



Educational Affairs Committee
Minutes for Monday, March 17, 2008 – 3:30 p.m.
Peabody Board Room of Administration Building

Members Present: Denise Mewborn (Chair), , Tracie Costantino, Ann Crowther, Dale Goodhue, William Barstow (proxy for Dan DerVartanian), Susan Quinlan, William Vencill, Conner McCarthy, and Matt Gore

Others: Rebecca Macon (Registrar), Amrita Veliyath (SGA), Brian Mink (Red & Black) and Brian Paul Freese (Staff)

Dr. Denise Mewborn called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. She thanked members and guests for attending.

Minutes

Dr. Susan Quinlan moved that the minutes of the February 11, 2008 Educational Affairs Committee be approved as recorded without revision. Dr. Dale Goodhue seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

New Business

SGA proposal for “Preparation Week” policy: Mr. Conner McCarthy presented the SGA’s proposal for a University preparation week policy with supporting comparative information collected regarding peer and aspirational institutions. Two handouts were provided. The comparison demonstrated that the University has a fifteen week semester, while many peer and aspirational institutions have a fourteen week semester. Many peer and aspirational institutions also offer more than one day for final exam preparation, either during regular classes or in the absence of scheduled classes. In light of this, SGA proposed a “preparation week” in which no assignment worth more than 15% of the course grade could be due in the 7 calendar days preceding the start of final exams.

Several committee members expressed concern that the proposal would curtail or unduly regulate an instructor’s pedagogical freedom in the classroom and would therefore be an infringement on academic freedom.

The committee members suggested that the SGA revisit the matter and consider the academic calendar as a focus of their efforts. Doing so would provide greater flexibility and perhaps allow the University to introduce additional reading days to the academic calendar. This would better meet the students’ needs for additional preparatory time for finals, and also alleviate any undue regulation of an instructor’s pedagogical freedom in the classroom.

Mr. McCarthy moved that the Educational Affairs Committee present a resolution to request a 14 week semester to University Council. Dr. Susan Quinlan seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Faculty right of appeal: Dr. Mewborn shared that a member of faculty was concerned that in grade appeals, faculty aren't given an opportunity to appeal a decision that fails to uphold the assigned grade. Dr. Vencill shared that in all appeals, only the student has the right to continue the process through further appeal to a higher authority. The state, and in this case the faculty member as an agent of the state, therefore shouldn't have a right of appealing a decision made by the Petitions Subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee.

Dr. Dale Goodhue moved that the policy regarding academic appeals be upheld, but asked that administrative measures be taken to better ensure that faculty and instructors understand both the grade appeals process and their opportunity to appear in that process. Dr. Tracie Constantino seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Gayle Andrews agreed to serve as chair of EAC for fall 2008, and Susan Quinlan agreed to serve as chair in spring 2009.

There being no further business, Dr. Vencill moved that the meeting be adjourned. Dr. Quinlan seconded, and the meeting ended at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Paul Freese", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Paul Freese
Office of the Vice President for Instruction