**Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**January 28, 2020**

**Voting Members Present:** Bennett Adamson,Chair Molly Bolger, Joan Curry, Leslie Dennis, Moe Momayez, David Ortiz, Claudia Stanescu, Richard Vaillancourt, Joost Van Haren

**Non-voting Members Present:**  Roxie Catts, Neel Ghosh, Elizabeth Sandoval, Abbie Sorg, Alex Underwood

**Voting Members Absent:** Kirk Dimond

**Guest Presenters:** Cori Cashen, Rob Groves, Kim Jones, Cody Nicholls

Chair Molly Bolger called the meeting to order at ­­­3:30 p.m. A quorum was established with 7 voting members. Two additional members arrived after the approval of the minutes.

1. **Approval of Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee meeting minutes, 11/26/19**

Claudia Stanescu moved to accept the meeting minutes from 11/26/19 as submitted. David Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

1. **Policy Proposals**
   1. **Proposal to create a Military Excused Absence Policy –** submitted by the Office of the Registrar and Dean of Students- Military and Veteran Engagement

**Presenters:** Cody Nicholls, Assistant Dean of Students; Cori Cashen, Associate Registrar

This policy proposal was drafted in order to comply with a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Arizona and the Department of Defense. This is the only adjustment to policy needed to maintain compliance with the MOU, to make provisions for “Service members that are temporarily unable to attend classes for less than 30 days within a semester or similar enrollment period due to a Military service obligation.”

It is expected that this policy will impact a very small number of students, around 1-2 per semester, based on those students’ drill schedules. The students that will be impacted are generally reservists, who may receive their drill schedules at the end of September, after they’ve begun classes for the Fall semester. This usually results in students missing a few days of class, and needing to work with their instructors to address those absences.

Discussion commenced:

* The policy specifies absences of up to 30 days, though the presenters focused on shorter absences of only a few days. What would account for a month-long absence? This is a less likely situation, but could be possible in cases of national emergency like natural disasters when reservists can be called for longer periods. The most common use case will be shorter absences for scheduled training drills.
* Is there a way absences of this nature could be folded into the existing Dean’s Excuse procedures, to reduce the number of policies and procedures faculty members need to be familiar with? Dean’s Excuses are meant only for university-related absences, so military-related absences are outside of that scope. The Dean of Students office walks through the process with service member students and their instructors when these situations arise, and will continue to do so once the policy is in place. This involvement sometimes takes the form of consulting with the student to determine whether the best path forward is to withdraw from courses or to take an incomplete until they can return to finish their coursework. The Registrar and the Dean of Students offices can work together to create a form similar to the Dean’s Excuse form to make the process as simple for faculty to navigate as possible. Faculty should not need to become familiar with reading students’ military orders; the Dean of Students will continue to liaise with faculty to make this process simple.

**Joost Van Haren moved to approve the proposal as submitted, and Claudia Stanescu seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 9 votes in favor.**

1. **Proposal to Eliminate the 18 of Final 30 Units in Residence Policy –** submitted by University Academic Advising Council

**Presenter:** Roxie Catts, Director, Advising Resource Center

This update to the Units in Residence policy was proposed because the current policy is outdated and is increasingly an unnecessary roadblock to graduating students. While the original reasons for the current policy can no longer be recalled, the policy is problematic for multiple populations: students at microcampuses, students transferring 2nd language coursework from other institutions, students studying abroad, and students in the College of Applied Science and Technology. The policy cannot be enforced by the advisement report, and manual enforcement is labor-intensive and inconsistent. The enforcement of the policy ends up being a financial or academic burden for students who end up needing to take a heavy load during their final semester or take additional courses over the summer in order to satisfy the requirement. Since most majors already include specific units in residence requirements on their advisement report, it should not be problematic to remove the “18 of the final 30 units” requirement altogether.

Discussion commenced:

* Would removing this requirement be a problem for the university’s accreditation? No; the HLC standard is that 25% of all coursework needs to be from the awarding institution. Since we would not be removing the requirement for 30 units in residence, removing the time-based 18 unit requirement would not be a problem.
* It’s likely that the original policy was created in order to ensure that students graduating from the UA had received a UA education. If students take their upper division coursework elsewhere, should they really receive a UA degree? What if the policy were updated to instead specify that a certain number of the 30 required units in residence must be upper division units? That might help alleviate the concern about students taking the bulk of their final years at another institution, without having to legislate when the units in residence are taken.
* The committee agreed that the following adjustments should be made to the language of the proposed policy update:
  + Remove “It is further required that 18 of the final 30 units offered toward the degree be University Credit. In other words, no more than 12 of the final 30 units to complete the degree may be credit by exam (i.e., CLEP, Special Examination for Credit), or transfer credit.”
  + Add “of those 30 units, 18 must be in Upper Division (300-400 level) coursework.”

**David Ortiz moved to approve the proposal pending updates to the language as listed above, and Claudia Stanescu seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 9 votes in favor.**

1. **Proposal to amend the General Education Second Language Requirement Policy –** submitted by University-Wide General Education Committee

**Presenters:** Kim Jones, Vice Dean, College of Humanities; Rob Groves, Assistant Professor, Religious Studies

The procedure prior to the current second language policy for international students saw individual students making appointments with the department that offered their primary language, to prove proficiency in their primary language; this process was unwieldy. The current policy was instituted to simplify that process, with the understanding that international students should be allowed to use their proficiency in English to satisfy the second language requirement (rather than their proficiency in their primary language). Since Admissions has added new exam options for students to prove their English proficiency, the current policy leaves some students in a situation where they have to pay for a second exam or otherwise prove their proficiency again after having been admitted. The proposal is to simplify the policy to state that students who must prove their English proficiency for admission have satisfied the second language requirement. This will prevent additional costs and hoops for students to jump through as they prepare to graduate.

Discussion commenced:

* A similar proposal was considered and denied in Spring 2016 because of concerns that students who meet the admissions standards aren’t prepared for their UA coursework; how can this concern be addressed? The exams accepted for admission to the UA will not change based on the result of this proposal, so the same students will be admitted to the UA whether or not the second language policy is aligned with the admissions policy. Additionally, it’s worth noting that the requirement for second language proficiency is either 2nd semester or 4th semester; that level of proficiency is lower than that needed for success at the university level in general. For example- a student with 4th semester proficiency in French would have difficulty taking all their courses for all subjects in the French language. International students should not be held to a higher standard than domestic students for the same graduation requirement.
* What about international students whose only language is English? There are students who grew up on military bases, or who for other reasons have only spoken English in non-English speaking countries. It’s possible that there will be some students who slip through the cracks without proving proficiency in a second language. While this is possible, the number of students who may be in this situation is statistically small, and the new proposed policy doesn’t remove any protection from this scenario that the current policy ensures.

**Claudia Stanescu moved to approve the proposal as submitted, and Joost Van Haren seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 9 votes in favor.**

1. **Additional Discussion – Efficiency of Course and Program Approval Process –** Neel Ghosh

The Provost is holding a meeting with UGC and subcommittee Chairs and other key players to determine how to reach the goal of course and program approval processes taking 30 days to complete.

Discussion commenced:

* Do proposals need to come before the full UGC if the subcommittee has unanimously approved them? Yes, this is still important because each subcommittee only has representatives from half of the units on campus. It’s possible that a representative on the policies subcommittee could have insight or questions about a proposed program; if the full committee didn’t see that proposal, that feedback would be lost.
* UGC and subcommittee meetings are officially public- anyone can attend. There is concern that committee members may feel pressure not to raise issues if there’s a push for a faster approval process. It would be beneficial to have a way to raise issues anonymously if possible. While it isn’t possible to make the discussion private, it would help to have a way to make the voting anonymous.
* Is the problem that there is something systematically wrong with the process, or is the problem that some programs have taken a long time because of issues specific to those programs? If most programs go through the process in an acceptable amount of time, those that take longer may be delayed for valid reasons, and speeding up the process may not be appropriate.
* Is this an issue of the total time it takes for a proposal to get approved, or the number of different committees presenters end up needing to visit? In some cases, the submitters may not need to make the same presentation over and over again, but it’s beneficial for them to attend the meeting in case there are new questions that need to be answered. If they aren’t in attendance when a new question comes up, that could delay the proposal.
* The purpose of UGC is for each representative to communicate as needed with their colleagues to get feedback from their units. The process shouldn’t be sped up to the point that there isn’t time for that communication to take place.
* It may be possible for a process to be created where new courses can be packaged together with the new programs they will serve, in order to streamline the proposal and approval process.

Molly adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m. The next Subcommittee meeting will be on February 25, 2020.

*Respectfully Submitted by Abbie Sorg, 1/31/20*