**Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**November 23, 2021**

**Voting Members Present:** Joan Curry, Leslie Dennis, Moe Momayez, Amber Rice, Caleb Simmons, Chair Claudia Stanescu, Jordan-Isaiah Toyos, Joost Van Haren

**Non-voting Members Present:**  Molly Bolger, Carmin Chan, Abbie Sorg

**Guests Present:** Chrissy Lieberman

**Voting Members Absent:** Michelle Berry,Jim Hunt, Jennifer Schnellmann

Chair Claudia Stanescu called the meeting to order at ­­­3:30 p.m. A quorum was established with 5 voting members. 3 additional members arrived after the minutes were approved.

1. **Approval of Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee meeting minutes, 10/26/2021**

Caleb Simmons moved to accept the meeting minutes from 10/26/2021 as submitted. Amber Rice seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 votes in favor.

1. **Policy Proposals**
   1. **Class Attendance and Participation amendment**

**Presenters:** Abbie Sorg and Chrissy Lieberman

Discussion from the October meeting continued, with an updated proposal based on recommendations from the subcommittee. In response to recommendations from the previous meeting:

* In the Extended Absences section, language was added to clarify that students can contact the Dean of Students office before, during, or after a 1+ week absence. This will provide flexibility for students that have a planned absence as well as those with emergent absences.
* The Administrative Drop section has been removed from the Class Attendance and Participation policy, and will be incorporated into the Change of Schedule policy where it is better aligned. A proposal for updates to that policy will be discussed at the next subcommittee meeting.

Additional Discussion commenced:

* No feedback from the advising community on concerns about the proposal.
* Committee members expressed concern about the phrasing that recommends instructors “work with students to provide means to participate in or view lectures"- for classes where it isn't possible to view lectures, how does this work? Labs are difficult to make up later, and generally aren't recorded for later viewing since they're participatory. Missing a week of lab or fieldwork class might be detrimental to student's success. The DOS generally says this to instructors: "If the nature of the course and/or amount of work missed precludes them from being able to complete your course successfully, please discuss this with the student so that they may consider the option of a withdrawal from the course, or course incompletion."
* The policy doesn’t specify an upper limit for extended absences. What if the student is missing from participation for the whole semester? Is it reasonable for faculty to accommodate very long absences, or should some cap be included? It would be difficult to put a specific cap since each case is different. The DOS works with students and faculty to guide both on how long is too long to remain enrolled without participating. Giving that flexibility would be better than making hard deadlines/limits part of the policy. This issue is mitigated by the fact that the policy doesn’t grant an automatic extension of due dates or exams.
* Committee members found the phrasing of “documentation may be submitted prior to a planned absence, or during or after an unplanned absence” confusing. Recommend updating this sentence to “documentation should be submitted prior to a planned absence. Documentation may be submitted during or after an unplanned absence.”
* The goal of the DOS process is to remove faculty members from needing to interact with HIPAA-protected information. In theory, DOS should have the bandwidth to help introduce some humanity to the process (though due to the pandemic they currently have less bandwidth due to the large case volume). Long term, this will hopefully help with retention- may help DOS put students in touch with needed mental health, physical health, or other resources so they're better able to stay in school rather than needing to drop out due to crisis.
* Committee members expressed concern about possible abuse of the policy in the future, since this will be a permanent policy. It is necessary to ensure this is appropriate for all times (and not just the current pandemic). Will this policy encourage shorter absences that happen to fall on the date of an exam? Students that are willing to attempt gaming the system will eventually have that behavior catch up to them through failed classes. Since the policy doesn’t grant an automatic extension of due dates or rescheduling of exams, it shouldn’t appear to be a temptation to exploit the system.
* Is the DOS notification for athletic absences, field trips, other planned absences going away? No, that process will remain, but is separate from this policy.
* The committee agreed upon the following amendments to the proposal language:
  + Replace “Documentation may be submitted prior to a planned absence, or during or after an unplanned absence” with the following: "Documentation should be submitted prior to a planned absence. Documentation may be submitted during or after an unplanned absence."
  + Replace “Instructors should work with students to provide means to participate in or view lectures, turn in assignments, and complete exams remotely as needed” with the following: "Instructors should work with students to provide means to participate in or view lectures, turn in assignments, and complete exams remotely if possible."
  + Replace “Non-attendance for any reason does not guarantee an automatic extension of due dates or rescheduling of examinations" with the following: “Non-attendance for any reason does not guarantee an automatic extension of due dates or rescheduling of examinations, laboratory, or practicum work."

**Amber Rice moved to approve the updated policy with the addition of 3 amendments as described above, and Caleb Simmons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 8 votes in favor.**

* 1. **Choice of Catalog amendment**

**Presenter:** Abbie Sorg

The current policy language is confusing and difficult for students, faculty, and staff to interpret. The proposed updated language is intended to keep the meaning of the policy the same while making it simpler to understand. Term of admission is more clearly defined, as are the elements that a student’s term of admission defines. The language defining the two options for students choosing to follow a newer catalog has also been clarified.

Discussion commenced:

* Concerns about General Education- will there be a point where students in pre-2022 catalogs are no longer able to complete Tier 1/Tier 2 requirements? If so, should any updates be made to the policy to help mitigate potential issues? This shouldn’t be a big issue- currently any courses that are being approved for the new General Education curriculum are being selected from the pool of existing Tier 1/Tier 2 courses. Since these courses will keep their Tier1/Tier 2 status while being added to the new General Education curriculum, students will be able to use those courses to complete either curriculum for the foreseeable future.
* This policy allows the flexibility to help advisors help students find the best/shortest path to graduation, by giving students the option to move to a newer catalog, without forcing them to take on new requirements that were added after their term of admission.
* The committee agreed that the updated language makes the policy easier to digest at a glance.

**Caleb Simmons moved to approve the policy amendment as proposed, and Amber Rice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 8 votes in favor.**

Claudia adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m. The next Subcommittee meeting will be held on January 25, 2022.

*Respectfully submitted by Abbie Sorg, 12/6/21*