

Education Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: October 7, 2022

Faculty/Staff Members: Sonya Comins, Eric Edlund, Margaret Gichuru, Christina Knopf, Jennifer Moore, Jason Parks, Abby Thomas, Jeff Walkuski, Chris Widdall

Student Members: none

Ex-Officio Members: Andrea Robinson-Kuretich, Carol Van Der Karr

Guests: Nancy Diller

Members Absent: Jason Parks, Andrea Robinson-Kuretich

Topic	Comments/Discussion	Action
Approval of prior minutes	No corrections	Minutes approved
General discussion	<p>EPC has a visitor seat on GFEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GFEC meets biweekly, Monday 9 AM in Moffet 105 • Have representation there through Nancy and Carol 	Will send a rep if we are contacted about important matters that require our presence
Old business	<p><u>Visit by Tim Delaune</u></p> <p>Background: Tim has been chair of AGT for the last 9 years and is intimately connected with the procedures of the AGT and spoke about the purpose of the “no withdrawal” policy.</p> <p>Summary: This part of the policy that prohibits withdrawal after a finding is critical as it is what helps give teeth to the AGT process. This is most important for the large number of AGT cases that concern students who have their back up against the wall and who have not taken steps to remedy their situation (seeking support, going to office hours, etc.) and resort to cheating as a quick fix. Removing the clause that prohibits students from withdrawing after a finding would allow them to</p>	

attempt cheating and then effectively dodge the consequences if/when they get caught. This could have serious negative consequences and could result in an increase in the frequency of cheating due to diminished consequences.

Specific points from Tim:

- Clarification on the meaning of the term “finding” in the policies. This refers to the finding by the instructor, which is officially determined following the meeting between the instructor and the student and formalized with the form that is sent to the AGT (through Eunice Miller). A finding does not require confirmation by the AGT. It may be challenged by the student in an appeal.
- Slight infractions are not the issue. The real issue is students who egregiously cheat on an exam, plagiarize a test, buy a term paper, etc.
- The far majority of AGT cases are students who have committed some violation like that listed above, and who have done so because their backs are up against the wall and are not doing well in the course.
- An important part of what we are doing is training students to deal with tough situations and be responsible for their education.
- If we set up a system where there are few or no penalties for cheating (because a student could withdraw to avoid the negative consequences) then we are going to see an increase in cheating.
- The consequences of multiple offenses are not experienced by a student until the 3rd offense when a suspension is issued.
- There is something of an equity issue with allowing students to withdraw after a finding since seniors cannot typically make that decision if they still want to graduate on time and students who cheat in the last few weeks of a course (following the end of the withdrawal period) cannot withdraw.
- Removing this clause would deprive faculty of the ability to hold students accountable and teach them a hard lesson, which may be important for their personal growth.

- It is not acceptable for administrators to override faculty on this issue because that means that they are effectively substituting their pedagogical vision for the instructor's pedagogical vision. It is not good to have disparate implementation of this policy across schools or depending on who a student talks to.
- Advice from Eileen Gravani: it is never acceptable to encourage this except when there is a serious problem (e.g. a home life or medical issue) that warrants special consideration. The proper path there is for the associate dean to talk with the faculty member and work together to find a mutually agreeable solution.
- Should have a common place in the policies where these rules are clearly defined, and other places should refer to this.
- There is a small loophole in all of this: students could immediately withdraw from a course following notification from the instructor but before the meeting with the witness has taken place. One way for the faculty member to deal with this is just not to sign the withdrawal form since they have 5 days to do so before it gets kicked up to the associate dean. This should allow the faculty member sufficient time to have the meeting and submit the finding.

Tim's suggestions for improving the existing policies:

- Keep the policy mostly as-is.
- Make the policy exist in one place in the handbook and have other areas cross-reference that part.
- Make changes that more clearly spell out what is meant by a "finding" and who is responsible for that.
- Add a clause that gives faculty the authority to allow a withdrawal following a finding.

Discussion:

- The EPC's concern about not allowing a student to withdraw from a course following a minor infraction would be remedied by modifying the policies to give authority to instructors to allow withdrawal.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carol inquired about data on these processes and students and faculty perceptions. Tim's response was that he has data on the number of cases and recidivism since he has been chair – can send that on to us later. Tim's estimate was that it is likely about 10% of students with AGT cases who get a second offense and about 1% or less who get a third offense. There are issues of perception around what is meant by a “permanent record” and who sees this, where it lives, how long it lives, whether it is shared with the outside world, etc. 	
New business	<p>Plan for the next meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss changes to the AGT/withdrawal policies 2. Review & discuss draft policy change for residency requirements for concentrations 3. Review & discuss draft policy for microcredentials (time permitting) 	Eric will reach out to Tim to see if he can provide a modified policy
Adjourned		Meeting adjourned at 10:58 AM
	Respectfully submitted by Eric Edlund on October 7, 2022	

Note on file naming convention: Please save these minutes as **EPC-minutes-<year>-<month>-<day>.docx** so that they will be automatically ordered in the file folders. For example, if a meeting took place on April 1, 2021 then the file name would be **EPC-minutes-2021-04-01.docx**.