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Student Academic Policies Committee Year-End Summary to the Academic Senate

University of Dayton. Student Academic Policies Committee

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Joe Castellano
George Doyle
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Tim Ilg
Robert Kearns
Laura Krabbe
Adam Kocoloski
Matt Morel
John Putka
Joe Saliba
Tom Skill
Megan Telfair – Chair

This semester the Student Academic Policies Committee met on three occasions to discuss the following issues:

First Meeting – January 29, 2003

Megan Telfair called this meeting to provide a chance for members of the SAPC to meet one another and begin brainstorming projects and ideas for the Winter 2003 semester. Nick Beck, Bob Gorton, George Doyle, Adam Kocoloski, and Megan attended. At this time, George voiced his concern regarding challenges that the current summer course schedule presented to faculty and students, in particular for the Engineering Department, and distributed a revised schedule aimed to lessen the opportunity for class-time overlapping to occur. Pros and cons to the revisions were discussed and the SAPC agreed to continue to look into the issue during the current semester and Fall 2003 term.

Second Meeting – March 5, 2003

On March 5th, Megan called the second SAPC meeting and senators Nick Beck, George Doyle, Bob Gorton, Bob Kearns, and Joe Saliba attended to continue discussion regarding the George's summer course schedule proposal. George submitted his latest draft of the Proposed Summer Time Schedule Guidelines and pointed out that the rationale behind the need for this schedule adjustment is due to problems within the current schedule: i.e. there is no set 12-week TTH class schedule, no test schedule for 12 week TTH classes, some class times overlap, some are taught in shortened time, Saturday test schedules are often not adhered to, and some classes start at non-standard times. The major changes proposed include: Adding a time schedule guideline for TTH daytime courses, as well as giving final examinations during regularly scheduled class times, lasting the length of the class time (75-100 minutes) rather than issuing them on Friday and Saturday mornings at 110 minutes. It was agreed that a letter would be issued to all department chairs and deans requesting their opinion of either Plan A: to follow George's proposed summer schedule or Plan B: Instead of overlapping classes, move to the option of Saturday classes as a part of the schedule. George agreed to present any feedback received from various departments at the April SAPC meeting before bringing it to the Senate for discussion.

The New Student Assessment of Instruction forms were also discussed, as Megan informed the SAPC that they were up for re-evaluation per request of the Winter 2000 SAPC. Megan submitted a form letter providing information about this re-evaluation to each of the student Academic Senators to pass along to the chairs of the respective schools/departments they represent on the senate. Senators were then asked to submit any feedback to Megan who would compile this information in a report for the SAPC to review and discuss at the April 2nd meeting.

Lastly, Megan informed committee members of the ECAS's request for the SAPC to investigate the University's policy regarding Dean's List Eligibility for Part Time Students. At this time, the SAPC decided to look into the current policy and discuss any proposals for revision at the April meeting.

Third Meeting – April 2, 2003

On April 2, 2003 members of the SAPC, including Nick Beck, George Doyle, Bob Gorton, Bob Kearns, Adam Kocoloski, and Megan Telfair met and followed up on George's proposal for summer course schedule changes. While he received some, but not a great deal, of feedback from professor chairs, George agreed he would distribute information regarding the latest updates to his proposed policy to senators at the April Senate meeting. Rather than highlight only the *changes* made to the current schedule, the SAPC recommended that the policy might read better if the *non-changes* had emphasis, as well. The SAPC hopes that after a brief discussion with the senate at the April 4th meeting, the policy can be brought back to the floor for a vote during the Fall 2003 term.

While the SAPC was asked to discuss its opinion on the fairness concerning the policy regarding Dean's List Eligibility for Part Time Students, the committee decided after reviewing the current policy that it does not feel any changes need to be made at this time. Overall, the SAPC decided that this does not appear to be that big of an issue in terms of overall fairness or advantage over full-time students. The rationale is that part-time status *implies* a student is taking a lighter course load as compared to a full-time student, and the student's transcript will reflect under what conditions the student earned "Dean's List" credentials, either PT or FT. Therefore, the SAPC would like to investigate whether by changing the current policy we would be solving a problem for anyone, and if so, re-visit this issue in the future.

Finally, the SAPC engaged in a productive discussion involving the Student Assessment of Instruction forms. Megan provided the committee with a copy of statements/suggestions presented by various faculty interested in bettering the process of professor evaluations. The Faculty Development Committee submitted its concern regarding the assessments, in particular, the significance these forms have in determining faculty promotion, tenure, and salary decisions. The FDC would like to see alternative and more effective ways for teaching to be evaluated, such as a "peer review" where faculty members observe each other teaching. The SAPC agreed to the logic behind an alternative/additional method of evaluation, seeing as how a student is more likely to rate a professor poorly if he/she is not doing well in the class. The bad rating, in such a case, may not be legitimately fair for determining the faculty's promotion just because a student(s) uses the assessment as a means of "getting back at" the professor. The SAPC is worried about how frequently students do misuse the assessment forms, and is receptive to ways that might prevent such activity.

In addition, the SAPC feels that students should be made more aware of the significance of these forms and the seriousness of completing them *honestly* and *completely*. To prevent students from rushing through the forms to leave class a few minutes early, faculty might consider distributing the forms at the start of lecture, thereby allowing ample time for their completion while precluding the temptation to hurry through the process. The SAPC understands that the overall length of the evaluations *is* another problem with the forms, and that the exclusion of questions that often times do not pertain to a particular course could prevent students from absent-mindedly marking a response even if it does not apply, which in such a case, would ultimately skew a professor's rating.

The Faculty Development Committee has expressed a strong interest in working with the SAPC to brainstorm, and eventually implement ideas that will improve this process. Megan will meet with the FDC on April 7th to inform them of the SAPCs progress on this issue and to gather additional feedback.