

Curricular Affairs Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes for 22 October 2012

Voting members present: Rainer Newberry (Chair); Retchenda George-Bettisworth (audio); Karen Gustafson; Cindy Hardy; Sarah Hardy; David Henry; Todd Radenbaugh (audio).

Voting members absent: Ken Abramowicz; Diane McEachern.

Non-voting members present: Doug Goering (audio); Carol Gering; Libby Eddy (audio); Lillian Misel; Donald Crocker (audio); Alex Fitts; Jonathan Rosenberg (audio – part of the meeting). Jayne Harvie was present (taking notes.)

Guests: Sine Anahita; Kristi Giddings.

1. Approve minutes of last meeting

The minutes for October 8 were approved with a correction to meeting attendance. Retchenda was present via audio conference.

2. Suggested change to Syllabus policy....(from Curricular Review Committee):

“If the course includes project(s) which count for more than 20% of the grade, include general project description(s) and evaluation methods (e.g., rubric).” This would be added to section #10 (see last page of agenda.)

Rainer will modify the syllabus requirement list at #10 – Evaluation, with the proposed statement (above) for the next CAC meeting. There was general support for the addition.

3. GERC-related issues

a. J Rosenberg call in at ~ 9:15 for brief report

b. new GERC business as required (?)

Jonathan reported that the poll has been sent out, noting it closes on November 2. The magnitude of response will be analyzed for quantitative data and the comments for qualitative data. A model will be formulated from the data results, and the committee will add structure to this model, which will then go back before the faculty. Feedback from current students will be collected by means of focus groups. An exit survey is planned for graduating seniors, and for alumni.

[In response to being asked at the meeting, Alex reported to the CAC via email following the meeting that 135 survey responses had been received to date.]

4. CONTINUING EFFORTS AT ADDRESSING THE ATHLETIC ABSENCE PROBLEM

The problem in a nutshell: UAF requires as a condition to athletic scholarships that students skip class. UAF consequently has a moral obligation to (a) not punish said students and (b) provide them with an education. Providing each team with tutors is a logical, but financially problematic, solution. Pretending that there really isn't a problem has been the historical substitute. . The current wording leaves much to be desired.

Athletic subcommittee has a couple of different versions in the works...here's one

Attendance Policy Language (proposed by Dept of Athletics and modified by DS & RN)

You are expected to attend class regularly. Class attendance policies are set by individual instructors. If you must miss class, you are responsible for conferring with your instructor concerning your absences and discussing the possibilities for arranging alternative learning opportunities. Note that some departments automatically drop students who miss the first day of class and who fail to obtain their instructor's prior authorization for the absence.

If you are **required** to miss class to participate in official UAF-sponsored activities (e.g., NCAA athletic competition, ROTC), you must notify your instructor in writing by the first Wednesday of the semester. The notification should list all scheduled absences and bear an official UAF signature. If you enroll in a class after the first Wednesday of a semester, you must notify the instructor of all scheduled UAF-sponsored activities on or before the first class meeting following your enrollment in the class.

In cases of these **required** absences, you will not receive an automatic penalty to your attendance grade.// **OR ...** not receive an automatic penalty to the attendance portion of your grade. However, it is necessary that you discuss the provision of alternative learning opportunities with your instructors before the end of the University's regular drop/add period (usually the second Friday of the semester). If, after a good faith effort, you and your instructor cannot make suitable arrangements for alternative learning opportunities, you may drop the course and add another without penalty, provided that you drop within the normal drop/add period.

Attendance (CURRENT VERSION)

You are expected to attend classes regularly; unexcused absences may result in a failing grade. You must have prior written approval to miss the first class meeting or your instructor may drop you. You are responsible for conferring with your instructor concerning absences and the possibility of making up missed work.

If you are required to participate in either military exercises or UAF-sponsored activities that will cause you to miss class, you must notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible of your absence. You must notify your instructor(s) of all scheduled UAF-required absences for the semester (e.g., travel to athletic events) during the first week of classes.

You and your instructor will make a good-faith effort to make suitable arrangements to assure that you can make up classes and work you miss and are not penalized for your excused absence. If suitable arrangements cannot be made, you will be allowed to withdraw from the course without penalty. However, your instructor is under no obligation to allow you to make up missed work for unexcused absences or if notification and arrangements are not made in advance of the absence.

Here's another proposed version

You are expected to adhere to the class attendance policies set by your instructors. If you must miss class, you are responsible for conferring with your instructor concerning your absences and to discuss the possibilities for arranging alternative learning opportunities. Note that some departments automatically drop students who miss the first day of class and who fail to obtain their instructor's prior authorization for the absence.

If you are required to miss class to participate in official UAF-sponsored activities (e.g. NCAA athletic competitions, ROTC), you must notify your instructor in writing by the first Wednesday of the semester. The notification should list all scheduled absences, and bear an official UAF signature. The notification form must be signed by the instructor acknowledging the proposed absences and either agreeing to provide alternative learning opportunities or declining to do so.

Students who are required to miss class because of official UAF activities must discuss the provision of alternative learning opportunities with their instructors before the end of the drop/add period. Doing so will allow the student to drop the class and add another if, after a good faith effort, the instructor and the student cannot make suitable arrangements to cover the missed classes.

Sine Anahita, professor of sociology, and Kristi Giddings, associate athletic director, were present and participated in the discussion.

There was much discussion of the above policy language which focused on trying to strike a balance between the prerogative of faculty to set their own attendance policy in their courses and accommodating the fact that student athletes (and others involved in university sanctioned events, and ROTC) will have excused absences and an opportunity for making up coursework during the academic year. There is an inescapable contradiction between faculty prerogative and university-sanctioned absences from class.

Sine noted that requiring written notification by students to instructors by the first Friday after classes start was impractical. She presented reasons why the Wednesday before the last day to add/drop courses was more workable, including the flood of emails during the first week that classes start, the fact that many evening courses haven't yet met, and that Wednesday still provides time to drop and add courses. Sine urged the committee to consider trying the Wednesday deadline for at least a year.

That the hockey team almost made the playoffs last year was a fact that brought the importance of dealing with this issue now to the forefront. The hockey team may again make the playoffs this year, and the new restrictive policy English has implemented which conflicts with current policy, both make the issue too big to ignore any longer.

Cindy H. raised the issue of providing tutors to the students. Kristi noted that Division 2 athletics does not make tutoring a requirement as it is in Division 1; however, they would love to be able to provide tutors but it's a budgetary shortage matter. There was agreement that providing tutoring would be a big step in the right direction.

Much discussion followed about providing quality education, the circumstances faced by different levels of course offerings (large 100/200 level courses vs. smaller, more in-depth upper level courses), core course requirements, and the need to protect both students and faculty by means of the policy. Distance solutions were discussed. Karen asked if the idea of having an English course just for athletes had been discussed. Lillian M. noted that there are certain departments (business, psychology, for example) with a higher proportion of student athletes enrolled, and asked if those departments have been spoken with regarding these issues. Options for directed study and individual study were mentioned.

Alex F. commented that overall, student athlete GPAs and graduation rates are good. It's a small number of students who are truly affected.

Karen G. commented that UAF has community outreach and engagement as part of its mission. Out of class activities are a valuable type of learning.

Todd R. asked if there is any data available. Kristi G. responded that there is not. Rainer commented that the size of the problem doesn't change the fact that it must be dealt with.

David H. expressed general support for the proposed version of the policy that Sine had supplied (particularly the first line), but with issues raised by Kristi G., Sine will make some modifications and send a rewritten draft to Rainer for the next meeting.

Excerpt from Syllabus requirements...

9. Course policies:

Specify course rules, including your policies on attendance, tardiness, class participation, make-up exams, and plagiarism/academic integrity.

10. Evaluation:

Specify how students will be evaluated, what factors will be included, their relative value, and how they will be tabulated into grades (on a curve, absolute scores, etc.) Publicize UAF regulations with regard to the grades of "C" and below as applicable to this course. (Not required in the syllabus, but may be a convenient way to

Everyone REALLY REALLY screaming and shouting...followed by adjournment close to 10:30 am.