

Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2023

Voting Members Present: Joan Curry, Leslie Dennis, Karin Nolan, Amber Rice, Caleb Simmons, Joost Van Haren

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Cassidy Bartlett, Carmin Chan, Abbie Sorg, Claudia Stanescu, Alex Underwood

Guests Present: Sandra Jonas

Voting Members Absent: Michelle Berry, Jeff Millburg, Richard Vaillancourt

Acting UGC Chair Claudia Stanescu called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m. A quorum was established with 5 voting members; one additional member arrived after the approval of the minutes.

- I. Approval of Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee meeting minutes, 11/29/2022**
Caleb Simmons moved to accept the meeting minutes from 11/29/2022 as submitted. Karin Nolan seconded the motion. The motion passed with 4 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

- II. Action Items**
A. Grade Appeal Policy Amendment
Presenter: Abbie Sorg

The committee was provided with an overview of the proposed changes to the policy:

- Information that is precursory to filing the appeal has been relocated to the beginning of the policy, thereby reducing the number of steps in the procedure
- Each step clarifies the party responsible for carrying out the specified actions
- Information that is duplicative of what appears on the appeal forms has been removed
- Deadlines for each step have been specified

Discussion began:

- The Office of General Counsel (OGC) representative informed the committee that the current and proposed policy language indicate that if an appeal is valid, the dean will always convene a committee; a dean who does not convene a committee for a valid appeal may be seen as in breach of policy. The committee requested that the policy language be clarified to indicate that it is the decision of the dean whether to establish a committee.
- A committee member asked for confirmation that the grade appeal timeline is the same regardless of the course length for the grade being appealed. The committee suggested clarifying in the policy that the appeal timeline is for regular fall and spring semesters, and students taking courses during summer would need to wait until fall to file an appeal.

- Another member pointed out that students will not have a consistent length of time to appeal depending on the disputed grade's term/session, but that this limit is largely due to faculty contracts not extending through summer.
- One member suggested clarifying that the grade appeal procedure is only for appealing a final course grade.
- The OGC representative suggested revising "...it may be in a student's best interest to file a grade appeal", as this implies there is a time when it is not in their best interest. The committee agreed to simplify the language to "...the student may file a grade appeal."
- The OGC representative explained that "Valid reasons for appeal include" does not exclude other reasons from being valid.
 - The committee voiced that it would be impossible to create an exhaustive list of valid and invalid reasons, and there is some likelihood of a student filing an appeal for a valid reason that had not been considered by the institution. Members agreed to leave that section as-is.
- The OGC representative commented that the original policy's use of "fundamental fairness" may be more advantageous than the proposal's use of "fair treatment"; fair is difficult to define, but fundamental fairness has a legal basis that has been established.
- A member suggested rewording "students in the same course and section" to avoid both confusing students and duplicating the language within invalid reasons.
- The same member felt that step 4, wherein it says, "the dean will take appropriate action", should clarify what that appropriate action is.
- It was pointed out that step 6's deadline of "within 4 weeks of receiving the student's appeal", can be misconstrued, and should clarify within 4 weeks of the *dean* receiving the appeal.
 - To address this same issue in other steps, the committee requested that the language should specify "with [X] weeks of [previous] step."
- At the OGC representative's suggestion, the committee decided to clarify that an invalid reason for appeal was the impact of *the disputed grade* on a student's academic progress or eligibility.
- Regarding the fact that students may request a letter of degree completion while their grade appeal is pending, a committee member questioned whether this would give students who ultimately don't pass the class a letter falsely saying that they have graduated.
 - It was clarified that students would only be granted this letter if they have satisfied all graduation requirements regardless of the results of the grade appeal. Students cannot file a grade appeal once they have graduated, which is why the interim letter is used.
 - To make this stipulation clearer for students, it was agreed to rearrange the sentences to make receipt of the letter contingent on whether the student has satisfied all degree requirements.
- The committee felt that the timeline may still be confusing for students. Members are interested in a visual representation, such as a flowchart, to act as a supplement to the policy.

- It was agreed that the policy would reference an external infographic on the Office of the Registrar's site.
- A member questioned why a dean wouldn't convene a committee for a valid appeal.
 - Another member clarified that typically only complex cases are passed on to a committee; when an appeal is clear cut, the deans often make a decision themselves.
 - After discussing whether the implementation of a committee should be required up to the dean, the committee opted to clarify that the dean may convene a committee at their own discretion.
- One committee member pointed out that steps 5 and 6 are part of step 4, with the same responsible party. The committee agreed to combining 5 and 6 as sub-steps of step 4.

The committee requested an updated proposal with the following discussed revisions:

- **Clarify:**
 - **the policy refers to appealing only final course grades**
 - **appeals submitted during summer semester will be reviewed by the instructor within the first two weeks of Fall semester**
 - **an invalid reason as "the impact of the disputed grade on student's academic progress or eligibility"**
 - **the appeals process through use of an external infographic/flowchart**
- **Replace:**
 - **language in steps 3 and 4, "within X weeks of receiving appeal" with "within [X] week(s) of completion of [the previous step]"**
 - **"fair treatment" with "fundamental fairness in treatment"**
 - **"same course and section" with "same course section"**
 - **"it may be in a student's interest to file a grade appeal" with "students may file a grade appeal"**
 - **"...the dean will review the student's appeal and take appropriate action. If the appeal is invalid, as defined at the start of the policy, the dean may dismiss the appeal. If the appeal has validity, the dean may convene a committee to review the case" with "...the dean will review the student's appeal. At the dean's sole discretion, the dean may convene a committee to review and make a recommendation"**
 - **Steps 5 and 6 as sub-steps of step 4**

An updated proposal document was sent to the committee via e-vote following the meeting.

The updated Grade Appeal policy proposal passed via e-vote with 7 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

III. Discussion Items

A. Double Use of Courses (Double Dipping) Policy Amendment

Presenter: Abbie Sorg

The subcommittee was provided with an overview of why the policy had been suggested for revision: under the new GE system, some general education courses, such as introductory lab sciences, are also commonly used to satisfy majors and minors. For students taking such courses, the question becomes

whether students must choose to apply the credits to their major or minor (in addition to their GE), or if they could potentially apply the credits to all three. This policy could be modified to a multiple use of courses policy. Additionally, the current policy does not address the double use of courses towards certificates, where stipulations differ (only 50% of units toward the certificate may be double dipped). Lastly, the policy does not explicitly say whether students in accelerated master's programs, students earning their master's and PhD, or students with double majors can apply a course toward both programs/majors.

Discussion began:

- One member posed the question, many unique courses should be required for a student to earn a credential? How much control should be imposed to prevent students from doubling up on degrees?
- Another member was curious about other checks and balances in place to monitor student fulfillment of curriculum, and if this policy is the most effective way to limit students.
- A committee member felt it pertinent to consider graduation rates compared against double-dipping policies at other institutions.
- The same member felt that broadening this policy would be overall beneficial, keeping students pursuing double majors on track to graduate.
- A separate member reminded that the aim is not to make the policy more restrictive but to broaden it or keep it as-is.

The Office of the Registrar will gather benchmarking data from peer institutions regarding double/multiple use of course policies. Subcommittee members will speak with colleagues and advisors for feedback to be brought up at the next subcommittee meeting. Discussion will continue at the February subcommittee meeting.

Claudia adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on February 14, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Cassidy Bartlett, 1/19/2023