

Memorandum

To: John Soares
Chair, Academic Senate

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Date: March 30, 2009

From: Stephen Phillips
Chair, Instruction Committee, Academic Senate

Subject: Instruction Committee Quarterly Report: Fall 2008

The Instruction Committee met three times during the winter quarter. Our arranged time worked for everyone, but not everyone was able to attend every meeting.

Two assignments were managed through to completion.

- 1) The Academic Calendar for 2010-2011 was reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate
- 2) The Resolution regarding Religious Holidays on the First Day of Classes was reviewed by the Executive Committee, amended, and reviewed with a first and second reading by the Academic Senate. The Resolution was approved.

Five additional assignments were discussed during the winter quarter.

- 1) Implementation of a new computerized system for DRC
 - a. We met and answered questions by Trey Duffy and Vanessa Dominguez of DRC in regards to computerized testing services.
 - b. We discussed their concerns in regards to faculty and student accessibility to the new system
 - c. We recommended that DRC meet with IDAC to inform them of the new system and to answer any questions that the Department Heads may have, and to ask IDAC to assist them to distribute information regarding their new system to faculty within their departments and to report back to DRC with any further questions or concerns.
- 2) Attendance Policy
 - a. Based on concerns observed during our study on religious holidays occurring on the first day of classes or otherwise, we noted the present attendance policy possibly needed revisions.
 - b. After further research we determined our present attendance policy answers most of the concerns discussed during meetings with the Academic Senate and Executive Committee
 - i. Although not state as such, students can already go to the Dean of Students if they have a conflict with their faculty or want to ensure their privacy.
 - ii. In addition, religious holidays are already excusable in the present attendance policy.

- c. We thereby decided to recommend that an insertion be made into present attendance policy text to simply emphasize that permissible excuses should be allowed on the first day of class. We will bring our proposal to the Executive Committee to review in the spring.
- 3) Archiving undergraduate thesis projects
 - a. We reviewed policy discussed last year in regard to concerns over departmental policy governing archiving senior projects.
 - b. We decided these departmental policies should be available in writing, but that the Senate should not impose a resolution that dictates departmental policy. Faculty and students should work within their departments to determine what policies should be maintained for archiving senior thesis projects.
 - c. Those departmental policies should however conform to Library archiving standards.
 - d. In addition, those departmental policies should conform to the Policies of Intellectual Rights set by the University.
 - e. We are writing a resolution to this effect, which will be submitted to the Executive Committee in early spring.
- 4) Course Evaluations
 - a. We revived discussions from last year in regards to the need for a University wide unified system for developing and disseminating and reviewing course evaluations.
 - b. We need to set a meeting with B. Giberti and M. Seuss to further these discussions.
- 5) W/WU Policy
 - a. In light of recent changes to the WU policy, concerns brought to the Instruction Committee that the new policy eliminated a necessary withdraw option needed by many students to ensure their academic success and advancement towards graduation.
 - b. For example: In many classes--first mid-term grades are not provided until after the census date, when there is no longer any academic reason available for dropping a class. As Cal Poly students choose their majors before attending the University, they are not often well-prepared for study in their major. After realizing their aptitude in a given course or major or even perhaps learning that they want to change majors, there is little option for withdrawing from a course after census. Prior WU policy provided a one-time option—to help them. This is no longer the case.
 - c. In addition, we determined based on Executive Order No. 1037 that there will soon be significant changes to the W/WU policy from the Chancellor's office that will dramatically decrease students withdraw options. Students will have a limit on the number of W's they can have, which will make the option of withdrawing from a quarter—sometimes very needed for a wide variety of personal and academic reasons—no longer viable.
 - d. To ensure the greatest potential success for our students we noted that it does not make sense to require a student to accept an F on their record or retake a failed course up to three times, when they are no longer interested in pursuing this course or required to do so because they switched majors.
 - e. We are posing a meeting with Phil Bailey, Rich Sanz, and David Conn for early spring to discuss these concerns and others, and develop any possible means for action if determined viable and valuable.