

Minutes
Educational Affairs Committee
October 11, 1996
1:30 p.m.

Members present: William E. Barstow, Loch Johnson, Marguerite Koepke, Jere Morehead, and Duncan Waite.

Guests present: William C. Marshall and Gary Moore of the Registrar's Office.

The first order of business was to elect a chair for the 1996-97 year. Marguerite Koepke was elected chair by acclamation.

Next, Professor Davis passed out copies of the new Academic Renewal policy and asked the committee for an interpretation of the policy, which has been in effect since Fall Quarter 1995. The policy states that a student, to be eligible for Academic Renewal consideration, must not have attended any institution of higher learning during the five-year period preceding his or her re-enrollment at the University. Yet, the College of Arts and Sciences requires many students who are out on dismissal to take 10 hours of course work (and in some cases 30 hours of course work) in order to be eligible for readmission. Since a student out on dismissal first must be readmitted in order to be eligible for Academic Renewal consideration, a literal reading of the policy would mean that a student who takes the course work as required by the college would be ineligible for Academic Renewal. After brief discussion, Professor Davis said that he would get an interpretation from Barry Fullerton, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The committee next considered the proposed academic calendar for 1999-2000 as submitted by Dr. Bruce Shutt, the Registrar. After brief discussion the committee voted to amend the proposed calendar by shortening the drop/add period from four days to three days during both semesters for 1999-2000. Drop/add for Fall Semester 1999 will be Monday-Wednesday, August 23-25, 1999, and for Spring Semester will be Thursday, Friday, and Monday, January 6, 7, and 10, 2000. As part of the calendar issue, the committee also considered the petition of the President's Council of the SGA that Memorial Day be declared an official University holiday. The committee noted that the calendars for 1996-99 have already been approved, and that Memorial Day is a student holiday (but not a holiday for faculty and staff) on May 31, 1999. Since the proposed calendar follows the semester calendar previously approved for 1998-99, it also recognizes Memorial Day as a student holiday on May 29, 2000. The committee decided that the Memorial Day petition presented a moot question, and asked that the SGA be notified that the holiday will be recognized beginning in 1999. With the above modification to the drop/add period, the proposed academic calendar was then approved. The proposal will now go forward to the University Council for approval. (A question was raised regarding how Honors Day would be handled under the semester calendar, with some sentiment being voiced that perhaps Honors Day should be held on a Saturday, allowing students who are not excused from labs to participate, and perhaps allowing more parents to attend).

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Next the committee considered the petition of Elizabeth Anne Higgins that she be recognized as a Presidential Scholar for Winter Quarter 1996 even though she took less than a full load (10 hours as opposed to 12 hours as required by policy), on the ground that she is a disabled student being served by the Office of Disability Services. The petition was heard by the full committee, as opposed to the usual three-person petitions subcommittee, because it raised the broader question of whether the policy itself should be modified to define "full load" as 10 hours in the case of students being served by the Office of Disability Services and the Learning Disabilities Center. After full discussion, the committee voted, with Professor Waite abstaining, not to change the policy requiring 12 hours for full-time status to be eligible for academic honors, i.e., Dean's List and Presidential Scholar, and to deny Ms. Higgins's petition on the ground that she did not qualify for academic honors because she did not meet the 12-hour requirement. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Moore pointed out that some years ago the Office of Disability Services had requested that students being served by the office not be identified as disabled on any of their records. Therefore, the Registrar's Office would have no way of knowing which students were disabled, and therefore qualified for academic honors based on a reduced number of hours for full-time status. Questions were also raised about fairness to other students, not only in terms of what constitutes "disabled" but also in terms of other disadvantages under which students might be operating, e.g., there are students with temporary disabilities (broken leg), pregnant women, students with clinically diagnosed emotional or psychological problems, single parents, married students who work 40 hours a week and have to maintain a household or support an elderly parent, and nontraditional students or senior citizens. The committee thought the best practice would be to adhere to the present policy and to allow students to apply for special consideration on a case-by-case basis. In Ms. Higgins's case, the committee thought a letter should be sent to her college asking that the college recognize her achievements in an appropriate way.

The committee next considered a proposal from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences requesting that students taking a 5-quarter-hour (or 3-semester-hour) internship be regarded as full-time students to enable them to qualify for insurance benefits. The committee turned down the proposal because it raised questions of fairness of application since there might be other categories of students (in Agriculture as well as in other schools and colleges) who might be equitably entitled to the same treatment. Without knowing the full implications of carving out an exception for this one group of students, the committee was reluctant to approve the proposal. The committee suggested that someone from the college might write the affected students' insurance companies a letter (in cases in which the insurance company raises some question about a student's full-time status) explaining the nature of the internship and explaining that the students work full-time but only receive 5 credit, but that they really are considered full-time students during the internship quarter.

Finally, regarding the grade inflation issue carried over from last spring, Professor Davis indicated he would send committee members all of the information he had on the issue for their consideration at a future meeting.

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No further business appearing, the committee adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel M. Davis
Secretary to the committee