

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
MINUTES

March 6, 2019

10:40 a.m.-1:10 p.m.

307 Kerr Hall

Present: Noriko Aso (CCI Chair, ex-officio), Needhi Bhalla, Elisabeth Cameron, Manel Camps (Provost Rep), Bruce Cooperstein, Noah Finnegan, , Joy Hagen (NSTF Representative), Rebecca Hurdis (Senate Analyst), Lily Moser (SUA Rep), Onuttom Narayan (Chair), Tchad Sanger (University Registrar, ex-officio), Megan Thomas (pro tem Chair), Micah Perks, Lauren Woo (SUA Rep).

Guests: Preceptor's Representative Emily Burt, Deputy Registrar Margie Claxton, Deputy, Associate Registrar Kalin McGraw.

Absent: Dongwook Lee, Matthew Mednick (ASO Director)

I. Announcements and Consent Agenda

The following consent agenda items were approved:

- 2/20/19 Minutes
- DANM and METX Program Statements
- Astronomy Program Statement
- Program Statement Letters
 - MCD biology
 - EE Biology
 - Music
 - Literature
 - Linguistics
- Additional Letters
 - CEP re posthumous certificate
 - CEP to Senate Chair re Transfer Admission guarantee
 - Request for posthumous certificate of progress

II. Museum Concentration

This proposed new concentration in the HAVC B.A. program has been resubmitted by the department, responding to CEP's earlier comments. Chair Narayan mentioned that in email correspondence following the resubmittal, the Arts Division analyst confirmed that the the HAVC curriculum plan for 2019-20 and the number of lecturers needed is comparable to previous years. The HAVC Chair explained the status of the four proposed courses; even if none of these are approved in time to be offered in 2019-20, students would have a reasonable number of elective courses to choose from. The HAVC Chair also explained the rationale behind including HIS 199 but not HAVC 199 in the catalog copy.

Action: The concentration was approved, with conditions which will be specified in CEP's letter.

III. Program Statement Review

The committee reviewed Politics + Legal Studies, EPS + ESCI, Philosophy, and Art department program statements.

Action: Letters to be sent to the Politics + Legal Studies, EPS + ESCI, Philosophy, and Art departments.

III. W Grade Policy (Consultation with VPDUE Richard Hughey)

VPDUE outlined the problems with the current policy regarding Withdrawal (W) grades. Up to the sixth week of a term, a student can withdraw from a course if they choose, resulting in a W grade on their transcript. There are no limits placed on the number of such W's. After the deadline, students can only get a W grade (and withdraw from a course) in an emergency. These emergency petitions create a significant workload for college advisors and CAPS near the end of the term.

CEP drafted policy about W grades last year to help with this, and has received comments from the PBSci Division Chairs. The objection raised was that a change of the W deadline to the 9th week would change student behavior (increase the number of Ws). This will increase the pressure on impacted courses. It will also affect major qualification policies which restrict the number of non-passing grades, if a W is a proxy F grade.

Discussion: Will a later deadline increase the number of Ws for students who would have passed the course? Or will they see that they are likely to pass, and continue with the course?

Students can genuinely feel overwhelmed, and there has to be a certain number of 'free' W's. The question is what the maximum number allowed and the deadline be. On an average, a student takes one to two Ws. (Lecture and labs counted separately.)

Ws affect graduation time, major qualification, and triple take restrictions, therefore they should be used carefully.

VPDUE would like to minimize or eliminate the number of Ws that require documentation.

W's in emergency situation: should students have to withdraw from the whole quarter? If they can complete one or two courses, is that not better for everyone?

Three options, all imperfect:

i) deadline for free W's late, and maximum number allowed large. Will solve the problem of advisor and CAPS workload, because emergency W's will be almost unnecessary and therefore rare. Will be viewed as a dilution of academic standards and therefore opposed.

ii) deadline for free W's early and/or maximum number allowed is not large. Causes demand for emergency W's, which are restricted to limit workload, e.g. by requiring withdrawal from the quarter. This seems unnecessarily restrictive for a student who could make progress during the term.

iii) deadline for free W's early and/or maximum number allowed is not large. Emergency W system flexible, like now. This is the status quo, with the high workload.

Does the minimum progress requirement ensure that W's will be self-limiting?

Do the restrictions on triple take of courses limit the number of W's? Colleges grant petitions even if department disagrees. Also, in a course that is a major requirement but is offered by another department, the major sponsoring unit has no control over triple takes. Should triple take petitions be transferred to department or division? Not while departments limit matriculated students taking courses elsewhere.

Confidence gap for some students, causes them to take unnecessary Ws. This is probably worse with an early (6-week) deadline.

Most students use W's thoughtfully; this is not happening willy nilly.

If a W can be a proxy F, but can also be emergency W, can the two be separated? Or can programs be allowed to impose a limit on Ws (separate from the limit on Fs) for major qualification?

The discussion will be continued at a later meeting.

IV. History Program Statement

The committee considered two alternative formats for the History B.A. program statement. The structure of the program is such that very little emphasis is placed on courses being lower vs upper division. Instead, requirements are grouped by region of concentration, breadth, etc. The standard format in the new catalog groups courses according to lower and upper division; putting the History requirements in this format makes it less clear. Should an exception be approved? Weigh the improved clarity in the program statement, vs the clarity of the catalog in its entirety if a uniform system is followed.

Action: Exception for History B.A. approved because of the highly unusual structure. For next year, HAVC will be informed that they can do the same.