If a student stops coming to the class early in the semester, he or she should withdraw from the course and receive a W. The new language is intended to back up instructors who do not wish to give an I when a student has only done a small amount of work in the course, Professor Wambach said.

-- The Committee also revised other language about the I. The current language reads "Receipt of an I in a course does not entitle a student to take the course a second time without paying tuition. The revised version reads: "Receipt of an I in a course does not create an entitlement for

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a student to take the course a second time." Some sciences allow a student to do some make-up work for a course without re-registering or re-enrolling. The Committee concluded that given tuition banding (with all credits after 13 the same price), the question of paying additional tuition to re-enroll is probably moot.

One related question was whether an instructor, in reaching a written agreement with a student about completion of work to change an I to a grade, can bind another instructor (who may be teaching the course in the future when the student seeks to complete the work). The Committee concluded this was probably not a big problem and agreed that the department would have to be the ultimate guarantor of the ability of the student to complete the work in accord with any written agreement.

-- The Committee agreed to delete language proposed by the subcommittee: "Advisor permission must be obtained before any student may register for a course a third or subsequent time (i.e., after receiving either a grade or a W)." The subcommittee was trying to design a mechanism to ensure that someone (an advisor) would intervene when a student repeatedly tries to take a course (typically to meet major requirements), Professor Wambach agreed, but it may not be enforceable. Professor McCormick said he was not sure the Committee could mandate a workload change for advisors and suggested that advisors need to talk about the proposal, both among themselves and with their supervisors and deans' offices. Ms. VanVoorhis said she was not sure how her office could enforce the proposed rule and suggested the Committee not move too fast on it. The larger issue is making advisors systematically more responsive to students with problems, Professor McCormick said, which is something advisors themselves are trying to do; it is not clear an additional policy from this Committee is the way to address the problem. Ms. VanVoorhis said she would bring the proposal and the problem to the advisors group and to the Council of Undergraduate Deans and then back to the Committee.

-- The Committee approved without discussion or dissent the proposed revisions to the language governing calendars, which would now read as follows:

1. There shall be two semesters, each of which shall include a minimum of 70 days of instruction, a maximum of 75 days of instruction, and approximately one week of final examinations (including Saturdays but not Sundays).
2. For the fall semester, the exam period shall end not later than December 23.
3. Departments may schedule a three-week intersession following the end of the spring semester and before the first summer term, using Summer Session compensation and tuition practices. No department shall be obligated to offer courses or academic work during this three-week term.
4. There shall be a standard eight-week summer session. No department shall be obligated to offer courses or academic work during this eight week session. Departments and programs may deliver courses over either shorter or longer periods of time and with starting and ending dates that differ from the standard eight-week session.

5. Colleges and campuses may authorize courses shorter than the term of enrollment, subject to the approval of appropriate curriculum review committees.

6. All calendars and any subsequent revisions or exceptions must be approved by the Faculty Senate.

-- The Committee agreed to a revision in the language governing examinations offered during the term that are held outside of the regular class hours (the new language is in brackets): 2. Accommodation must be provided [by the examining department] to any student who encounters an academic conflict, such as between an examination scheduled outside of regular class time and the regular class period of another course, or if two exams are scheduled to be held simultaneously outside of regular class time.

-- Similarly, the Committee approved a change in language concerning final examinations that last more than three hours (new language in brackets): 2. Final examinations normally shall be two (clock) hours long; instructors may schedule longer examinations with the approval of their department. Instructors and departments must decide in advance of scheduling a course if the examination is to exceed two hours. Any examinations which exceed two hours must be noted in the class schedule, in order that students are informed and can [try to] accommodate the longer examination in their schedule of final examinations. [Accommodation must be provided by the examining department to any student who encounters a conflict with another final examination because of this lengthened examination time.]

-- The Committee also agreed that the language to change the locus of authority for authorizing a change in the time of a scheduled final examination (providing that the authority rests with the appropriate academic officer on each campus, rather than with the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education.

-- The Committee also reconfirmed the existing language in the policy concerning a student who has three (or more) final examinations in one calendar day: it is one calendar day, not 24 hours.

Professor Wambach said the Committee would continue with its consideration of policy revisions at future meetings and adjourned this one at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota