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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Student Life Committee Meeting, Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Arts & Sciences Student Life Committee

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Student Life Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 23 March 2010
Bib Lab, Olin Library
12:30-1:45 p.m.

In attendance: Creston Davis, Denise Cummings, Patricia Tome, Bill Boles, Alex Brown, Cristina Figueroa, Mahjabeen Rafiuddin

Visiting: Karen Hater, Diane Willingham, Yudit Greenberg

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m.

The minutes from the March 2nd meeting were approved.

Cristina Figueroa asked that the agenda be altered so that the religious holiday policy could be discussed first. Yudit Greenberg was present and had to leave at 1 p.m. The committee agreed that the religious holiday policy be moved first.

1. The Religious Holiday Policy (See attachment 1)

Boles opened the discussion by explaining the changes he made to the original document presented by Figueroa at the previous meeting. He presented three different proposals as to how to address the proposed policy.

Conversation ensued:

Cummings stated: Deans likes process. Will Dean Joyner be ok wit a simple statement? Is "must communicate with the professor" enough?

Paladino countered: We need a form

Cummings agreed, offering: Similar to the one we get for athletic events.

Creston concurred.

Boles arbitrarily stated: The college has no statistics or any information as to the religious backgrounds of our students.

Figueroa, back on track with the topic, said: The Office of Multicultural Affairs could make up the form and then send it to another office on campus to get it approved. It will not be much work, as there's not a huge population out there of students who will need it.

Greenberg nodded: I support the form for it indicates that Rollins recognizes and respects the presence of a diversity of religious groups in our community .

Paladino offered in a cool, calm voice that reminded many people on the committee of a young Clint Eastwood: I saw a lot of eye rolling at the faculty meeting when this topic was brought up. A lot of head-shaking. This policy needs to be in the hand of Office of Multicultural Affairs. Student affairs as a whole should support this policy, not just necessarily the Faculty or the Dean of Faculty.

Boles, bringing the whole room down, muttered: Student Affairs has nothing to do with what goes on in a faculty member's classroom. The policy is between the faculty member and the student.

Paladino, with a steely resolve, squinted: It still should go on to OMA.

Rafiuddin agreed: It will be great if OMA can keep records of all of this. It provides valuable information. OMA can definitely house everything.

Dean Hater, as always four steps ahead of everyone else, mentioned: This form should be something on-line that can be filled out by the student at the beginning of the semester. Or it can be on-line and then it is sent out to the current faculty members and the student's advisor. From the Dean of Student Affairs office we can send out something to the students explaining "If you are planning on missing the classes for a holiday, it is your responsibility to fill out the on-line form." If you don't, the faculty member then can say no if the student asks at the last minute.

Greenberg suggested: We can use freshmen orientation to train the student on religious holidays.

Rafiuddin admitted: We are not in the program for freshmen orientation, even though we would love to be there.

Hater offered: There should also be a line on the syllabus from the professor. Something is offered to the faculty to place in it, just like the language from Gail Ridgeway's office.

There was then a bit of a shoot out between Boles and Davis as to language in the proposed policy.

Boles stated: I will play with this statement and ask someone from student affairs to come to our next meeting. At this late stage in the semester this probably will not come into effect until 2011. The process is also unclear. Is it just approved by the Executive Committee, does it go to the faculty, does it go to AAC?

Figueroa asked: Is it a good idea to meet with President Duncan?

Boles in a joyful tone exclaimed: You should ask Duncan and see where he stands on that. Definitely pursue it!

Boles then asked: Shall we vote on whether or not I go back and make changes reflecting our conversation for proposal #3?

Davis, always looking for attention, seconded it.

It passed.

Rafiuddin did a shout out: I just want to recognize Cristina Figueroa and the changes she has been making around the campus.

Everyone applauded her work.

2. The Learning Green Initiative

Davis and Cummings will do another test in this new site tomorrow.

3. Statement of Honor and SGA

Boles, getting jiggy with it, asked: What's up with it?

Brown revealed: We haven't gone over it on the Executive Committee. Hopefully, we can get it done by tomorrow's meeting.

Boles, always so politically minded, probed: Elections are next week. When will new president be inducted?

Hater, always a font of knowledge, stated: At the end of the school year they are inducted. They are here during the summer. The new electees start shadowing in April.

Boles, in a conspiratorial kind of way (NOT!), whispered: Remember that in our timeline we wanted to get this done this academic year. If it is not approved and there is new SGA leadership, will that mean we will have to start all over again?

Davis volunteered to attend the meeting with SGA Executive Board tomorrow if they voted on the Statement of Honor.

Brown then revealed some of the irregularities currently in place with the election process.

Hater offered: The SLC might be a good forum to start discussions on how to build a strong student government (SGA) and provide them the help they need.

Boles noted the comment and placed it on the agenda for next year's committee to examine.

4. Announcement about Residential Organization Placement

Dean Hater announced the selections for Residential Organizational Housing for the next academic year. Strong Hall will go to become a Foreign Language house. Eco-Rollins will be in Mowbray House. Residential Life is working with the Interfaith Group to acquire some space in Elizabeth Hall, so they can begin to work on their programming.

Rafiuddin stated: She is appreciative of the opportunity to have housing for the Interfaith group. While she prefers the more private space of Mowbray House for praying and other religious practices, she is fine with Elizabeth Hall. She will be working with Residence Life to find a perfect space for these practices.

5. Announcement from Boles that the next meeting will be on April 5th from 5-7 p.m. to deal with Code of Conduct changes.

6. Boles asked for nominations to replace the three open faculty positions.

The committee suggested a number of faculty names. Boles said he would contact them and see if they would be willing to be nominated.

7. Boles announced the need to reschedule the April 15th meeting as he will be out of town. He will send out an e-mail to find out availability.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Tome and Bill Boles

ATTACHMENT #1

Proposed Religious Holiday Policy:

Proposal #1

CURRENT POLICY with new paragraph in bold

CLASS ATTENDANCE

It is the responsibility of the faculty to publish attendance policies for their courses in the course syllabus. If a distinction is made between "excused" absences and "unexcused" absences, it must be conveyed in the attendance policy. At the instructor's discretion, a student's grade may be lowered for failure to comply with the attendance policy. If the student feels s/he must be absent from class for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to confer with the faculty member to determine whether the absence is to be considered "excused" or "unexcused" as defined by the attendance policies. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs will communicate when students must be absent from campus for hospitalization, family emergencies, or similar contingencies. Students will be responsible for all work missed.

In regard to religious holidays, it will be the responsibility of the student within the first week of school each semester to obtain an ethnic/religious holiday form from the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The Office of Multicultural Affairs will confirm that the requested holiday is official. Requests made at the end of the semester are not permitted. The Office of Multicultural Affairs will contact faculty, informing them of which students

have requested days off. These request forms do not excuse the student from missing any schoolwork or exams. If work is due during the religious holiday, the student is responsible to contact the faculty member and make the proper arrangements to make up the work.

Faculty may find it helpful to contact the Office of the Dean of Students concerning students who are frequently absent or who have been absent from several classes in succession. Reports of this kind often help the Dean to identify students in need of special academic or personal counseling.

Proposal #2

CURRENT POLICY with new paragraph in bold

CLASS ATTENDANCE

It is the responsibility of the faculty to publish attendance policies for their courses in the course syllabus. If a distinction is made between "excused" absences and "unexcused" absences, it must be conveyed in the attendance policy. At the instructor's discretion, a student's grade may be lowered for failure to comply with the attendance policy. If the student feels s/he must be absent from class for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to confer with the faculty member to determine whether the absence is to be considered "excused" or "unexcused" as defined by the attendance policies. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs will communicate when students must be absent from campus for hospitalization, family

emergencies, or similar contingencies. Students will be responsible for all work missed.

In regard to religious holidays, it will be the responsibility of the student within the first week of school each semester to obtain an ethnic/religious holiday form from the Office of Student Records. The Dean of Faculty's Office will confirm that the requested holiday is official. Requests made at the end of the semester are not permitted. The Dean of Faculty's Office will contact faculty, informing them of which students have requested days off. These request forms do not excuse the student from missing any schoolwork or exams. If work is due during the religious holiday, the student is responsible to contact the faculty member and make the proper arrangements to make up the work.

Faculty may find it helpful to contact the Office of the Dean of Students concerning students who are frequently absent or who have been absent from several classes in succession. Reports of this kind often help the Dean to identify students in need of special academic or personal counseling.

Proposal #3

CLASS ATTENDANCE

It is the responsibility of the faculty to publish attendance policies for their courses in the course syllabus. If a distinction is made between "excused" absences and "unexcused" absences, it must be conveyed in the attendance policy. At the instructor's discretion, a student's grade may be lowered for failure to comply with the attendance policy. If the student feels s/he must be absent from class for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to confer with the faculty member to determine whether the absence is to be considered "excused" or "unexcused" as defined by the attendance policies. **In regard to religious holidays, students are responsible during the first week of school to communicate any conflicts with their professor. When religious observance prohibits any work (papers, tests, presentations) being done, the student must confer with his/her professor as to how and when the make-up work will be done. Absences for religious holidays will be "excused."** The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs will communicate when students must be absent from campus for hospitalization, family emergencies, or similar contingencies. Students will be responsible for all work missed.

EXTRA INFORMATION

The following are among the more significant high holy days where "work" cannot be done, if a student has a religious holiday not in the following list then that student

will have to meet with a staff member in the Office of Multicultural Affairs to discuss the holiday:

Holidays Recognized- (This year for example 2009-2010):

*Ramadan ends with Eid al Fitr sundown, September 19 through sundown, September 20 (Islam)

Rosh Hashanah is sundown, September 18 through sundown, September 20 (Judaism)

Yom Kippur is sundown, September 27 through sundown, September 28 (Judaism)

Diwali is October 17, 2009 (Hinduism)

*Eid al Adha is sundown, November 26 through sundown, November 27 (Islam)

The beginning of Pesach/Passover includes the evening of March 29 through the evening of March 30, 2010 (Judaism)

Good Friday is April 2, 2010 (Christianity)

*Islamic holidays are calculated on a lunar calendar and are approximate.

Peer and Aspirant School Data Considering Ethnic-Religious Holiday Policies:

1. 7 out of 8 Peer Schools have an Ethnic-Religious Holiday policy. (Two of these peer schools are not religiously affiliated.)
2. 7 out of 10 Aspirant Schools have an Ethnic-Religious Holiday policy. Six of these aspirant schools are not religiously affiliated.) (2 of the 3 that do not have a policy listed observances that faculty are encouraged to abide by.)

Specifics on the peer and aspirant schools:

Elon University- Top Peer and Aspirant school

- [http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious%20life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml)
- Summary- A list of recognized holidays are on the website. If your holiday is not on the list, you have to contact your Academic Dean or the Office of Religious Life. You have the first week of the semester to request which days you will have off. Students are responsible for getting with their instructors and discussing how and when assignments will be made up.
- PDF of form- [http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/students/religious life/ReligiousObservanceNotificationForm.pdf](http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/students/religious%20life/ReligiousObservanceNotificationForm.pdf)

Southwestern- Peer School

- Methodist affiliated
- **It is an official policy in their student handbook**

Willamette University- Peer School

- In the Fall of '09 the faculty, staff and students drafted a proposal for a Religious Holiday policy and are in the process of making it an official policy.

Colorado College- Peer School

- A campus wide email is sent out informing faculty of upcoming ethnic/religious holidays and to be sensitive to them. They have not had an issue with faculty not allowing students to make up exams.

Trinity University- Peer School

- The following policy is in the faculty handbook

VII. EXCUSED ABSENCES FROM CLASS

(Approved by the Faculty December 9, 1991. Modified by the Faculty on December 12, 2003.
Modified by the Faculty on October 19, 2007.)

Students who are absent from class **in order to observe a religious holiday**, who are absent from class while participating in a University-sponsored dramatic production, or who are absent from the campus because they officially represent the University in such sponsored activities as intercollegiate athletics, debate tournaments, and tours will be excused from classes under the following circumstances:

- A student's absence from class does not excuse the student from any work missed during the absence. Students may not be penalized for excused absences; the student and instructor will devise an appropriate substitute for missed work, classes, and examinations.
- The responsibility to make up work lies solely with the student, who should discuss the missed assignments with the instructor.
- Students must discuss with the instructor as far in advance as possible the fact that they will miss classes to observe a religious holiday or to represent the University.
- In cases of students representing the University, the names of students who will miss classes must be sent to their instructors by their instructor or coach as far in advance as possible of the class to be missed.
- Note: Coaches, sponsors, and instructors should make every attempt to schedule travel, games, matches, tours, and other University-sponsored activities at times that will have the least conflict with students' class schedules

Rhodes College- Peer School

- The following email is sent out: "The Chaplain's Office encourages all faculty to be aware of major religious holidays and to accommodate students who may wish to refrain from work or attend religious services." They have never had a student report that a faculty member was insensitive to such a request.
- They do not have an official policy in the faculty handbook

Furman University- Peer School

- They currently do not have a policy in place.

Villanova University- Peer School

- *Their policy excuses students from class and the opportunity to make up the work without penalty.*

Bucknell University- Aspirant School

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND SCHEDULE-FALL 2009

- As you prepare for the fall semester, it may be convenient to have a summary of a number of academic policies regarding class schedules, attendance, suggested examination schedules, and religious holidays. Feel free to contact this office if you have questions about any of these policies.

3. Numerous religious holidays occur in the fall semester. As you begin planning your events, syllabi, and activities for the upcoming academic year, please keep in mind that religious observances and holidays are important to many of our students, and represent an important aspect of the University's diversity. Please encourage your students to see you privately for alternative accommodations if your class or assignments conflict with religious observances during these religious holidays.

Holidays during Fall Semester 2009 that have presented major conflicts in the past include:

September 18-20 (sundown Friday through sundown Sunday): **Rosh Hashanah**

September 20: **Eid ul-Fitr**: (end of the Ramadan fast)

September 27-28 (sundown Sunday until sundown Monday): **Yom Kippur**

The following two days are Holy Days of Obligation for Roman Catholics, who are required to attend Mass these days:

November 1: **All Saints Day**

December 8: **Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.**

You can access the 2008-09 "Selected Religious Holidays and Celebrations Calendar via the Chaplains and Religious Life web-site at:

www.bucknell.edu/Documents/Chaplain/Religious_holidays_09_10.pdf.

Macalester College- Aspirant School

- The faculty created a policy in 2007.

Davidson College- Aspirant School

- They don't have a specific policy but the holidays are provided on a calendar and they encourage faculty and administration to not schedule any events on high holy days.

Colgate University- Aspirant School

- No official policy but a list of observances are on the school's website.

Carleton College- Aspirant School

- They start school a day later because of Rosh Hashanah, but they do not have an official policy. Cases are solved by a professor by

professor basis only when a student shows that they need to observe this holiday.

Bowdoin College- Aspirant School

- Their religious policy says no students are required to take any examinations or fulfill any scheduled course requirements on major religious holidays.

Colby College- Aspirant School

- They have a religious policy. All quizzes and other examinations are not scheduled on these days and students are excused.

Oberlin College- Aspirant School

- Religious holidays or the day after Thanksgiving can be observed by using Spring/Fall break days(?)

University of Richmond- Aspirant School

- All religious holiday observances are excused through the Dean's office.

Washington and Lee University- Aspirant School

- They do have a policy.