

MINUTES OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO  
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Office of the Academic Senate  
Ext. 8-2743

March 12, 2008

Members Present: C. Edmondson (Chair), C. Coon, K. Fugelsang,  
D. Helsel, K. Goddard (student).

Members Absent: A. Fiala (excused), F. Padilla (excused).

The meeting was called to order by Chair Edmondson, at 10:05 a.m., in the University Center, Room # 203.

1. Minutes. MSC to approve the Minutes of 2/20/2008.
2. Agenda. MSC to approve the Agenda as amended to add a new item # 6 Draft System Wide Policy on "Course Withdrawals" and renumber subsequent items accordingly.
3. Communications and Announcements.
  - a. Update about 3/3/08 meeting with executive committee regarding our work on the Sexual Harassment Policy.
  - b. Announcement from Academic Chair Botwin regarding last day to submit items to the executive committee for consideration before the end of the semester.
  - c. Upcoming National Coalition Building Workshop: 4/12 8:30 – 4:00 UC202 - free to faculty, staff, and students. Register for the workshop by calling 278-6946. The committee discussed how Francine Oputa and the Central Valley Cultural Heritage Center have an excellent program and exciting activities during the Spring 2008 semester.
  - d. There will be a vote on the Student Fee Referendum April 7 – April 9. The fee will be for Instructionally Related Activities (IRA). Current IRA fee is \$17, proposed fee is \$70.
4. Policy on Accessible Instructional Materials.
  - a. Discussion of memo.

MSC to approve the memo and forward to the Executive Committee.

5. Interim Policy on Dropping and Adding Courses (APM 231).

- a. Discussion – First we reviewed discussion from the previous meeting. There was further discussion of concerns about the definition of serious and compelling reasons.

In discussing requests for withdrawal for reasons of poor academic performance, committee members felt that poor academic performance alone was not a serious and compelling reason because students should be able to evaluate the academic demands of the course and decide whether their current circumstances and academic skills are consistent with their ability to meet the requirements of the course and earn a passing grade. This is especially true of upper division students who are in good academic standing. However, lower division students have not had as much experience discerning how well their skills and resources can support effective academic performance in their coursework. Faculty could be encouraged to test students within the first three weeks of classes so that students have a better sense of the difficulty of the class. Faculty can facilitate students' access to academic advising related to course performance by talking directly with students about accessing the services of the Learning Center. The Learning Center can support faculty in their role as facilitators of academic advising if faculty call them for consultation. Faculty advising and performance monitoring can enhance the effectiveness of the policy in supporting student learning outcomes, retention, and graduation.

The committee decided to recommend that the definition of serious and compelling reason contain the words "other situation," with a specification that the other situation is a "circumstance to which the student has been subjected." Also, the committee decided to suggest adding the following reasons to the list of those mentioned in the definition of "serious and compelling reason" to withdraw from a course: financial concerns and changes in childcare situations.

There should be an appeals process available to students who do not receive approval to withdraw for serious and compelling reasons from their Academic Dean. The appeals process would provide a mechanism for supporting students with legitimate reasons for withdrawal and for supporting instructor/dean concerns.

There is no rationale stated for the policy. A rationale would assist in the implementation of the policy in service of effective instruction and of the need to retain and graduate

students. The draft policy emphasizes reduction of the potential for abuse of the policy. There was committee consensus that fair policies are important despite the potential for abuse.

- b. Chair Edmondson will draft a memo to Senate Chair Michael Botwin that will be copied to the AP&P committee with recommended changes to the policy and recommendations for implementation.

6. Draft System Wide Policy on "Course Withdrawals".

Deferred until next meeting.

7. Draft System Wide Policy on "Course Repeats".

Deferred until next meeting.

8. Honor Code and Policy and Procedures on Cheating and Plagiarism.

Deferred until next meeting.

MSC to adjourn at 11:03 a.m.

The next Student Affairs Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 26, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in the University Center, Room #203.

Agenda.

1. Approval of the Minutes of 3/12/2008.
2. Approval of the Agenda.
3. Communication and Announcements.
4. Implications of System Wide Policies for the Revision of the Interim Policy on Dropping and Adding Courses (APM 231).
5. Implications of System Wide Policies for Repeating Courses.
6. Honor Code and Policy and Procedures on Cheating and Plagiarism.