



Educational Policies Council
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, 20 October 2014

Ex-Officio Members present: Associate Provost Melody J. Tankersley (representing Provost Todd A. Diacon); Faculty Senate Chair Donna (Lee) L. Fox-Cardamone; Deans James L. Blank, James K. Bracken, John R. Crawford, Donald F. Palmer, Eboni J. Pringle, Robert G. Sines, Deborah F. Spake, Douglas L. Steidl, Mary Ann P. Stephens; Senior Associate Dean Vincent J. Hetherington; Associate Deans Joanne M. Arhar, John (Jack) R. Graham, Catherine E. Hackney, LuEtt J. Hanson (representing herself and AnnMarie LeBlanc), I. Richmond Nettey, Cynthia R. Stillings, William T. Willoughby; Director Robert A. Walker

Ex-officio Members not present: Deans Sonia A. Alemagno, Barbara A. Broome, Wanda E. Thomas; Associate Deans Janis H. Crowther, Donald R. Williams; Assistant Dean Thomas E. Klingler

Faculty Senate-Appointed Representatives present: Professors Richard Feinberg, Thomas Janson, Fred T. Smith, Roberto M. Uribe-Rendon, Donald L. White; Associate Professors Christopher A. Was, Linda L. Williams; Assistant Professor Terrence L. Uber

Faculty Senate-Appointed Representatives not present: Professor Katherine A. Kerns; Associate Professors Anne B. Morrison, William C. Ward III

Council Representatives present: Associate Dean Mary Ann Haley (representing David H. Kaplan); Professors Michael W. Chunn, Timothy A. Roberts (representing Danielle Coombs); Associate Professors Robert E. Cimera, Michael Ensley, Pamela K. Evans, Eric D. Johnson, Jayaram (Jay) Muthuswamy, Athena Salaba, Denice Sheehan, Jonathan F. Swoboda; Assistant Professors Tina D. Bhargava, Mary A. Mooney, Debra S. Shelestak, David (Blake) Stringer, Belinda S. Zimmerman

Council Representatives not present: Professor Ann F. Jacobson; Associate Professors Thomas W. Brewer, John A. Marino, John H. Thornton; Assistant Professors John C. Duncan, Jonathan P. Fleming

Observers present: Graduate Student Senate Vice Executive Chair Fritz Yarrison

Observers not present: Undergraduate Student Government Academic Affairs Director Michelle A. Crisler

Consultants and Guests present: Susan M. Augustine, Alan A. Brandyberry, Willie J. Harrell, Jennifer S. Kellogg, Yza Y. Melvin, Alexander W. Moore, O. Felix Offodile, Matthew M. Rollyson, Gail M. Rebeta, Katherine (Katie) J. Smith, Kathleen J. Spicer, Linnea A. Stafford, Therese E. Tillett, Whitney E. Wenger, Linda J. Zucca

Representing Provost Todd A. Diacon, Associate Provost Melody J. Tankersley called the meeting to order at 3:22 p.m., on Monday, 20 October 2014, in the Governance Chambers of the Kent Student Center.

Joint EPC Action Item 1: Approval of minutes of 18 August 2014.

Associate Professor Pamela K. Evans moved for approval of the minutes, which was seconded by Dean Donald F. Palmer. The motion passed unanimously.

Graduate EPC Information Item 1: Program development plan to establish a major of Business Analytics within the Master of Science [MS] degree.

Associate Provost Tankersley invited Dean Deborah F. Spake to provide an overview of the item. Dean Spake announced that the proposed master's degree is a heavily quantitative, 30-credit hour program designed to meet the growing demand for business analytics in industry. An additional faculty member will be hired in order to successfully deliver the program, but Dean Spake indicated that expected class sizes will enable the college to break even financially. The College of Public Health, the School of Digital Sciences, the School of Library and Information Science within the College of Communication and Information, and the Department of Computer Science within the College of Arts and Sciences provided letters of support for the new program.

Associate Provost Tankersley introduced the two lesser action items from the Department of Geology within the College of Arts and Sciences. Associate Dean Mary Ann Haley gave a brief summary of the changes, and no questions were asked. With no further questions, discussion or announcements for the graduate council, Associate Provost Tankersley released the Graduate EPC members from the meeting.

An EPC member asked if Undergraduate EPC Action Item 1 could affect placement of students into graduate programs. Director Therese Tillet indicated that a student's whole transcript, including grades for any forgiven courses, could be reviewed for admission to graduate programs. Nothing has changed in that respect. Associate Provost Tankersley used this question as an opportunity to transition to the first action item for the Undergraduate Educational Policies Council.

Undergraduate EPC Action Item 1: Revision of Course Repeat Policies for undergraduate students to (1) allow all repeated undergraduate courses, rather than only lower-division courses, to be eligible for recalculation of the GPA; and (2) limit the number, to three, of overall attempts to a course before a student can no longer register for that course without departmental/college intervention.

Associate Provost Tankersley explained that the proposed revisions to the current Course Repeat Policies, brought forth by the EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies, are intended to address factors that inhibit student success and graduation at Kent State University. She directed members to EPC agenda Attachment 3, which includes information reviewed by EPC Ad Hoc Committee members prior to their decision to present proposed revisions to EPC.

Associate Provost Tankersley for a motion for the item, which was given by Associate Professor I. Richmond Nettey and seconded by Professor Fred T. Smith.

Associate Provost Tankersley opened the floor for discussion, and invited the EPC member who first raised a question about the item to repeat her comments. The EPC member expressed concern about extending the GPA recalculation provision of the Course Repeat Policies beyond lower-division courses. She shared her perspective that reviewing students for admission to graduate programs may become more challenging if the transcript is not an accurate reflection of student performance, which she felt would be the case if grade forgiveness became an option for all students at all course levels. She also expressed the opinion that grade forgiveness to the extent proposed would be a disservice to students who decide to pursue graduate study.

Dean Eboni J. Pringle shared that the EPC Ad Hoc Committee's rationale for limiting course attempts was to address the issue of excessive unsuccessful course repeats. She explained that data collected by the EPC Ad Hoc Committee indicate that students were repeating courses excessively in an effort to increase their GPAs, and extending their time to graduation in the process. Dean Pringle also stated that, while concerns about the need for a complete transcript were valid, extension of the GPA recalculation provision and restriction of course attempts were proposed to support undergraduate student graduation rather than graduate school admission processes. It was emphasized again that the student transcript would continue to reflect all courses and grades.

Associate Provost Tankersley shared the EPC Ad Hoc Committee's perspective that a higher grade earned by a student repeating a course was a more accurate reflection of the student learning that had occurred during the subsequent attempt at the course.

An EPC member asked if the EPC Ad Hoc Committee discussed limiting the number of courses that students are able to repeat. Director Tillett stated that restrictions on the total number of courses eligible for repeat was discussed, but limitations of the Banner system would make enforcing these restrictions impossible. Associate Provost Tankersley added that the frequency with which undergraduate students change majors (thereby changing the courses required for graduation) may complicate attempts to restrict the total number of courses students are able to repeat.

An EPC member asked for clarification about the sentence in the proposal stating that, after three attempts at a course, students will no longer be able to register for that course without college or campus intervention. Associate Provost Tankersley indicated that exceptions to this proposed policy would require the college or campus to initiate a registration override based on whatever criteria it determine to be appropriate. Dean Pringle added that this intervention would force a conversation about students' progress and their ability to be successful while attempting to move forward in their current academic plan.

An EPC member shared his opinion that he viewed these policy revisions as a "free pass" for students, and that he believed the university would see a large increase in the number of students who repeat a course at least once.

An EPC consultant, representing her college curriculum committee, voiced support for the policy revisions. She explained that, from the perspective of her college curriculum committee, senior-standing students very close to the required GPA for graduation would be more likely to take advantage of upper-division grade recalculation than students committed to pursuing graduate study. She identified the two options currently available for senior-standing students very close to the GPA required for graduation: (1) repeat an upper-division course, which would have only an incremental positive effect on the GPA, or (2) repeat lower-division courses, which would have a more significant impact on the GPA but be unhelpful to the student's learning and mastery in their major. She shared her opinion that the proposed policy revisions would better support student graduation on a timely basis.

An EPC member asked if individual departments would be able to refuse course repeats under any circumstances. Director Tillett said that was not possible under existing policies. However, departments can develop Not Permitted to Continue policies that could include course repeats as a criterion.

An EPC member voiced concern about the extension of grade recalculation in upper-division courses incentivizing course repeats. Associate Provost Tankersley stated that there were also a number of existing disincentives for students to repeat courses, including cost and extended time to graduation. She echoed her previous statement that grade recalculation in upper-division courses was discussed less as an incentive, and more as a better reflection of the learning that had occurred in the student's subsequent attempt in a course.

An EPC member stated that grade recalculation for upper-division courses may have an effect on the ability of individual units to report accurate information to external constituents, such as program accreditors. Director Tillett and Associate Provost Tankersley responded that Cognos may have the ability to run reports for specific unit needs.

An EPC member shared his perspective that GPA shouldn't necessarily be an indicator of what a student knows, but instead an indicator of their overall university performance. Another EPC member asked if the EPC Ad Hoc Committee had any data regarding the potential for increased class sizes or change in demand for courses based on the proposed policy changes. Associate Provost Tankersley responded that data obtained with current course repeat policies in place indicated that the number of students who repeat courses more than three times is very small. The report (appendix B) indicated that 87.5 percent of students attempted a course once, 10.4 percent attempted twice, and 1.7 percent attempted a course three or more times. Of those courses repeated, 92.6 percent is done at the lower-division level, and 7.4 percent is done at the upper-division level.

In response to a question by an EPC member, Director Tillett clarified that these proposed changes would not override any program or departmental progression policies (as well as any Not Permitted to Continue policies), or any minimum grades required in any classes as specified by program areas.

An EPC member asked, in light of the policy requiring all students to meet with an advisor prior to class registration, if another policy limiting the number of course attempts was necessary. Associate Provost Tankersley indicated that, while she trusted advisors to talk with students about academic progress, students still register for courses independently. Because it is not the responsibility of advisors to sign off on each individual class that a student will take, a formal policy would be necessary to enforce course attempt limitations.

An EPC member stated two concerns: (1) that students who want to take advantage grade recalculation for upper-division courses may take seats away from students who progressing successfully within the major, and (2) that allowing upper-division grade recalculation conflicts with the university's desire to promote itself as a more rigorous institution and to attract stronger students.

An EPC member asked Associate Provost Tankersley if the current motion could be split into two separate items, in order to provide for a clearer vote. After some discussion, Dean Douglas L. Steidl moved for the item to be divided, and Associate Dean Nettey accepted Dean Steidl's amendment to his original motion. Associate Provost Tankersley clarified that the group would be voting first on the proposed policy revision to impose a limit of three attempts to a course before a student can no longer register for that course without college/campus intervention. With no further questions or discussion, the item passed unanimously.

Dean Steidel then moved for approval of proposed policy revision that would allow all repeated undergraduate courses, rather than only lower-division courses, to be eligible for recalculation of the GPA. Dean Palmer seconded the motion. Nine EPC members voted to approve the motion; 11 EPC members voted against the item. The motion did not pass.

Undergraduate EPC Action Item 2: Approval of Kent Core and/or Global Diversity designation for specified International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations.

Dean Palmer explained that, after International Baccalaureate (IB) exams were reviewed by program areas for direct course equivalency, the Office of Curriculum Services was charged with reviewing any exam determined not to be directly aligned with the content of a specific course for possible Kent Core and/or global diversity designation.

The Office of Curriculum Services produced a memo (Attachment 4) outlining their recommendations, which were informed by comparing the IB exams against the Ohio Transfer Module and Kent Core guidelines, to be reviewed by the University Requirements Curriculum Committee. Dean Palmer indicated that the committee unanimously approved the recommendations of the Office of Curriculum Services and moved for approval of the item. The motion was seconded by Associate Dean Nettey; with no further questions or discussion, the item passed unanimously.

Undergraduate Educational Policies Council Action Item 3: Endorsement of the Writing Intensive Course (WIC) requirement review report.

Associate Dean Nettey presented the Writing Intensive Course (WIC) requirement review report on behalf of the WIC sub-committee of the URCC. Recommendations, based on 2012 student survey data that was collected and analyzed by the URCC, include:

- (1) the URCC should send a “WIC checklist” to faculty members teaching writing-intensive courses, prior to the beginning of each semester;
- (2) the Center for Teaching and Learning (formerly the Faculty Professional Development Center) should be encouraged to offer a WIC workshop for faculty and graduate students teaching writing-intensive courses at least once each academic year;
- (3) academic units that continually exceed the enrollment maximum for a WIC should be required to bring the maximum to 25 students within two years, and academic units should be required to justify exceeding the maximum enrollment if they do so continually;
- (4) all academic units offering WIC must ensure that at least 50 percent of the final course grade is based on writing by students in the WIC; and
- (5) the Kent Core Composition requirements should be standard prerequisites for all WIC.

Associate Provost Tankersley requested a motion to approve the WIC requirement review report. Professor Fred T. Smith moved for approval of the item, and Associate Dean LuEtt J. Hanson seconded the motion.

An EPC member asked for clarification about the intended audience for the WIC workshops. Associate Dean Nettey explained that department chairs could recommend the workshops to faculty who teach a WIC. The EPC member also asked what would be considered sufficient justification to exceed the WIC maximum enrollment of 25 students. Another EPC member expressed concern that graduate students were able to teach a WIC. Associate Dean Nettey explained that the WIC sub-committee found that graduate students with the responsibility of teaching a WIC are often working toward a doctorate.

In response to a number of questions by EPC members, Associate Provost Tankersley and Dean Palmer clarified that the URCC WIC report contained recommendations for practice that would be reviewed by departments, and that EPC members would be voting on the approval of the report, not the implementation of each individual recommendation included in the report. With no additional questions or discussion, the item passed unanimously.

Associate Provost Tankersley requested questions or comments for any of the information items, lesser action items or remaining courses listed on the agenda. An EPC member requested that, if the graduate and undergraduate councils are to continue meeting jointly, that protocols be established so the different councils have a better understanding of when they are expected to participate in voting for agenda items. He expressed the opinion that, as EPC representatives, all members should vote on all issues. Associate Provost Tankersley stated that she would welcome the opportunity for EPC to meet as one unified committee, rather than two separate committees. Director Tillet reminded members that a decision was made at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year to meet jointly as two distinct committees, and revisit that decision (to combine councils) in spring 2015. Hearing no additional questions or comments, Associate Provost Tankersley adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie J. Smith
Academic Program Coordinator
Curriculum Services
Office of the Provost



Jennifer S. Kellogg
Academic Program Coordinator
Curriculum Services
Office of the Provost