

1-31-2008

CWU Academic Affairs Committee Minutes - 01 / 31 / 08

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Minutes
Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee
January 31, 2008

Present: Tim Dittmer, Danielle Howard, Key Sun, Sura Rath, Marla Wyatt, Carolyn Wells, Kim Bartel

Absent: Joe Brooks, Tim Englund and Dan Neighbors

Guest(s): None

Meeting was called to order at 3:18 pm by Chair Kim Bartel

Review Minutes November 8, 2007 – Approved as amended to add Tim Dittmer as present.

Unfinished Business:

Final Examination Schedule, Student Survey – Kim presented the data from the student survey. The Executive Committee asked if they could do a similar survey of faculty. Tim Dittmer moved to do a survey, similar to the one used for students, of faculty regarding finals week schedule similar. Sura seconded. Motion approved.

New Business:

FS Curriculum Committee – policy wording – The Curriculum Committee is working on definitions of major, minor and specialization. Looking at setting up minimum and maximums credits for these definitions.

EC report:

Kim met with Executive Committee on January 2. They were happy with the student survey and would like a faculty survey done. Grade inflation charge is from the conversation with the Executive Committee. Kim explained to them that academic freedom of faculty is a big concern, and the committee did not want to put anything in policy that would violate academic freedom. They talked about the possibility of developing a university wide grading system and about different grading systems. Kim expressed the committee's concern about having an Executive Committee liaison at the AAC meeting rather than the chair going to the Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee indicated that they would like to continue with the process the way it is set up to see how it works. The Executive Committee was very positive and complimentary of the committee's work.

AAC07-08.04 Committee Charge

Based on previous ad hoc committee reports to the FS in 1994 and 1997-1998, consider the conclusions reached and examine how similar concerns have been addressed by other universities, especially in Washington and at peer institutions (from list compiled by CWU Office of Institutional Research). Please compare our current grading policy (Section 5-9.4.14) with those of other institutions to determine the impact of establishing a university-wide grading policy based on:

- a. a specific GPA
- b. the use numerical scores instead of letter grades

- c. adding class rankings or class averages next to student letter grades

If there is time and the committee is so inclined, please feel free to examine additional conclusions reached in these reports, including but not limited to:

- a. the effect of reducing or eliminating Withdrawals
- b. the effect of reducing or eliminating Incompletes
- c. the effect of sharing grade information/distributions among faculty by department/college (i.e., self-correction)

The EC requests a report by May 15, 2008, summarizing the committee's work and providing any recommendations that would effectively address grade inflation at CWU.

Carolyn indicated that Tracy has a book that came out that she will share with committee. Carolyn has requested a new query in SAFARI to look at grades by department and college. She also looked at peer institutions to see what they have. There have not really been any studies recently by most colleges. Dartmouth has an article regarding the cost of fighting grade inflation and the students who are suffering by the policy.

Tim Dittmer asked if institutional wide do we have grade inflation over a certain time period. At any time is there disparity in average grades across departments or colleges and is that a problem.

Kim indicated that it would be nice to develop a history of what is happening at CWU both departmental and university wide. What are other universities doing and compare us with others. What is the possibility of developing a university wide grading standard?

Kim asked the committee members to do some thinking and talking, will continue breaking this down and come up with a plan. Kim asked Carolyn to keep gathering some of the data she is working on.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.