

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, April 8, 2009
2:00 – 4:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Cathrine Wambach (chair), Joseph Bartolotta, LeAnn Alstadt, Norman Chervany, (George Green for) Gail Dubrow, Megan Evans, April Knutson, James Leger, Robert McMaster, Kristen Nelson, Peh Ng, Jane Phillips, Paul Siliciano, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Erin Sperling, Molly Tolzmann, Michael Wade

Absent: Shawn Friedland, Elaine Tarone

Guests: Professor Will Durfee, Pamela Flash (Writing Board); Susan Van Voorhis (Academic Support Resources)

[In these minutes: (1) The Writing Board (Twin Cities campus); (2) credit and degree requirements and graduation rates; (3) due date for grades]

1. The Writing Board (Twin Cities Campus)

Professor Wambach convened the meeting at 2:00 and welcomed Professor Durfee and Ms. Flash to provide an update on the Writing Board.

Professor Durfee began by thanking the Committee for the work it did in revising the undergraduate-education policies. He said he was astounded at the work that was entailed but the results have led to greater clarity in the policies.

He serves as chair of the new campus Writing Board, Professor Durfee said, and he provided an overview of where things now stand with undergraduate writing. At present the undergraduate writing requirement is part of the responsibility of the Campus Writing Board, a subcommittee of the Council on Liberal Education (CLE); students must complete one or two freshman writing courses and four writing-intensive courses, of which two must be upper division and one must be in the student's major.

In February of 2006 the strategic-positioning task force on undergraduate reform of writing (co-chaired by Professors Laura Gurak and Donald Ross) made four recommendations. One, there should be writing-enriched baccalaureate degrees ("the University should endorse writing-enriched baccalaureate degrees. Faculty in each major should create a comprehensive curriculum of writing-enriched courses based on both central guidelines for effective writing instruction and departmental assessment of writing objectives"); two, there was need for strong central leadership across the University ("strengthening the Provost's office's active, centralized support for all elements of writing instruction and assessment"); three, there should be a new academic department of Writing Studies ("because an excellent undergraduate writing program depends on rigorous research and scholarship,

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

we recommend the University create a new university-wide academic unit in Writing Studies); and four, campus-wide student support ("we recommend that the University increase support for and coordination among existing writing centers, learning centers, libraries, and other student support services, in order to make one-to-one writing instruction more widely available to students").

The results of the recommendations are that the Department of Writing Studies was established in CLA and it houses the first-year writing program; the Center for Writing's Student Writing Support program consolidated writing services for undergraduate and graduate students; there is a writing-enriched curriculum project; and there is a campus Writing Board.

The Campus Writing Board was established by Vice Provost McMaster in March, 2008 and was charged to provide expertise to the Vice Provost on writing, to evaluate and approve department Writing Plans, to evaluate and approve writing-intensive courses, to provide guidance on policy issues to this Committee and the Senate, to help integrate the Student Learning Objectives into Writing Plans, and to coordinate with the Council on Liberal Education on writing in the liberal-education requirements.

The major concerns of the Writing Board thus far have been approving Writing Plans generated by units piloting the Writing-Enriched Curriculum program, and approving and the writing-intensive courses. By policy, writing-intensive courses are approved by CLE; by agreement with CLE, the Writing Board actually approves them, an arrangement that has worked out well. The Writing Board has received a steady stream of proposals for writing-intensive courses and they have been promised that liberal-education courses that are also writing-intensive will be submitted to the Writing Board for approval—although they have not seen a lot of the latter up to now. There are criteria for designating writing-intensive courses, but for the Writing Board the bottom line is that writing instruction is an integral part of the course and one of the course objectives is that students write better as a result of taking the course.

Student Writing Support is housed in the Center for Writing's office in Nicholson Hall, in several satellite locations, and online, Professor Durfee reported. In fall 2008, the service provided 5395 consultations, of which 84% were to undergraduates and 16% to graduate students. They had to turn away 550 requests for consultation, so it appears there are more students who want to use the service than the service is able to assist. This has happened without any "marketing" of the service. Clearly something good is going on and students view writing support as a valuable resource.

As for the Writing-Enriched Curriculum (WEC), the University is running a three-year pilot study with funds from the Bush Foundation; Pamela Flash and Vice Provost McMaster are co-PIs, Professor Durfee told the Committee. They are working with 20 departments to create Undergraduate Writing Plans, implement them and assess them. The WEC project evolves from the writing-intensive requirement that has been in place since 1999. In 2005 and 2006 the Provost's Writing Task force found that although some amazing work had been done in some units, writing instruction was not, by and large, saturating the undergraduate curricula as comprehensively as it should, via the writing-intensive requirement. The Bush Foundation was receptive to the idea that intentional infusion of meaningful writing instruction necessitates the involvement of faculty in discussions about writing expectations. Specifically, faculty need to address the questions: "What does writing look like in this discipline?" and "With what writing abilities should our undergraduate majors graduate?" They are now working with 17 departments to implement the writing-enriched curriculum, in three phases:

create the plan, implement it, and then revise it as needed. Five plans have been approved and four are in process (they will be discussed during the May 26th CWB meeting), and they have collected 1100 undergraduate writing samples to help assess changes. They have also distributed surveys to undergraduates, students, and professional affiliates in disciplinary areas. The units developing the curricula were selected for their diversity: big and small, engineering and arts and sciences, some that embrace a writing-intensive curriculum and some that scoff at it.

They have just hired an evaluator (a postdoc in the College of Education and Human Development) who will assess and communicate what has happened in the pilot units. There will be an all-day writing-enriched-curriculum symposium on May 13 to describe the program to the University that will include faculty liaisons who will show the diverse programs that have been implemented. A national speaker will put the University's programs in context (there are a lot of eyes on the University's plans). There will also be a town-meeting discussion that he will chair, Professor Durfee said, that will include faculty and administrators that will focus on what has been learned and what comes next.

Ms. Alstadt asked for an example of how a department changed its writing-intensive courses. Ms. Flash said it was not just a matter of changing those courses; departments are addressing their basic plan for writing (including writing-intensive courses and those that are not), what writing should look like in their field, and where writing-intensive courses are most strategically positioned within a curriculum. For example, Mechanical Engineering is focusing on specific courses at the 2XXX and 3XXX level and has hired a TA to develop a series of small style manuals for mechanical-engineering writing. So far it seems successful with the students.

Professor Chervany asked about the other nine departments, if 17 are to be pilot programs and if five have been approved and four are in process. They are coming, Ms. Flash said; it takes time to work them through the process, and their engagement is staged (in the first year five departments were brought in, in the second year twelve departments, and so forth).

Professor Leger said this was extremely good work and asked if it would be replicated in every department. Is that the plan, or an option? This is a pilot, Ms. Flash said. The idea is to move toward what the strategic-positioning task force recommended, which is to work toward greater integration of writing in the curriculum in every discipline that is writing-intensive. The Campus Writing Board and Office of Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education are discussing what a rollout would look like and what a sensible direction is. She said they would welcome the Committee's views.

Do they plan that every department will have a writing-enriched curriculum, Professor Leger repeated. There could be clusters of departments or an entire college, Ms. Flash said. Will every student have an opportunity to take a writing-enriched curriculum in the major, Professor Leger inquired. They will, Ms. Flash said, if this project is approved for full-implementation. It will be important to set up plans that can co-exist with current requirements, Professor Durfee said, because students may transfer between majors that are and are not part of the WEC program.

In the transition period, when there are no funds after the two years of pilot projects, how will writing-intensive courses and the writing-enriched curriculum co-exist, Dean Green asked. If a

department has a writing-enriched curriculum, will students not be required to take writing-intensive courses? The requirements cannot be doubled. If a student changed majors, he or she could get caught in different requirements. They are thinking about that, Ms. Flash said. It is a problem making two different models co-exist, Vice Provost McMaster acknowledged. He has asked the Writing Board to envision a writing-enriched curriculum with writing-intensive courses embedded in it. If a student changes majors, he or she could take writing-intensive courses as part of the writing plan in the new major. The question is how to enable students move around at the University, but they are not there yet.

What about community-college transfer students, Dean Green asked? They could fulfill the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, and many community colleges have writing-intensive courses, Dr. McMaster said. The University will have to deal with both internal and external transfer students. Ms. Flash said the Writing Board is looking at whether the writing-intensive guidelines should change; the requirement will probably remain but the guidelines could be changed. By campus policy students must take four writing-intensive courses, Dr. McMaster observed; if that is to be changed, the proposal must be brought back through the Faculty Senate. At present the writing-intensive requirement co-exists with writing-enriched curricula, but the writing-intensive requirement is flexible and allows for the enriched curriculum. Ms. Flash said they wanted this to be a shared endeavor, to infuse writing in the curriculum but to work within existing guidelines—this is not intended to be a revolution, she commented.

Many transfer students do not select their major immediately, Dean Green observed, but they may come with writing experience. Or they may change majors. So a major-driven strategy must accommodate students who have already completed a lot of writing courses.

Ms. Phillips asked for an example of a department that does not have such a linear curriculum as an engineering program. Ms. Flash said that History identified writing abilities by level in the first and fourth year and changed courses to be developmentally-appropriate by level. In the more "flat" curricula, they determined there should be thresholds each year that are communicated to faculty.

Professor Chervany asked what percentage of undergraduates is covered by the 20 departments doing the pilot program. The writing-enriched curriculum appears to be the gold standard, he said; if a department adopts such a curriculum, with writing-intensive courses embedded in it, that would be the model. Ms. Flash said she did not know the percentage.

Ms. Alstadt said she thought these were really interesting ideas and commented that she came from a high school where writing was not discussed and wished she had had more writing instruction. What has been the student reaction to these plans and how will it be tracked? Ms. Flash said students take an online survey and they are still in the cycle of assessment. There will also be focus groups. What they hear from students is that some are aware of the program and some are not but most believe it a good idea. They recognize writing is important. The WEC staff collects writing samples from classes and will then re-sample later to look at how writing assignments have changed. There are more student data coming in.

Professor Wambach thanked Professor Durfee and Ms. Flash for joining the Committee and making their report.

2. Credit and Degree Requirements and Graduation Rates

Professor Wambach turned now to Vice Provost McMaster to lead a discussion of the University's credit and degree requirements and their effect on graduation rates. She noted that he has been working on audits of undergraduate majors to learn why students in some fields graduate more quickly and some take longer. He has come to inform the Committee and to apprise it of any policy implications.

Vice Provost McMaster said that his office has been looking at the curriculum, work that stems from the financial aid working group last year that examined issues related to the curriculum, retention, and graduation. There was a sense in the working group that the curriculum is part of the problem in keeping students at the University for more than four years. There are places where they must dig deeper to learn if the time to degree is a curriculum problem.

Dr. McMaster alluded to a number of factors that may come into play. He has seen data indicating that in some departments, over 50% of students have accumulated 150 credits and have not graduated in four years. The University requires four writing-intensive courses, which could be too many because the Council on Liberal Education has seen a large number of requests for exemptions. The new liberal-education requirements have increased by one the number of required courses by one (seven core and five themes, compared to seven core and four themes previously), and while students can continue to "double dip," courses may no longer fulfill two themes. If students do not receive good advising, they may need to take longer to get their degrees—especially in engineering and other more "rigid" curricula.

The Provost's office is conducting a complete University curriculum review, Dr. McMaster reported, and asked the deans for information about where there might be bottlenecks (e.g., the requirement of a senior project in CLA means some students do not finish on time). They are also looking at advising ratios. They hope to complete the curriculum report over the summer and will speak to several issues: complexity versus simplicity in the curriculum, advising, accreditation, prerequisites, and transfer of students across colleges and departments. They will have specific examples of problems.

The President is very interested in learning if the curriculum is part of the problem with graduation rates, Dr. McMaster said.

Ms. Phillips asked if there is a potential plan to DO something about bottleneck courses. They can't say students need not take the courses (e.g., chemistry)—students MUST take it. Will they move money around? That is part of the solution, Dr. McMaster said. Could some chemistry be online? That could be the solution to the four-year graduation rate but it might not provide the best education, Professor Nelson commented. There is St. Paul space to help with the bottleneck in chemistry.

Professor Wade asked if he is looking at data related to students who change majors. Dr. McMaster said he is not; the data are poor in that regard and the problem varies by transfer—some do not cost a student time and some do.

Professor Siliciano said the review is a good idea but that it may not be easy to understand the requirements in the real world of the various disciplines. In his field, biochemistry, it could be possible to substitute courses for different tracks. They might need people to interpret the requirements. Where they see problems they will drill down and talk with the departments, Dr. McMaster responded. Why, for example, in one major do half of the students graduate with 150 credits? Right now they have no hard data but they need to figure out what is going on. It is unclear why Minnesota has a lower graduation rate than its peers when they all have the same type of students. He said it seems pretty clear the problem may be embedded in the curriculum.

Dr. Sperling asked if they are looking at the curricula at other institutions, and at different kinds of curricula. They are, Dr. McMaster said. For example, why, in engineering, do Purdue and Illinois have much higher four-year graduation rates than Minnesota? Because of liberal education requirements? The nature of the curriculum? (They all have to meet the same accrediting standards, so that seems an unlikely cause.) Professor Leger recalled that about ten years ago they invested a lot of effort in non-curricular issues (e.g., perhaps the graduation rate is lower because this is an urban campus, unlike many of Minnesota's peer institutions). Are there any data to show that the University has achieved parity with its peers? There could be residual non-curricular issues involved. Vice Provost McMaster said that was a good point and that as they dig into the problems, they will try to tease out the sources of variation.

Professor Wade said he believed there are more part-time students at Minnesota because there are more opportunities to get jobs. That has been changing, Dr. McMaster said; most students at the University are now full time. The 13-credit rule helped.

Ms. Alstadt said her first thought was that they can look at the curriculum all they want but they won't learn what the problems are until they talk with students in their fifth and sixth years. They should ask seniors and advisors why there is a problem. Dr. McMaster said that was an excellent suggestion. Professor Chervany followed up by suggesting a small number of case studies of students who took longer and those who did not.

Vice Provost McMaster noted that Ms. Van Voorhis is looking at the data major by major to learn for each the percentage of students who completed their degree on time. Ms. Van Voorhis said she is looking at students who graduate with 120 credits; she has seen double-dipping and some exemptions from requirements. If a student does not double-dip, it can take longer. The grad planner is helping a lot of students.

One feature of a large institution, Professor Wambach said, is students must take courses in more than one department and may not figure out how to do so when both required courses are scheduled at the same time. He might see if that is a problem and how it could be addressed, she suggested to Dr. McMaster. Ms. Van Voorhis said they work with departments when they know of such conflicts, but they don't always know.

Ms. Alstadt said she was a peer advisor to help freshman register, and she told them to pack into double-dipping courses. But as those courses fill up, students struggle to find courses in the major, depending on where they fall in the registration queue. And certain majors want the liberal-education courses spread out over all four years while others want students to complete them in the first two years, Ms. Van Voorhis added.

Professor Siliciano asked Ms. Van Voorhis if she had data on students who finished in four years who had PSEO credits. Ms. Van Voorhis said she looked at students who did NOT have PSEO credits, and she also learned that the PSEO credits did not help students graduate in four years (they just ended up with more credits at graduation).

Ms. Phillips asked if part of the problem is that anyone must even talk about double-dipping? She recalled that when she was at Wisconsin, they did not have double-dipping. Not many schools have it, Ms. Van Voorhis said. That is his objection to the liberal-education requirements, Professor Leger said. Professor Wambach said she continues to wonder about the themes; they seem like good ideas, but why cannot they be talked about in the majors? Cannot departments be instructed to work the themes into their courses? Are they part of the student-learning outcomes, Ms. Phillips asked? They are, Dr. McMaster said, and because CLE is in the middle of curriculum recertification, they are not going to backtrack on the themes now.

Professor Leger inquired of Ms. Van Voorhis when students get out of synchronization for graduation in four years. She said she would provide to the Committee information on where students are in years four, five, and six, by major (but she will not know if students have changed majors). Professor Leger said it is his sense that students are in good shape their first year and that the problems come later. The data support that view, Dr. McMaster said.

There could be an intersection of problems, Professor Chervany observed. With declining resources, there are larger sections, so fewer degrees of freedom for students because it may be that three sections have been collapsed into one. He said he sees a permanent change toward larger classes, which in turn leads to a loss of flexibility for students. Instead of sections with 45 and 60 students, there will be one section with 120 students. And if other colleges don't know about those changes, Ms. Phillips added, they cannot change fast enough to accommodate the changes elsewhere—in biology, they rely on chemistry to stay the same. Even within colleges there isn't always good coordination of courses, Professor Siliciano pointed out; it would be great to have coordination between colleges so students could take required courses the same semester. That is difficult to accomplish because they do not know what the curriculum requirements are, Ms. Van Voorhis responded.

Dr. Sperling responded to Professor Wambach's point by saying that building themes into majors can lead to silos, which defeats the purpose of liberal-education requirements. If students cannot double-dip at other schools, what are their graduation rates? As an advisor, she was told to advertise the possibility of double-dipping. There are three "buckets" of requirements, Ms. Van Voorhis said: liberal-education, major, and some have elective rules. They do not worry about double-dipping, and institutions with a smaller liberal-education core have higher graduation rates. And those graduates go to professional schools, get jobs, etc., Ms. Phillips commented; she said she was not sure Minnesota had a better system.

Perhaps students here take more time to write and reflect about liberal education, Dr. Knutson said. The University should not start with the premise that students should graduate in four years. Rather, it should encourage the pursuit of the well-thought-out liberal education requirements that faculty committees have approved. Dr. McMaster agreed but said that the cost of education is so high, the need to take a fifth or sixth year creates additional debt for students. National rankings are also

affected by graduation rates. So the University wants to be sure that students graduate in a timely manner. Those who leave with \$20,000 in debt would agree, Ms. Van Voorhis commented. And that is also why the University wants to admit students who it has a high certainty it can get through.

The grad planner helps, Professor Ng said. What percentage of students use it? Ms. Van Voorhis said she didn't have the number with her, and it has only been available for two years. It was only last year that they showed freshmen how to use it, and her office is now receiving data on whether students request courses for which they planned. Dr. McMaster said he was surprised to learn that one college does not use the grad planner because it believes there are better tools available. He said he finds that troubling.

Professor Nelson said that her college did a major curriculum change when the University changed to semesters so that most students are done with degree requirements by their junior year—and then they decide to double major in order to better ensure themselves a job in a challenging economy. Ms. Van Voorhis said she would provide data on double majors.

Ms. Alstadt, apropos Dr. Knutson's point, said she is a big advocate of students taking their time and doing the liberal arts, but she knows it is important that students have the option to complete a degree in four years and get into the workforce because of debt or because they lose financial aid after four years. It would be a shame if students are held back because they cannot get the classes they need. She added that the grad planner is a great tool and was surprised to learn there are departments that do not use it.

Ms. Evans observed that the cost of education is spiraling up year after year, which turns her stomach, especially for students who go into fields that do not pay a lot. Is there a point by which a student must change a major? She suggested the University track when students do so. One problem with graduation rates may be students who make late changes in major, Dr. McMaster said. They have thought about an advising center to help students stuck between majors or colleges (although funding for such advising is in jeopardy).

Bottleneck courses require additional staffing and space, Mr. Bartolotta said; has there been discussion of digital classrooms? Classrooms themselves have not come up as a problem, Dr. McMaster said; the Office of Classroom Management has been doing a good job, but they will talk with Vice Provost Wahlstrom at some point (she is responsible for online courses/e-education).

Professor Siliciano said he wished students were required to meet with a professional adviser more than twice; it should be once per year. Ms. Van Voorhis noted that an advisor can always impose an "advisor hold" on a student's record, but she would want to be sure that they are advising the students, not imposing the hold but not offering the advising. Ms. Phillips said that student services in her college could not handle the advising load if they were required to see students more often. Professor Siliciano said that faculty are generally lousy at offering advice on courses, so students make their own decisions and make mistakes. Dr. McMaster said the issue is worth Committee discussion.

Professor Wambach thanked Vice Provost McMaster for leading the discussion.

3. Due Date for Grades

Professor Wambach next reported that Professor Chervany and Ms. Phillips had both expressed an interest in discussing the due date for grades and whether there would be an educational benefit to allowing a longer time for grading. When the Committee talked about this recently, there was concern about creating perverse incentives: are finals less comprehensive because of the need to meet the grading due –date deadline? What data would the Committee want to help inform its decision?

Ms. Van Voorhis provided a summary of the issues to the Committee:

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Information gathered from collegiate student services staff.

Students are always anxious to find out their grades for courses. In addition, a number of important processes depend on final grades. The impact of late grades can be very serious and disadvantage a student. Students can:

- face probation or suspension by their college
- face probation or suspension of financial aid
- lose athletic eligibility
- lose scholarships
- face delay of graduation
- face delay of tuition reimbursement
- risk termination of Veteran's Administration benefits
- risk loss of honors status
- have their admission to a graduate program postponed
- lose their good-student insurance discount
- lose job opportunities
- non-compliance of SEVIS regulations for international students
- students who are teachers may be prevented from professional lane changes

Additional information for consideration:

- Students may be attending classes the next term that have yet to be suspended due to shortened processing and appeal time
- Students may be attending the subsequent portion of a sequenced course, but should not be because they did not successfully complete the first part
- Student services staff would need to work overtime to complete all necessary processing between fall and spring semester (increased administrative costs)
- Delay in clearing students that have graduated
- Not revenue neutral as students may not be suspended (or dropped from a sequenced course) until after the drop/add period has passed
- Deadlines for disbursing financial aid, certifying for eligibility, lane change eligibility set by outside entity
- If a faculty member has a final exam late in the final exam period, and has a valid pedagogical reason for administering a final exam that requires extra time to evaluate he/she can appeal to have the final moved earlier in the week to accommodate this need

AAU Schools grade deadlines:

- 31 schools – grades due within 72 hours or less (many schools include weekends)
- 6 schools – 4-5 days
 - do not suspend students between fall and spring
 - registrar's office handles suspension before the Christmas break
 - no suspension appeals allowed
- Yale – Jan 1st unless a student is graduating, on academic probation, financial probation or international

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The deadline has been 72 hours for a long time, Ms. Phillips observed, but technology has changed, so that there is no longer a long lapse between the submission of grades and their availability to students. Grades are now submitted electronically and can be available to students the next day.

Many instructors do not turn in grades on time, Ms. Van Voorhis said; if her office could receive all grades on time, it might be worth talking about extending the deadline. Federal rules require that financial aid be dispersed ten days before the start of a term. Colleges cannot process eligibility until grades are turned in, and there are holidays and weekends to consider. They must also report student progress within 96 hours after grades are turned in. These requirements create problems for college staff in getting everything done (and deal with graduations as well). She said she would worry about extending the problems even longer.

Are the grades late because instructors don't turn them in or because they are spending time doing the grading, Ms. Phillips asked? Ms. Van Voorhis said it could be an educational issue, or faculty may not know when the deadline is. They could be still grading (this is not just a problem at the undergraduate level; it is also true for graduate and professional school courses). She noted that she just received the last grades for Fall Semester 2008 last week.

Professor Chervany said that his perspective is not whether faculty are meeting their responsibilities but rather if the deadline constrains the examination experience to something other than what it should be. There may be a powerful list of administrative reasons for the deadline, but he said he would be shocked if the three-day deadline did not affect the quality of exams. There needs to be a balance, he said. Ms. Phillips wondered if a five-day turnaround time would make any difference in the case of the reasons that Ms. Van Voorhis recited (separate from the problem of those who turn in grades late—a problem that must be dealt with because instructors are not meeting their responsibilities).

College staff have so much going on—orientation, degree clearances, etc.—that she worries if the grade due date is pushed out they may not be able to get all their work done. Perhaps it would be better to think about exemptions granted by the dean for faculty who want more time to grade exams, or to allow faculty who want to give more comprehensive exams to have earlier exams. She said she would prefer not to change policy for a small number of individuals but would rather allow exceptions.

The Committee noted that there is confusion about whether grades are due three days after the examination given in the course or three days after the final examination period ends. It is the latter, although many people likely believe it is three days after the final for the course.

Professor Wambach said she liked Ms. Van Voorhis's idea to have a policy that allows for an extension for grading in order to provide students good feedback; she said she would not favor moving final exams.

There are two separate problems at hand, Professor Chervany said: (1) the right balance between feedback to students and administrative requirements, and (2) those who turn in grades late. Someone should identify those who turn in late grades. (That is the responsibility of the department head, Professor Wade said.) Before any change in the policy is proposed, Professor Chervany said, he would like to know if faculty feel constrained by the deadline in the way they give examinations. He said he would like to see a small study, and said he would also like to ask students whether they believe their exams fairly assess what they learned and if they were provided adequate feedback on the exams. It is important to know if students say the exams are crappy or if they receive only minimal feedback. Are the two parties (students and/or faculty) troubled by the exams?

Professor Ng asked how long it takes to grade a regular (non-final) exam that's an hour long—a day? Two days? If a final is two hours long, does it take 7-10 days to grade? Dr. Knutson said she generally does not write on exams because students do not pick them up—but if a student wants to see his or her exam or have it returned, she makes an appointment and/or does write on it. Professor Chervany said he mails exams back to all students as a matter of course. Ms. Alstadt she knew of no teacher who did that. She said the deadline may not be a problem but if instructors are allowed to move exams to earlier in the week because they require a more reflective examination, students could have problems.

Professor Wambach said she has spoken with Vice Provost McMaster about using the PULSE survey to learn if faculty have a problem with the deadline or are constrained in the final exams they offer. But questions will need to be developed if that vehicle is to be used.

Professor Wambach adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

-- Gary Engstrand