



Memorandum

To: Rachel Fern-Flores
Chair, Academic Senate

From: Kevin Lertwachara
Chair, Instruction Committee, Academic Senate

Subject: Instruction Committee Quarterly Report: Spring 2010

Date: June 13, 2010

The Instruction Committee met six times during the Spring 2010 quarter. The meetings were scheduled during the time that the majority of committee members could participate. However, we did not have any representative from the College of Science and Mathematics, College of Architecture & Environmental Design, and College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences appointed to the Committee during the 2009/2010 academic year.

During the Spring 2010 quarter, the Instruction Committee worked on the following business items.

- 1) Review of AS-669-08 (WU grade): The Committee had a discussion about the Senate Resolution AS-669-08 on the WU grade. Since the resolution had been passed recently, the Committee voted not to revisit the issue at this time.
- 2) Advising on GE courses: The Committee decided to postpone our discussion on advising on the GE courses. Currently, many academic programs are making changes to their curriculum, and some of these changes will likely affect GE requirements. As a result, the Committee will revisit this issue after these changes are put in place, possibly in the 2010/2011 academic year.
- 3) Academic dishonesty: The Committee met with Professor John Walker representing Department of Statistics and Adrienne Miller representing the Office of Student's Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) on the issue of academic dishonesty. The Statistics Department asked the Committee to revise our current policy on academic dishonesty to include the following. For the first incident of academic dishonesty reported to OSRR, in addition to receiving a warning letter from OSRR and an 'F' grade as suggested in the University's current administrative policy, the student can also be subject to having a notation added to his/her transcript. The rationale for the proposed change is to distinguish between an 'honest' failure (regular 'F') and a 'dishonest' failure. Additionally, for the students who are already failing in a course, the possibility of a transcript notation denoting a judicial disciplinary action would hopefully discourage them from cheating in the remaining assignments or exams.

In addition to working with the Statistics Department and OSRR, we communicated with David Conn, who, as Director of the Academic Program Office, has been working on the academic dishonesty policy for the Campus Administrative Policy (CAP) to replace the old Campus Administrative Manual (CAM).

The Committee met and discussed possible steps we might take to address the issue of academic dishonesty raised by the Statistics Department. We considered the Statistics Department's proposal to ask the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) to increase the penalty on academic cheating and plagiarism. Part of our discussion was on the use of transcript notation to denote information about the course and academic quarter in which the infraction takes place. In addition, we discussed the proposed idea to add a temporary notation to the student's transcript for even the first offense. We also discussed that the policy should differentiate between types of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on a homework assignment versus on the final exam, or plagiarizing on a senior project).

After lengthy discussions and email communications, the Committee decided to propose amendments to the new policy being drafted by the Academic Program Office. The Committee recommended that each incident of academic dishonesty be decided on a case-by-case basis by the OSRR and the instructor, who are the most knowledgeable about the students and their past history and are therefore most qualified to determine the appropriate disciplinary action(s). We recommend that the OSRR and the instructor take into account the severity of the violation(s) and the past history of the student to help determine the appropriate disciplinary action. We also supported the use of a transcript notation to denote information about the course and academic quarter in which the infraction takes place.

In addition, the Committee supported the following recommendations proposed by the Statistics Department regarding academic dishonesty: 1) requiring/encouraging students to take an online training on academic dishonesty (e.g., an online module being developed by the Library http://lib.calpoly.edu/research/tutorials/101/use.html#slide_2), 2) a formal training for current and new faculty members on how to report academic dishonesty cases and the importance of reporting these cases to the OSRR, 3) raising the awareness among the students on the serious nature of academic dishonesty and its potential consequences (e.g., publishing on the University's web site (or campus newspaper) the statistics about academic dishonesty violations and disciplinary actions taken, without identifying the names of students).

- 4) Policy on Credit/No Credit grading: The Committee reviewed the current policy on credit/no credit grading which allows students to take up to 16 units for credit/no credit grading. The Academic Senate drafted a resolution on this issue in 2003 (AS-603-03) to limit the number of courses a student can take for credit/no credit grading to 12 credit units. However, this draft resolution was never put in place. The Committee will continue to work on this issue in the Fall 2010 quarter.