

9-28-2010

Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 28, 2010

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Recommended Citation

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee, "Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 28, 2010" (2010). *Academic Affairs Committee Minutes*. Paper 45.
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AAC Minutes – September 28, 2010

In attendance: Barry Levis (Chair), Rick Bommelje (Secretary), Gloria Cook, Chris Fuse, Lila Martin, Sebastian Novak, Dawn Roe, Darren Stoub, Martina Vidovic

Guests in attendance: John Sinclair, Kevin Griffin, Sharon Lusk

The meeting was called to order at 12:32 PM.

Minutes. The minutes of the September 28, 2010 meeting were approved with correction.

Announcement: Barry welcomed student representative Lila Martin to the committee.

New Business

1. Administrative policy on charging students additional tuition for taking 23 or more credit hours.

Barry stated that a new item of business has surfaced as a result of the Dean's announcement during the last meeting about the new administrative policy that students who take 23 hours or more will be charged additional tuition. He also indicated that the origin of the policy came from the President two years ago who stated in an Executive Committee meeting that he was concerned that students were taking a tremendous number of hours and graduating early. They were graduating in three years instead of four and the College was losing out on a year's worth of tuition. Barry noted that this was somewhat peculiar since Deb stated last week that there were only a few students involved. The problem with this policy was brought to Barry's attention by Thomas Ouellette and John Sinclair about concerns that their two departments had about this regulation because it puts strains on them. Barry invited John Sinclair and Jennifer Cavanaugh to the meeting. Kevin Griffin represented the Theater department. They asked us to look at this policy and have a discussion on the curricular impact.

John stated that the policy will impact the Music department in three ways. First, the department is a big proponent of double majors. At least half of the Music students are double majors. Second, the department offers a number of one and two hour courses that students are required to take these courses by the National Association of Schools of Music. Because of the lessons and ensembles, music students can easily take 22-24 hours a term. John indicated that the department is not experiencing students graduating early. Third, he believes that students will begin taking their Gen Ed course at community colleges. He also believes it will be damaging to the department and to the Theater department. Darren asked if it would be advantageous to look at best practices at peer and aspiration institutions. Barry reinforced that the policy states that 22 hours is the maximum level. John stated that he would also like to see best practices. The Music department is a big proponent of students taking their Gen Ed courses at Rollins. Darren asked if we have data on the

number of students who are taking over 22 hours. Barry indicated that Deb had this information. Kevin stated that the Theater department is running a parallel with the Music department's concern. There are several 2 hour production courses that Theater majors are required to take. This policy would be detrimental to the department and he also believes that a number of students would be taking their Gen Ed courses at the community colleges. Gloria queried about the rationale for charging over 22 credits and what AAC can do to rectify it and present our reasoning for either not doing it or raising the requirement to 26 credit hours, for example, before additional tuition charges can be incurred. She also wants to see the data on the number of students who are graduating early. Additionally she queried about starting from the other end with transfer credits and examining why so many transfer credits are allowed. She reinforced that the committee needs a game plan on this issue and move one step at a time. Rick asked if it is the intent of the committee to challenge the policy that has been passed. Barry stated that we have to first look at the current data and survey the peer and aspirant schools.

Darren shared that the Provost has stated that the institution is moving from an educational model to a business model. Barry emphasized that he believes that students are not going to pay for the additional tuition. Lila stated that the typical student who graduates early desires to save money and would not pay the additional amount. John stated that one of the big concerns has been the shift from the traditional three hour to four hour courses. Barry indicated that there is a committee that is exploring this issue. John also stated that the College has articulation agreements with the community colleges. It is his experience that students who transfer in do not graduate early. Chris questioned if the institution wants to penalize a student who is working hard toward a double major.

Dawn concurred that the issue is more about the transfer credits. John stated that it is possible that this is treating symptom and not the root of the problem. Taking too many transfer credits and not engaging the student in the major are much bigger issues to be addressed. Kevin pointed out that this during the ten years that he has been at Rollins, only one of his students graduated early. Barry asked the committee if this is a problem and issue to address. Darren stated that it is a huge problem for the Sciences and is a fundamental problem that needs to be addressed. The idea of pragmatic liberal arts is being devalued.

As a first step, Barry asked the committee members to survey the peer and aspirant institutions and find out what they are doing with this issue. Rick asked for clarification on the questions to be asked and it is: Do the peer and aspirant schools charge above a certain number of credit hours? Martina stated that this should be translated to the number of courses since a number of institutions have 3 credit hour courses. John suggested that there should be exceptions for students who have double majors. Barry will invite Toni to the next meeting to share information on the number of student that would be impacted by the policy. He will also confirm that Deb will be at the next meeting. After the committee has information on the issue, there was agreement that the administrators (i.e. Provost and President) should be invited to the committee to learn about their rationale.

2. Valedictorian Requirements.

Sebastian reported on the SGA Executive Board comments about the outstanding graduate proposal and nominating form. He stated that the students believe the summa cum laude

students should be the group invited to submit the application. He also indicated that the students voiced that the system should be weighted more toward the GPA than service. Additionally, they did not want an essay to be part of the application process. Barry agreed that there are questions on the form to present the case without also requiring an essay. Gloria asked if the students should have a face to face interview. Sebastian indicated that the students queried about preference going to double majors and also the number of credits at Rollins. He emphasized that the Executive Board is still uncomfortable of having transfer students be eligible. Additionally, the students do not like the term 'Outstanding Graduate Student'. They preferred the term 'distinguished'. After discussion about the student concerns, Barry stated that he believes we have reached a compromise position in the sense that we have tipped the selection in favor a four year student but have not excluded a transfer student. It was also agreed that the title will be 'Rollins College Distinguished Graduate'. Barry will revise the form and upload it on Blackboard for review. The essay will not be a part of the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:44 PM.

Rick Bommelje
Secretary