

## **Revised DRAFT: Curricular Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes for Oct 26 2011**

3:30-4:30 pm Kayak

Voting members present:

Rainer Newberry, Chair; Anthony Arendt; Carrie Baker; Dave Valentine; Debra Moses; Jungho Baek; Todd Radenbaugh (audio).

Voting members absent:

Brian Himelbloom; Diane McEachern; Retchenda George-Bettisworth.

Non-voting members present:

Dana Thomas; Linda Hapsmith; Libby Eddy, Doug Goering, Donald Crocker

Guest: Carol Gering

Taking notes: Jayne Harvie

### **A. OLD Business**

#### **1. Recent GERK issues (chairperson, etc) —comments by Dave/Carrie**

The committee meets this Friday, October 28, so nothing new to report at this time. Chair Alex Fitts is reviewing previous work of the committee, Dana noted to explain the delay for the meeting.

#### **2. ‘Stacked’ courses -- comments by Tony**

Tony mentioned that they now had lists of both faculty and students who’ve taught/taken stacked courses. They’ll be using this info to distribute their surveys over the next several weeks. Rainer asked about a deadline for responses, but Tony noted that one hadn’t yet been set.

#### **3. Incompletes....cont.**

##### **A. Presentation by Carol Gering RE steps CDE is taking to reduce I’s and F’s**

Carol provided hand-outs (copies attached) for Online, semester-based courses vs. Paper-based, semester-based courses, depicting the percentages of Incompletes given by academic years 2006-07 through 2010-11 by semester, along with the percentages of Incompletes that became Fs.

She noted that for online, semester-based courses, the percentage of Incompletes decreased from 23% down to 8%, which is a significant improvement. She also noted that CDE is getting away from semester-long paper-based courses, but not from year-long paper-based courses which still serve students who are incarcerated. The goal is to have all semester-based courses online. In the meantime, semester-length paper-based courses are phased out when they come in for changes, and no new ones are being created. The exception is for high-demand courses which are still available as semester-based paper-based courses (until the online versions are created).

Rainer asked why the downward trend in percentages for Incompletes for online courses was occurring. Carol explained that they’ve instituted a number of improvements, working heavily on course design and pedagogy and learning theory for distance and online courses. About two years ago they switched direction and started paying attention to how the courses are being taught – instructor response time; seven principles of good education – rapid feedback and instructor presence; clear directions, welcome e-letter; if a student doesn’t do anything in the first two-weeks then instructors note that on a roster and CDE support staff call those students.

Rainer noted that Pete said only a number of courses have gone through this augmentation, Carol responded that all courses are undergoing quality improvement. Also, the payment model is changing. The practice has been to use paper-graders who are paid per lesson graded. The new pay model is cohort based, emphasizing interaction between students and with the instructor. Rainer asked how they know that this is effective thus far. Carol said she could explore that further for the committee.

Linda asked what the percentage is of instructors under the new pay model, and Carol responded that about half of the online courses are under the new pay model. (Some instructors teach multiple courses.)

Rainer observed that the number of F grades hasn't dropped. Carol asked about a comparison between distance and classroom courses for this aspect. Rainer said it's 20% vs. 35-40% of distance courses. He would like to know how the F grades are being addressed when the data becomes available. The percentage of Incompletes turning to F has not improved and Rainer stressed that they want to see improvement in this area.

Rainer asked the committee if the Senate should shorten the time allowed to finish an Incomplete from a year to a semester. Carrie asked why it was a year in the first place, and Dana mentioned because of military deployments. Dave suggested a review of the Incompletes every three months, which was met with groans when the amount of time and paperwork was considered. Dana mentioned that many adjuncts teach courses and then disappear, leaving no one to follow up with any incompletes, to which Dave noted that a three-month review could help in such a situation by shortening the timeframe for follow-up. A model was discussed that would allow for an "I" to be completed by the end of the next semester for the vast bulk of students, but a year for the military-related reasons. Todd noted that catastrophic illness needs to be included in the longer extension.

Dana reiterated having semester-long extensions, with possible extensions to two semesters; however, this doesn't address distance delivery students.

Libby explained why the Registrar's Office would not want different forms for the various categories of extension. Rainer suggested changing the wording on just the one existing form.

Dave stressed that the goal should be to change the expectation for completion time to a semester instead of a year, unless there's good reason not to do so. Dana suggested that a simpler path might be to set the completion time to a semester and handle exceptions to it via the academic appeals process.

Rainer asked for data to back all of this up. They need to know when most incompletes are successfully finished (shortly after the granting of the I, or right before the deadline?). There are situations when the faculty is at fault to take into consideration. Dana is going to write to Mike Earnest and copy others, to ask for the data.

There was general agreement among all the committee members present that shortening the timeframe for completion of the Incomplete would be beneficial.

Carol mentioned the fact that sometimes staff are stuck in the middle, trying to ask a faculty if an Incomplete is being granted for a truly valid reason. Todd brought up the fact that adjuncts can give Incompletes, asking if this should be disallowed. But the fact that students would then know (and act on the fact) that certain faculty could or could not grant Incompletes would become the issue. Posting grade rosters for every adjunct was suggested, and this was a plausible task in terms of Banner and OnBase. Carol noted this similarly for grade-books in Blackboard.

Making changes to faculty contract letters was mentioned. For example, noting how Incompletes would be dealt with if an adjunct leaves and isn't there to follow up with the student.

Rainer stated that the data is needed before any steps are taken with regard to forms, contract letters, or changes to policy.

Currently, there is no notification whatsoever that goes out to students or faculty that the year-end deadline is approaching for an Incomplete. Doug G. suggested that a half-year report on grades be done that faculty would use to then notify students. Getting a comparison of first half vs. latter half of the year in terms of the grades would be useful.

Everyone agreed on further discussion, getting more data, telling students what ideas are being considered, and pursuing some form of notification.

**B. Suggestions by Mike E regarding Exceptions to I→F ???**

Item B wasn't discussed as Mike was not present.

**4. Proposed motion:**

**The UAF Faculty Senate moves to require that all new courses offered wholly or in part by ASYNCHRONOUS distance delivery, and all existing courses adapted or converted to ASYNCHRONOUS distance delivery, must be approved by the appropriate subcommittee of the Faculty Senate**

Effective: Spring 2012

Rationale: The Faculty Senate has primary authority to initiate, develop, review and approve academic criteria, regulation and policy (Faculty Senate Constitution, Article 1, Section 1). This includes curriculum review. Current policy is that all courses with 'major' changes must be re-approved. This motion hereby DEFINES 'change from face-to-face to Distance Delivery' as a 'major' change.

**Asynchronous** distance delivery methods are fundamentally different methods of communication than face-to-face instruction. Effective instruction by distance delivery requires adapting or designing content for new formats and modes of communication. It cannot be assumed that a course approved for face-to-face delivery automatically passes review for a COMPLETELY different mode of delivery. The structure and content of courses intended wholly or in part for Asynchronous distance delivery must be separately reviewed.

This motion applies to all distance delivery courses within UAF, whether listed by an academic department, a rural campus, or the Center for Distance Education (CDE).

**DISCUSSION of proposed motion:**

Dana mentioned the additional workload to senate committees that would result with review of even just asynchronous courses. Rainer stressed the fact that faculty feel strongly about this issue and that there is significant fundamental change to courses that were delivered in a classroom going to distance delivery.

Carol mentioned her post to the Faculty Senate discussion group which included details about their approval process at CDE. Department heads must approve the course, and their designers adhere to a checklist. Would a senate review process supersede theirs? Rainer reiterated that a senate approval process is wanted, so that courses went through a Faculty Senate committee for review. If a course changes mode of delivery, then it must be re-reviewed by a senate committee. Carol asked if this extra scrutiny isn't a penalization. Concern over student learning outcomes was noted by Dana. He had the evaluation report from the recent accreditation visit, and gave an example about library usage. Rainer observed that contact hours aren't defined for asynchronous instruction. Dave noted the value of interaction

of faculty with students equates with contact hours. Carol asked what defines the interaction value – is it emails, telephone or face-to-face?

Everyone agreed that it was too soon for this motion to go before the senate. It should go back to the discussion board and Carol is encouraged to comment further. She was also invited to continue meeting with the committee on a regular basis.

Carol mentioned the fact that there are **15-30 course revisions and developments** being reviewed by CDE each semester.

**BH comments RE CDE presentation today [He wasn't able to be at the meeting and this comment was included in the agenda.]**

“Thank you for the explicit 4-step details, including the required 8-p form, regarding the quality mechanism established by the Center for Distance Education (CDE). I believe that the CDE process will alleviate concerns that the Faculty Senate has regarding oversight of distance-delivered courses at UAF.

I suggest that you create a separate box under "Syllabus" that describes what a grade of "Incomplete" means. Thus, the instructor and the student are *\*fully aware\** of the implications of not completing the course, except under extenuating dire circumstances encountered by the student.

Finally, I recommend that the CDE form include the required signatures from the school's or college's program or department chair, curriculum council chair and dean, so that all entities agree to which CDE course is being devised, revised, or transformed from a solely in-class taught course. Then, each person can be involved in assessing how well each course was being delivered and received by the students.”

**Because of time constraints, discussion on the rest of the agenda items (below) had to be postponed for the next meeting. Dana shared some further comments from the accreditation evaluation report before the meeting was adjourned.**

**5. Princess Tour CDL = 3 credit UAF 200 level course.** Part of a bigger problem??? Yes. There's a pattern of courses from some programs NOT meeting minimum contact hours. Other problems???

**6. Moving date of graduation...Sunday → Saturday** ...should we weigh in? Yes??? but not now??

**7. Proposed MS 'hooding' ceremony to happen Thursday night.** GACK HAS agreed to deal with this!