

June 19, 2013

From: D. Kenneth Brown, Philosophy, Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee

To: Cal Poly Academic Senate

Re: Faculty Affairs Committee Year End Report, Spring, 2013

The Faculty Affairs Committee in Spring 2013 had already completed its initial charges from the Academic Senate:

- Look into international travel insurance to ensure both that there is some clarity about it, and that faculty are not paying for it themselves.
- Assist the Instruction Committee with course evaluation and course materials discussions.

For Spring we took on this additional charge:

- Assist the Instruction Committee with drafting a Senate resolution on final examination overload conflicts.

Final Exam Overload Conflicts:

The FAC met twice in Spring 2013: April 18 and May 7. These meetings preceeded the occasions when the Instruction Committee (IC) would present their drafts of the resolution to the Academic Senate for its first and second readings. The FAC chair agreed to serve as the liaison between the two committees. After each FAC meeting the chair met with the chair of IC, Dustin Stegner (CLA) to report the FAC opinions on the drafting of the resolution.

We thought in occasions of conflict or impacted exam schedules, we think that the interests of faculty who adhere to the official schedule should have priority over those who deviate from it. This is just a matter of conforming to expectations based on policies in CAM (Campus Administrative Manual) and its successor, CAP (Campus Administrative Policies). We requested that these points be explicit in the resolution. Though they ended up not finding their way into the text of the resolution, it invokes the relevant CAM and CAP policies that describe these matters in more detail.

We thought it might be helpful for there to be a service for proctoring conflict resolution exams akin to what the DRC offers, but separate from the DRC. Perhaps the DRC could divest itself of all test proctoring responsibilities, and instead make use of a centralized proctoring service that would be available for any student. Since addressing these conflicts over scheduling might put students in an uncomfortable confrontation with their professors, we thought that perhaps there could also be a centralized way for students to express their problems concerning their final exam schedule, or even to lodge complaints about faculty who deviate from the official final exam schedule in ways that generate conflicts or impacted schedules. This service could be part of a centralized way of reporting the need for accommodation in the first place, and for approving and implementing such changes (e.g. arranging for proctoring or room scheduling). The resolution takes a small step towards this goal by having the students requesting accommodation include all affected faculty in a joint process of resolving the conflicts. If the

appeal for reasonableness from affected students and faculty seems not to redress this problem, perhaps this function could be taken over by the Ombuds office. A neutral third party might be able to address these conflicts while also determining whether students with heavy unit loads have brought this problem on themselves.

We thought some changes to presentation of the final exam schedules are in order so it is easier to read and understand at a glance. Faculty and students in Graphic Communications could take on this task. Also, we thought it would be helpful for a student's final exam schedule display in PASS when registering for classes, along with the weekly class schedule. We also thought PASS could display a warning to students who generate schedules with impacted exam schedules. Discussion on the floor of the Senate when the resolution was up for its second reading suggested that some of these informational guides to students are in the offing.

As block scheduling for freshmen becomes the norm, we thought that those implementing these schedules ought to avoid block scheduling students into schedules that put more than 2 final exams on a given exam day.

We thought that the problem here might partially arise from the basic structure of the final exam schedule. Perhaps there would be more flexibility if the final exam schedule were adjusted to accommodate for a mixture of some 2 hour exam slots and some 3 hour exam slots. That is a radical suggestion, and we understood that it would probably not have much traction.

Very few of these suggestions affected the content of the resolution, as it was fairly narrow in scope.

FAC Members:

Brown, D. Kenneth (chair) - CLA

Calkins, Kate - ASI

Clayton, Robert - Library/Counseling

James, Jennifer - CAFES

Liddicoat, Al - Academic Personnel

Lund, Ulric - CSM

Nelson, Jill - CAED

Nico, Phillip - CENG