

ACADEMIC POLICIES COMMITTEE

Monday, September 27, 2021

2:30p.m. | UC Council Room

MINUTES

Present: Benedict, Brewer, Couch, Franklin (Dineen), Matchett, Pullen, Schaberl (Lightfoot), Vaughan, Wieben, Wood (Muller)

Absent: Benavidez, Kraver

Guests: Heiny, Levin

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:33pm.

Approval of the Agenda

Approved without objection.

Approval of the September 13, 2021 meeting minutes

Approved with objection.

Announcements

Chair's report (Vaughan) – No Report.

Reports from Councils:

Graduate Council (Brewer) – We discussed a permanent S/U grading option, and the Graduate Council expressed there is no place for an S/U grading option at the graduate level. There would be too many difficulties with existing Graduate School policies.

Liberal Arts Council (Muller) – We met last week and worked on refining the curriculum review process for IS/MS courses. The Council is working with JMS to develop an LAC video.

Professional Education Council (Kraver) – Vaughan reported on behalf of Kraver that PEC does not support a permanent S/U grading option for courses that are part of teacher education programs, given licensure requirements.

Undergraduate Council (Dineen) – UGC is forming a sub-committee to examine the creation of a permanent S/U grading option. We are also looking at recommendations for Canvas use, syllabus statements, and more. Commencement student speaker applications are open.

Student Senate (Benavidez) – No Report.

Unfinished Business

• **Permanent S/U Grading Policy**

- The committee briefly discussed current grading policy, by which courses may be designated by the program offering them as either S/U or letter graded.
 - Programs may designate courses as S/U when a letter grade distinction is not necessary.
 - This is different from the question of whether to add an option for students to elect to take a course (that is normally letter graded) as S/U.

New Business

• **Grade Point Average**

- Couch presented proposed catalog language to clarify how UNC GPA is calculated:

The cumulative University of Northern Colorado grade point average (GPA) is calculated as follows: the credit hours and quality points are totaled for all courses and across all campuses within the same degree level.

- The issue arose when a student who graduated from UNC with a bachelor's degree in 2012 has now returned and is pursuing a 2nd bachelor's degree in Nursing. The student wants a fresh UNC GPA. However, GPA at a given level (UG or GR) is calculated cumulatively across time.
 - The student has already started the Nursing program, meaning the student met the program's GPA requirement for admission.
 - It is common practice across higher education nationally to include all institutional coursework by level in calculation of GPA, regardless of date of completion.
 - The language proposal presented is based on language in CU Boulder's catalog.

DISCUSSION:

- GPA does not typically follow students from one institution to another.
 - Institutions transfer credit when a minimum transferable grade is met (often "C-" or higher), but the grades themselves are not transferred.
 - Only resident work is counted toward GPA.
 - All resident work of the same level is counted in the cumulative UNC GPA.
 - Students pursuing a 2nd BA at UNC whose first bachelor's degree was awarded at another institution start their program with no UNC GPA.
 - In this sense, they are relieved of the baggage or benefit of their GPA from other institutions.
 - Cumulative institutional GPA may be seen as a discouragement from pursuing a 2nd degree at the same institution (depending on past academic performance).
 - Depending on their previous academic performance, some students want their previous UNC GPA to be included in the overall calculation.
- Major GPA is not reported on official transcripts; it is, however, reported in Degree Works.
 - Seeing program-specific GPA is helpful for evaluators reviewing admissions packets/transcripts.
 - Reporting major GPA outside of Degree Works would require larger conversations.
 - Official transcripts show specific detail on when degrees are awarded; it is clear to discern a student's performance during any given semesters.
 - The Registrar's Office has provided letters to programs/employers to explain GPA within a given program of study.
- The committee agreed the language proposal needs to be clarified. For example:
 - Address the vagueness of the "campuses" reference.
 - Clarify what is meant by "level" (i.e., UG and GR).
 - References needed for other GPA-related policies (such as Fresh Start, grade replacement, petition to count toward UG or GR level, etc.).
- Couch will incorporate the committee's suggestions and bring revised language for review next time.
- The committee discussed the difficulty of finding various grading-related policies, as the information is housed in multiple places in the catalog and Registrar website.

- A sub-committee could review grading-related policies and make a recommendation about how to package/present information in an easily digestible way for students, faculty, and advisors.

MOTION: Brewer – It is moved to create a sub-committee to examine grading policies in the Registrar’s website and university catalogs for clarity and consistency.

VOTE: Approved by voice vote.

- Brewer and Vaughan volunteer to serve, and Couch will identify a Registrar staff member to help in the task.
 - We will begin work once Couch sends a volunteer.

Comments to the Good of the Order

- Applications are open for commencement student speakers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Please encourage graduating students to apply.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24pm.

Angela Vaughan
Chair

Betsy Kienitz
Recording Secretary