

Minutes approved at the AAC meeting of 8/24/10

AAC Minutes – April 26, 2010

In attendance: Jim Small (Chair), Wendy Brandon, Don Davison, Chris Fuse, Annie Hilb, Barry Levis, Tocarra Mallard, Sebastian Novak, Dawn Roe, Don Rogers, Steven St. John (Secretary), Lito Valdivia

Guests in attendance: Allisa Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of April 19 were approved.

Announcements. Jim announced that although the Curriculum Review Committee Phase II had appeared set, there had been a miscommunication regarding the appointment of David Charles by the Division of Expressive Arts. The Chair of the Expressive Arts Division would resolve this issue and provide the name of a representative (possibly still David Charles) in the near future. Jim also announced that it was usual to have a final meeting with the newly elected members of AAC, but since that committee also was not yet set due to late divisional and at large elections, he would do his best to have a meeting with the future committee prior to summer. Barry Levis, as a returning member, agreed to call the first meeting of Fall, 2010 if necessary, and organize an election to establish next year's chair.

New Business.

On-Line Registration System

AAC received a memo from Paul Stephenson on behalf of the Department of Biology and from Lisa Tillman requesting that Rollins College investigate the possibility of an on-line preregistration system. Both memos expressed frustration with the current system in regards to students having difficulty getting needed classes. Both memos also referenced systems at other schools where on line or touch tone systems had been successful.

Annie agree that the current system is frustrating. Barry noted that the faculty had voted for the current system to enable all students to at least get their first choice for classes and possibly a second choice as well. The faculty are also concerned that in an on line system, in which students get immediate feedback about courses that they have been placed into, would devolve into an "early bird gets the worm" scenario creating enormous hardships for students that ended up in the back of the line.

Don Davison reported that the Dean's Office is already actively researching the possibilities with the goal of having something in place in Fall, 2010 for the Spring, 2011 preregistration period. In response to concerns that an online system would inhibit proper advising, Don

Davison noted that most systems require students to obtain a registration code from the academic advisor, enforcing that an advising meeting takes place.

Wendy suggested that it would be nice to have a system that makes suggestions to students as they are filling out their schedule. She imagines that a student who fails to get into a particular course might then see a list of suggested courses that are similar to the course that was full. Chris thought that would be pretty difficult to do, that it would take years to get that to work.

Barry observed that the online system being researched in the Dean's Office would require faculty approval. He noted that one of the big problems with scheduling right now isn't so much the registration system, but rather the fact that so many courses are scheduled in the same, popular time slots. Jim said that it was his understanding that this issue is being dealt with. Don Davison confirmed that departments must allocate their courses across the scheduling matrix, but that some departments are more cooperative than others. Plus, some departments have unique curricular needs. He suggested that the Monday-Wednesday 75-minute time slots are the most problematic, since they overlap with two hourly slots. Late-day scheduling doesn't provide much of a solution because Holt classes have scheduling priority after 4 pm.

Barry also noted that practices for sports teams occur in the afternoon. The athletic department had been cooperative in the past moving practices from any time during the day to late afternoon to minimize the conflict between sports practice and class scheduling.

Barry imagines a system in which students cannot take courses too far removed from their grade level, e.g., freshman can take 100 – 200 level courses, sophomores 100 – 300 level courses, juniors 200 – 400 level courses, and seniors 300 – 400 level courses.

Sebastian imagines a system in which scheduling priority is awarded by GPA after seniors and honors. He felt this was a proper incentive and reward and gave academic scheduling preference for those students that had demonstrated a high priority on academics. In response to objections, Don Davison noted that some schools do in fact use a GPA-preferencing system. Annie noted that GPA-preference is used in assigning housing.

Jim asked that a formal outline be presented to AAC that the committee could review and bring to the faculty at the appropriate time.

Internships

Two questions came to the committee regarding Internships. Bill Boles asked why there was a hard date for the start of academic internships (currently June 1) when many students had the opportunity to begin as soon as classes in the Spring came to an end (i.e., as early as the last day of classes or after the student's last exam). Thom Moore asked if the fact that students registered for an internship could receive up to 4 credits for a given internship awarded by a staff member (Allisa Johnson) was a violation of the Bylaws that stipulate that no more than 2 credits will be awarded "in cases where a faculty member is not involved in the course".

Allisa noted that the internship office had never received a request for an internship to start as early as the last day of classes. The start date is June 1 so that all students are aligned when they take the summer Internship course. However, exceptions are made on occasion to allow a student to begin earning hours as soon as graduation day.

Barry noted that Bill Boles' memo suggested that a student might not have any final exams which was a violation of the Bylaws. Sebastian agreed that he had had exams on the last day of classes rather than during the final exam period. Jim noted that that rule is occasionally relaxed; last year for the faculty involved in the Antarctica trip, for example.

Allisa pointed out that a student may start an Internship at any time, but that academic credit is determined by the number of hours logged beginning June 1 (2 credits: 80 hours, 3 credits: 120 hours, 4 credits: 160 hours). These hours overlap with the Reflections course.

Given that the Internship does grant exceptions in certain cases, there was discussion about whether this should be noted somewhere. It was agreed that the current practice was more clear: advertise a June 1 start date, but continue to consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Wendy suggested that Jim communicate the rationale to Bill Boles.

With regard to Thom's question, Allisa noted that she was hired to oversee the day to day details of internships and stay abreast of federal law. Don recalled that this used to be the responsibility of a faculty member (first, Don himself). Prior to that, there was a great deal of variability in how internships counted, and so putting it in one faculty member's hands helped to standardize the amount of credit granted for a given amount of effort.

Barry said that the faculty did pass a policy regarding faculty oversight of any course over 2 credits. This was inspired by concern over the Leadership courses which were directed by staff members. Allisa said that her understanding was that Internships had been specifically exempted from this policy. AAC agreed that this was a critical question.

In the case that this was not so, the committee briefly discussed "stopgap" measures. Wendy thought that the Department Chairs should have the final say on credit. Annie felt that the Department Chairs wouldn't be in position to make a judgment, as they would lack information that Allisa had access to. Wendy felt that the Chairs would undoubtedly lean heavily on Allisa's appraisal. Steve agreed with Annie and did not feel that another layer of bureaucracy be added to the process, though he did agree that the process had to follow policies adopted by the faculty.

Following the meeting, however, this issue was resolved. Don Davison researched the minutes of the Faculty (February 28, 2008). The resolution Thom Moore alluded to reads as follows:

To be inserted in the Arts and Sciences Policies and Procedures:

Any course taught by an instructor who is not a tenured or tenure-track faculty member, for which a student receives either graded academic credit or more than one hour of academic credit without a letter grade, must be offered within an academic department or academic program of the Arts and Sciences, and the instructor must hold the credentials required under the guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to teach within that department or program, or be approved for an academic exception under SACS guidelines by the Department or Program and Dean of Faculty. Exceptions to this policy may be made for internships, where a student may be awarded up to four hours of academic credit (without an associated letter grade) for an internship outside of the context of a department or program during a semester.

In light of the last sentence beginning "Exceptions...", AAC felt that no action needed to be taken in regards to the query of Thom Moore.

Don Rogers moved that the committee thank Jim Small for serving as Chair and Steven St. John for serving as secretary. The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 a.m.