ACADEMIC POLICIES COMMITTEE

Friday, September 17, 2021
2:00pm – 3:30pm

https://csus.zoom.us/j/84707031069 (Meeting ID: 847 0703 1069)

MEMBERS, ATTENDED

Amber M. Gonzalez, Undergrad Studies, CoE (Chair)   Julie Fogarty, Civil Engineering, ECS
Lauren Kelly, Design   Raul Tadle, Economics, SSIS
Brandon Carey, Philosophy, A&L   Won Jung Kim, Accounting
Ali Behzadan, Math & Stats, NSM   Denys Brand, Psychology, SSIS
Tara Sharpp, Nursing, HHS   Matt Block, Physics and Astronomy, NSM

MEMBERS, NOT ATTENDED

James Fox, Library, LIB

NON-VOTING/EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS, ATTENDED

James (Jim) German, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Justin Gaulke, University Staff Assembly

NON-VOTING/EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS, NOT ATTENDED

Adam Rechs, Faculty Senate Chair
Danielle Ambrose, Office of the University Registrar
Steven Salcido, Student Affairs, AVP for Enrollment and Student Services
Miesha Donne' Williams, Director of Academic Advising, Student Affairs
Marcellene Watson-Derbigny, AVP Student Retention and Academic Success, Student Affairs
Vacant, VP for Academic Affairs
Vacant, Associated Students Inc., Graduate Representative
Vacant, Associated Students Inc, Undergraduate Representative

NON-VOTING GUESTS, ATTENDED

Kristen Anderegg, Liberal Studies Advisor, Academic Affairs
Michelle Faul, Associate Registrar

MINUTES

1. **Called to Order, 2:00pm**

2. **Agenda, approved**

3. **Open Forum**
   Brief period for members to raise issues related to the committee charge that are not on the meeting's agenda

- On Base forms – some forms are only available to students (e.g., GE petition) – this makes advising students challenging because staff/faculty advisors cannot help guide a student in filling out the form. How can we make these forms available to faculty and staff but only a student can submit it? Also, who was consulted in making decision as to which forms were student only vs faculty/staff only or who submitted the forms?
  - Jim German will work with Registrar and provide update at next meeting stating that some forms must originate with the student but will look into how faculty/staff/advisors can have viewable forms
    - Decisions had to be made rather quickly due to pandemic which limited the opportunity for consultation across many
- On Base forms – video tutorials – many of these forms (but not all) have accompanying instructional videos – would be great if all forms have accompanying instructional videos especially or those that the form is student only facing
  - Jim German will look into

- Excused absence policy – confusion about whether faculty can request documentation to verify an absence. See Appendix. In spring 2021 there was a directive from the President and/or Provost that faculty should not be asking to see medical records to "verify" a serious illness. Is missing class for a religious holiday an exceptional circumstance – it's not on the list within the policy? What can faculty ask for to *verify* an absence?
  - Gonzalez will bring to Senate Exec

- Objectives that are part of GE requirements – language is concerning
  - Many of the objectives presented are not measurable
  - Concern that any new courses being developed to meet GE requirements must include these learning objectives as part of the course to meet approval
  - Race/Ethnicity objectives – language is concerning
    - For example, Outcome #4: "Includes an examination of such factors as race, class…sexual preference, and how these shape the ethnic experience in the United States."
      - Sexual Preference is outdated and offensive as it suggests that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary or a choice
  - Gonzalez will bring to Senate Exec

4. **Agenda Items**
   a. Welcome and Introductions
   b. Election of APC Vice Chair, Lauren Kelly (vote – unanimous)

   c. Election of Committee Liaisons (https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/senate/subcommittee/index.html#readmission-subcommittee)
      i. Academic Standards Subcommittee – Ali Behzadan (vote – unanimous)
      ii. Readmission Subcommittee – Raul Tadle (vote – unanimous)

    d.   Committee Work Practice – Overview of Microsoft Teams - discussed

    e.   Summary of End of the Year Report, 2020-2021
        i. Reflections from previous committee members – discussed
           1. Make sure to build in time for departmental review with Deans/Department Chairs – Senate Exec organizes

    f.   2021 - 2022 Referrals from Senate Executive Committee
        i. Grading Policy – provided overview
           1. Gonzalez will post link to EO 1037 to Teams - CSU grading policy
        ii. Dismissal and Reinstatement Process Policy – provided overview

Adjournment, 3:35pm

APC meets 1ˢᵗ and 3ʳᵈ Fridays, from 2:00 – 3:30 pm via Zoom

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Fall 2021: Sept 3 (canceled) and 17, Oct 1 and 15, Nov 5 and 19, Dec 3

Spring 2022: Feb 4 and 18, March 4 and 18, April 1 and 15, May 6

Appendix

Excused Absence Policy

Faculty in a department have many questions and concerns about the guidance we are receiving about not being allowed to ask students for documentation/verification of their medically-excused absences. Until recently, we have usually asked for something that indicates "medically excused from school" rather than a diagnosis or other protected information, in order to protect privacy and also ensure fairness to all students. In the past, we have been guided not to request medical notes for flu and recently for COVID, as these might require going to a medical setting while contagious, in which case the cost-benefit is in favor of the student isolating and faculty trusting their self-report. Faculty are expressing consternation that we are now being guided to refrain from requesting verification for all medically-excused absences. Their concerns are mainly for pragmatic reasons that have to do with ensuring fairness in the classroom and managing workload for themselves (most faculty appreciate that these policies prioritize compassion and understanding for students but worry about the actual implementation of the policy). I also know that individual situations may vary and can be consulted on individually, but some general guidelines and suggestions would be helpful.

Two specific concerns that faculty would appreciate receiving guidance about include:

-how much "after the fact" can students indicate that their absence from class is due to a medical issue? For example, faculty often reach out to students who drop off of their radar but don't necessarily hear back from them. How timely does student notification of a medical absence have to be? We recognize that some medical situations make it difficult for students to reach out in real time, but faculty feel they need guidance on what kinds of limits they can reasonably set on after-the-fact notifications.

-maintaining the integrity of ongoing exams and quizzes while a student is out on an extended absence. Faculty frequently review exams and quizzes with students after grading to guide their learning and preparation for future assessments. However, they also feel bound to protect the integrity of assessments, so they are facing dilemmas involving equity and integrity of their planned assessments versus creating new make-up assessments that may not be equivalent to the planned ones (resulting in potentially inequitable assessment that could lead to a grade appeal). This is also a workload issue for faculty.

I think that having been able to request verification made it easier for faculty to navigate these issues as they felt reassured that they were acting appropriately to support ill students; without verification, they feel more at risk of inadvertently creating inequitable class evaluation experiences.

Finally, I am wondering if there is a way to work with student health, CARES, or SSWD for absence verification that exceeds a specific time frame. For example, if a student were to miss more than X days or percentage of class meetings or assessments, perhaps they could work with a non-academic unit on campus to verify their circumstances, and the fact of that being verified could be conveyed to faculty? I am particularly thinking about multi-week absences that create a lot of academic recovery workload. I know there is only a requirement for "reasonable" accommodations, but determining what is considered *reasonable* often requires consultation and support for faculty and students, especially as more and more classes are back in f2f modalities.

This is going to be a complex academic year with respect to how all members of the campus community manage illnesses, including ones that previously might have been regarded as minor though not always brief (e.g., winter colds), and I am sensitive to faculty and students being partners in navigating that complexity.