

Duke University

Arts & Sciences Council: Meeting #2

Minutes (October 8, 2009)

Welcome

Council Chair Ruth Day called the meeting to order.

Minutes

Professor Day asked for additions & corrections to the minutes for the Sept 10th meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved. Professor Day thanked Executive Secretary Alan Biermann for the minutes.

Updates

ECASC Election

There is a position open on the Executive Committee of the A&S Council (ECASC), to be filled by a faculty member from the Humanities. Candidates are:

- Sharon Holland (English/AAAS/Women's Studies)
- Beth Holmgren (Slavic & Eurasian Studies)

Council representatives will vote for one.

A&S Priorities Poll

Council representatives are currently responding to the A&S Priorities Poll to help set the agenda for faculty governance this year. The Poll asks representatives to rate the priority of various topics, all from the Council charge in the by-laws. Main categories and sample topics include:

A&S Issues

- budget, faculty research support, faculty development, faculty compensation, teaching, facilities, organization of Departments, etc.

Trinity College Issues

- academic standards, academic programs, student research support, etc.

Legislation

- curriculum, academic priorities, etc.

Space is also provided for comments. Representatives are encouraged to discuss the Poll with colleagues. However the link provided should be used only by representatives, so each Department or Program has equal representation. The Poll closes October 30.

Committee Guides

Committee Guides to serving on A&S Council committees include information about the Council, the charge of each committee, committee composition, who votes, and related information:

- Completed: Guide for Students
- In progress: Guide for Faculty
Guide for Deans

Professor Day thanked Cynthia Chen, Academic VP from the Duke student Government (DSG) for their interest in and support of the Student Guide.



Information Technology: Hardware & Software Policy

Ed Gomes

Associate Dean, Trinity Technology Services

Dean Gomes was unable to attend the meeting so Professor Day provided his report.

Sample of Policy Issues

- What software is provided and supported?
- What hardware is provided and supported?
- How often are they replaced?
- What type of support is provided?
- What are support priorities?
- Are there exceptions?

Current Issue

- What is the status of faculty input on such issues?
- Currently, there is informal consulting with some Departments. However there is no formal body that recommends and reviews these IT policies.

Request

Dean Gomes requests that the Council reinstate the A&S Council Technology Committee (on hiatus since 2007). With a show of hands, the Council indicated support for this request..

Discussion

Ron Grunwald (Biology): Ed Gomes told ECASC he wants more input from faculty in general, especially those departments that are not usually represented in IT conversations (e.g., Humanities).

Dalene Stagl (Statistics): The IT committee needs to be structured differently than its predecessor (she served on the previous committee) – meetings were time-consuming and often not effective.

Ruth Day (Chair): Plans are already in place to streamline this committee, to make it more efficient and effective.

Peter Lange (Provost): DART discusses campus-wide budget issues; budget and technology issues often overlap.

Pass/Fail Proposal

Brief History

- Students requested changes in the policy
- ECASC sent the request to the Academic Standards Committee
- Policy changes have been discussed for a long time
- The issue seems simple at first
- However it is complex, detailed, and the Committee did not reach consensus on all issues



Committee Report

Peter Feaver
Chair, Academic Standards Committee

General Comment

- We should be mindful of the Duke brand – this is not Brown or Princeton
- Bottom line: very few students take advantage of the current P/F policy because it is too constraining.

Committee Consensus Points

- Current policy does not encourage students to explore and take more intellectual risks
- The policy should be relaxed while also preserving the Duke brand
- We should change grades:
 - from Pass/Fail (P/F)
 - to Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U)
- What courses can and cannot be taken S/U must be decided

Committee Points of Contention

- Should the new policy be extended to first-year students?
- When should students declare S/U for a given course?
- Faculty can decide whether their courses can be taken as S/U, but can Departments decide whether S/U courses can count toward the major?

Other Observations

- Would the new policy be an exercise in grade inflation or an invitation to academic exploration
- Students can declare S/U early; however, at the withdrawal deadline (4 weeks before the end of the semester) students have the option to make another decision.

Discussion

Professor Day suggested that the discussion focus on the points of consensus and disagreement separately. She showed the disagreement items (**modified by ECASC**) on the screen during the discussion:

Freshmen

Council Discussion

First-Year Students

Should the new policy be made available to first-year students?

Option-A = NO

With the consent of the instructor, a student **who has reached the 3rd semester of enrollment** may register, following instructions included in registration information, for grading on a “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” basis

OR

Option B = YES

With the consent of the instructor, a student may register, following instructions included in registration information, for grading on a “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” basis

Majors

Council Discussion

S/U & Major

Can courses taken on an S/U basis count toward major requirements?

Option-A = NO

Courses taken on an satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis do not count toward satisfying the requirements or prerequisites of a major, minor, or certificate program.

OR

Option-B = MAYBE

Courses taken on an satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis **generally** do not count toward satisfying the requirements or prerequisites of a major, minor, or certificate program. **However, departments and programs may choose to allow courses taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis to count towards prerequisites and corequisites for a major. (require approval by DUS of student's major or student's dean)**

TimeTable

Council Discussion

TimeTable for Declaring S/U

When should students declare they are taking the course on an S/U basis?

Option A = EARLIER

Students who wish to take a course satisfactory/unsatisfactory must obtain the instructor's permission and register to do so **by the end of the course correction period in any term**. Students who have elected to register for a course satisfactory/unsatisfactory **may choose to register for a letter grade** by filing a request with the registrar **up to four weeks before the last day of classes** (see specific deadline date in the Academic Calendar).

OR

Option B = LATER

Students who wish to take a course satisfactory/unsatisfactory must obtain the instructor's permission and register to do so by filing a request with their academic dean **up to four weeks before the last day of classes** (see specific deadline date in the Academic Calendar).

Leslie Digby (Evolutionary Anthropology):

Is there data on the impact of P/F?

Norman Keul (Academic Dean, Trinity College):

We looked at data on students enrolled in multiple programs (i.e., double majors, one major & multiple certificates), and found that more students are now engaged in them. During the same time period, the number of P/F courses has diminished, with students opting to take interdisciplinary courses rather than P/F.

George McLendon (Dean of Arts & Sciences): The University of Rochester had no freshman grades. It was unbelievably disastrous and the policy was consequently dumped. The university came back with an S/U policy similar to the one proposed here today. Princeton has limited the number of courses that a student can take P/F and that has been helpful. Dean Keul's point supports the policy because we want to encourage exploration.

Lee Baker (Dean of Academic Affairs, Trinity College) was unable to attend the meeting today. However, he wanted to share his opinions about the proposal. He agrees with all consensus points – Yes to limited opportunities for first-year students, Yes to giving departments flexibility to denote S/U courses; No to students using P/F as a “bail-out plan” for poor choices during intellectual risk-taking.

Professor Micaela Janan (Classical Studies):

Please clarify Peter Feaver's comment about upgrading to a graded course by the withdrawal deadline, 4 weeks before the end of the course. Also, what are the counter-arguments to upgrading?

(Peter Feaver and Dean Norman Keul commented on these issues)

Peter Lange (Provost): One issue is the bundling of item 4 with a timetable. As the author of Curriculum 2000, I can assure you that the students will be able to figure out how to work the curriculum, while the faculty may not be able to do the same.

Andrew Janiak (Philosophy): The faculty will not understand the policy. The faculty's lack of understanding of the curriculum may inhibit the quality of advising for both parties.

Ingeborg Walther (Academic Dean): Students are given up to 4 weeks before the end of the course to make a decision to upgrade to a normal grading rubric; we are encouraging students to do well in P/F courses.

Dean McLendon: Are we encouraging intellectual risk-taking or risk avoidance? Within three years, we will assess the policy to determine if Trinity has created an effective policy.

Chelsea Goldstein (DSG student representative on the Academic Standards Committee): If a student is doing poorly, they will withdraw anyway. We will not see a change in students' risk avoidance. However the proposal is assuring and hope that it will encourage more academic risk-taking.

Ron Grunwald (Biology): For Item 3, would it enhance the likelihood for students to be caught in an administrative trap (i.e., taking a class S/U that it required for their major)?

Peter Feaver: The current policy does NOT allow for any departmental leeway; but the students will hopefully figure out the intricacies of this new proposal.

Provost Peter Lange: Ron's point is profound. A S/U course could count towards 3 particular majors; perhaps there should be a generalized policy about pre-reqs.

Eric Wibbels (Political Science): Is this a frequent problem?

[A majority of the Council]: Yes.

Peter Feaver: We thought that the S/U at C- level would appease most departments.

Scott Yakola (HPER): Does this impact GPA? And what if your course is already designated as P/F (such as PE courses)?

Micaela Janan: Can a department DUS make an exception?

[Ruth Day thanked Peter Feaver who had to leave the meeting for another commitment.]

Ron Grunwald (Biology): There are times when it is advisable and better that students withdraw from a course. It gives them an opportunity to possibly retake the course when they are in a better position to perform better academically.

[After further discussion, Professor Day thanked the Council for a thoughtful discussion and encouraged representatives to discuss the proposed policy with their colleagues. There will be a vote at the next meeting.]

Information Technology: Security & Privacy

Overview

- Duke previously placed more emphasis on individual privacy than on security
- Now there is more emphasis on security
- What is the appropriate balance between IT security and privacy?
- Current policy is old (1997) and out of date
- The University IT Advisory Committee has revised it and is seeking feedback



John Board
Campus IT
Advisory Committee

Presentation



Paul Horner
Chief Information
& Security Officer

John Board: The 1997 ITAC Statement on Security and Privacy supported protecting privacy. However times have changed and a new statement (“Acceptable Use Policy”) has been drafted. It places more emphasis on security (e.g., legal situations that might require that University officials examine emails or

computer data). Nevertheless, even today only in most extreme cases will access to email or computers be given to others. During the lacrosse case Duke had to freeze copies of emails. Judicial matters sometimes require that the University provide or examine email.

Paul Horner: The University is very careful to ensure that individual privacy is not violated without legal and just cause.

John Board: People should never share their password. A software program is used to examine the quality of passwords. It is called Tipping Point and it is effective.

[The new Statement on Security Privacy and the Acceptable Use Policy were reviewed]

Paul Horner: We have our “marching orders” to share the new policy with each of University’s schools and to ask for feedback.

Ruth Day (Chair): Can a department chair get access to a faculty member’s e-mail?

Paul Horner: No. This should not happen.

[Additional discussion concerned other Schools and bodies in the University that have already been consulted, next steps in the process, and appreciation for consulting with the A&S faculty.]

Close of Meeting

Chair Ruth Day thanked the Council members and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

David Malone
Acting Executive Secretary