

FACULTY CAUCUS MINUTES

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

2:15PM

PH 300

Present: J. Baumann, L. Charbonneau, S. Crocker, A. Doughtie, A. Fried, H. Haines, D. Kelly, S. McCall, G. Melendez, C. Miller, A. Radlowski, N. Rosero, R. Santos

Guests: R. Spetka, J. Sunderhaft, T. Thomas, C. Zupancic

CALL TO ORDER

The Caucus was called to order at 2:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the Special Meeting of the Caucus on December 15, 2016 were approved. The minutes from meeting on February 17, 2017, were discussed and, after some changes, were approved.

CHAIR REMARKS

C. Miller commented that the Presenter Form is ready to go live, and she will send an announcement when that occurs. Additionally, the Senate discussed micro-credentials at their last meeting. SUNY needs to provide more information regarding financial aid and the completion metric. A. Haines will reach out to SUNY for answers, as well as to other campus governance leaders.

WAITLIST QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

R. Spetka and J. Sunderhaft were present to address waitlist concerns. They presented a background on what happens with the waitlist prior to the start of the semester. The process of filling vacant seats with waitlisted students is done manually, with preference given to the first person in the queue. If patterns arise, associate deans are contacted to add additional sections of the course if possible.

When a student is moved to a new class, they are sent an email notification. If a student is registered for one section of a course and are on the waitlist for another section, they will be dropped from the registered section in favor of the waitlist section if a seat opens up. The day before classes start, J. Sunderhaft creates a list of all the CRNs with a remaining waitlist, and then forwards the list to the associate deans. The associate dean can also make a report for the students on a waitlist at any time.

The decision to end the waitlist on the first day of classes was made to give the instructor more control over who is in the class. While the date could be extended, the later we permit students to move via the waitlist, the less of a chance there is for people to adapt to the changes. If this happens once classes begin, it could create real issues.

STUDENT ADVISEMENT DESIGN TEAM

T. Thomas, S. Crocker, and C. Zupancic were present to discuss changes in advising. The team distributed a copy of their vision for advising moving forward, and discussed some of the motivations and challenges present in their vision.

One motivation for the changes is to reinforce faculty advising without creating more barriers for students. This led the team to revise advising on student intake. All new students take a new student survey via Survey Monkey to indicate their goals, interests, majors, days and times they want to attend school, and so on. From this survey,

the college advisors create a first semester schedule for the student. This way, when a student first meets with a college advisor, their time can be spent discussing the student's goals rather than creating a schedule. There is a planner in Degree Works that can be used to map out a student's curriculum semester by semester through completion. Advisors will work with students to determine appropriate electives for their plan, although adjustments can be made later as needed. These plans can also be used to identify students who are not enrolled in the correct classes in future semesters.

The team suggested that students can meet their faculty advisors as a group during New Student Convocation (instead of having their first ED100 meeting). By putting a face to the name, advisors are hopeful that students will feel more comfortable meeting with their faculty advisor in the future. Students whose faculty advisors send them an email before priority registration are also more likely to meet with their advisor for advising.

Assignment of students to faculty advisors is not equitable, and some faculty have a heavier advising load than others. One of the challenges is to make the assignment of advisees more equitable. While cross-training has been completed in the past, there are still difficulties, especially with general studies. For example, some students enter general studies with the intent to transfer to another program (such as nursing) later on. Another challenge is that the Degree Works planner is still in beta, so it's a bit cumbersome to use. Additionally, the advising team would like to facilitate communications between faculty advisors and advisees, and increase the response rate to emails.

A concern was brought up that, if advisees are distributed evenly among faculty, each faculty advisor will need to meet with an average of 40 students. How will faculty find the hours to meet with students during the registration period?

An additional concern was expressed that if the advisors are creating a new student's first semester schedule for them, their first meeting with their faculty advisor will be longer, because the students will not know how to build a schedule. Currently, some faculty advisors work with students to build their schedules while others do not.

The Degree Works planner will be integral in addressing these two concerns, particularly in identifying students who are at risk or taking courses not aligned with their plan. Faculty advisors would reach out to those students most at risk for advising.

There was also a recommendation for training workshops to be held during the Institutes rather than during the semester so that more faculty will be able to attend. The Advising Team is putting together binders of resources for faculty to help train them in advising, and are planning two sessions at Summer Institute for the Degree Works planner.

UPDATE ON PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Student Affairs and Learning & Academic Affairs are in the last stages of drafting policies and procedures intended to make the credit evaluation system more efficient. Once finished, APSC will need to finalize the process. The teams are reviewing AP and current systems in place at the College, and are also examining rubrics and examples of how other institutions apply value and credit to prior learning. One of the difficulties with the process is that Middle States and SUNY have different definitions for applied learning. As with transfer courses,

students will need to meet a significant portion of our course's Student Learning Outcomes in order for them to receive credit for the course. At the moment, course descriptions have been used instead of outcomes to compare courses, but moving forward our process will become more rigorous and outcomes will need to be used.

DISCUSSION ON TRANSPARENCY IN COMMUNICATION

There was some discussion regarding faculty's role in the decision-making process at the College. There continue to be concerns about starting after Labor Day, for example, and there was a conversation about how faculty might be included in these decisions in the future. One suggestion is for the chair of Caucus to reach out to all committees, workgroups, etc. on an annual basis, prompting them to reach out to Caucus if there is something in process that will have a direct impact on faculty.

There are many concerns surrounding building the schedule for the post-Labor Day start, and many faculty feel the change is happening too quickly to be able to take all factors into consideration and build a good schedule that works well with all the variables.

OPEN FORUM

One comment was raised that the parking lot has not always been appropriately cleared when it has snowed. Moreover, the sidewalk coming up to the campus from the bus stop is not always consistently shoveled, and students in wheelchairs struggle to make it up to the building. There was one day in particular when the parking lot was especially snow-covered, and C. Miller had already spoken with T. Squires, who admitted that it would have been better to delay opening on that day. However, they made the best decision they could with the information at hand, and the snowfall came later and more intensely than initially predicted.

An additional comment was made regarding the timing of painting on campus. The chemical smells of the paint are affecting those with offices nearby, and windows cannot be opened to get appropriate ventilation this time of year.

ADJOURNMENT

The Faculty Caucus adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Senate Faculty Caucus will be Tuesday, February 21st at 2:15 p.m. in PH 300.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Radlowski