Academic Standards Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, October 14, 2009
4:00 p.m. 2007 Ullsvik

Attending: Beth Frieders, Shane Drefcinski, Roxane Gunser, David Krugler, Mike Dalecki, Mark Albers, David VanBuren, Barb Daus

Absent: Kevin Haertzen, Phil Sealy, Irfan Ul-Haq, Chris Schulenburg, Angela Udelhoven

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

1. Freiders moved, Krugler seconded a motion to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

2. Barb Daus commented on the Barons ranking of UW-P as a “non-competitive” college in regards to admission requirements. Barons could not substantiate the source from UW-P that provided the information, nor would they produce the information for UW-P review. It was also determined the information was from 2005 and not 2007 as the article stated. Barons also stated that the data has been published and there was little if any recourse. The committees’ discussion questioned the convenient balance of gender within the subsets of undergraduate and graduate programs that did not reflect the reality on the campus. Daus also commented that UWP entrance requirements were equal to or above other UW Systems schools and that UWP was to voluntarily post such stats on the UW Regents Accountability website.

Committee member Frieders produced a document that indicated UWP had 3400 non-TSI applications and accepted approximately 2600, while the TSI had 600 applicants and accepted approximately 500. This disproved an earlier statistic that UWP accepts 98% of all its applicants.

It was not indicated by the committee to produce any outcomes from the Barons report, but Chairman Dalecki commented that it does support the common consensus in the publics’ mind that UW-P is a “safe” school for high school graduates to fall back on in the event that a first choice school falls through.

3. Freiders reported on the Committees’ report to the Faculty Senate this week concerning grade inflation. She said that the discussion generated was not productive in the sense that new material or data was produced, but merely mimicked the discussion and findings of our own committee. The commonality that both committees shared was the desire for more raw data to be reviewed and interpreted as needed. In short, we would like to see raw data, not pre-generated reports.

Freiders stated that grade inflation is occurring nationwide and it will need to be addressed in terms of university policy. Chairman Dalecki continues to stress the need for a common definition that will serve as a guide to any meaningful outcomes. His definition being: the occurrence of higher grades over time.
The discussion returned to the access of raw data from the University and the UW System. VanBuren commented on the desire of both entities to maintain a level of control over data as a possible challenge in regards to its distribution to the committee.

Chairman Dalecki closed the discussion stating a desire to contact Duane Ford before the next meeting.

4. Assessment Oversight Committees’ review of General Education was presented by Drefcinski. He stated it is a reviewing assignment that alternates annually between the Assessment Oversight and the Academic Standards Committees. It is an informal process that tends to be inconsistent throughout the departments. The example stated was that the Math Department was assessed last year in a straight forward approach based on students meeting the required competencies, while the Social Sciences being less rigorous and more based on learning outcomes. Some concerns being that the outcomes based approach is less likely to recognize shortcomings within a department and may even miss the need for teaching basic skills relative to the major.

Freiders noted that a challenge exists that as the assessment assignment is transferred to the next committee, the former recommendations are not often fully appreciated, nor built upon by the current assessor.

5. Course repeat policy was again discussed. Freiders produced a letter from the Faculty Senate Chair Mark Evenson, dated March 2005. This document stated the issue as “sufficiently small”. Freiders noted that its premise being third time repeats, not seconds does reflect the issue at hand. Committee members stated their own class situations could challenge the letters indicated numbers and felt that repeat students were creating an unfair situation for first time students attempting the class, i.e. early registration privileges for repeaters with higher accumulated credits over underclassmen (first attempts) with fewer credits.

Considerations given the topic included: higher fees for repeaters, a justice approach of gpa averages based on all attempts at the class and not grade replacement, and incentives to accelerate a perceived hardship to students uncommitted to completing the course with a satisfactory grade.

A possible remedy that could be implemented was that first time students are first in line to register, while repeat students have to wait until a date closer to the start of classes.

It was again determined that raw data interpretation was needed to truly evaluate the situation.

Next meeting: Wednesday October 28, 2009, 4:00p.m. 2007 Ullsvik

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Albers