

**SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
YEAR-END REPORT – 2006–2007**

Submitted the SLA Agenda Council on May 7, 2007

Submitted by Jason Eberl, Chair

Members

Rick Bein, Geography

Mark Chappell, Economics

Jason Eberl (Chair), Philosophy

Danna Kostroun, History

Brian McDonald, English

Shannon Sherrill, Student

Brian Vargus, Agenda Council Representative, non-voting

Rick Ward, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, SLA, non-voting

Jim Miller, SLA, non-voting

Meetings

October 14, 2006

January 19, 2007

May 3, 2007

Responsibilities of Committee Members

1. Review petitions before meeting time;
2. Attend all meetings;
3. Discuss and vote on petitions during meetings;
4. Determine concerns of faculty, students, and the Committee;
5. Develop talking points and/or proposals for solutions to concerns to be sent to the SLA Faculty Assembly;
6. Be available for immediate e-mail consultations on urgent petitions;
7. Serve on the academic misconduct appeal board when requested.

Responsibilities of Chair

1. Keep in close touch with the SLA Dean of Students;
2. Call for and direct committee meetings;
3. Facilitate discussion and decision making at meetings;
4. Communicate with committee members when necessary;
5. Review and sign letters to students concerning results of their petitions (letters are prepared by the SLA Dean of Students Office);
6. Arrange for academic misconduct appeal board when requested;
7. Write thank you notes to members of the committee at end of the year;
8. Write the end of the year report.

Petitions

In 2006–2007 the SLA Academic Affairs Committee reviewed 26 student petitions. Two of which were modification petitions concerning the junior/senior integrator course; both were approved.

The remaining 24 were all student initiated grade change petitions, of which 5 were approved. Grade change petitions are received in the office of student affairs and then routed to the appropriate department and instructor. If the instructor supports the petition, they complete a change of grade request and submit it to the Office of Student Affairs in the School of Liberal Arts. If the instructor denies the petition it is forwarded to the Academic Affairs Committee for review. If a petition is not returned within a month, the petition is sent again. If there has been no response to a petition after two months, it is automatically forwarded to the Academic Affairs Committee for review without the benefit of comments from the instructor of record.

Among the 19 grade change petitions denied, the Committee recommended that 7 of them be changed to 'FX'.

It is also worth noting that, among the 24 grade change petitions, the majority (15) were requests to change an 'F' or 'FN' grade to a 'W'. Of these, 4 were approved by the Committee.

All decisions were made with full committee approval.

Topics of Concern

Policy Awareness

During its discussion of various cases, the Committee noted how uninformed many students are, and apparently some faculty members and advisors as well, of relevant academic policies regarding 'I' and 'FX' grades. For example, it is apparent that some faculty members are not aware that they do not have to allow students an entire year to complete the requirements to remove an 'I' grade. Even more evident is students not being informed of the policies regarding 'FX' grades, believing, for instance, that their previous course grade will *automatically* be changed to 'FX' if they re-take the same course—instead of it being a student-initiated process. Nearly 30% of grade change petitions the Committee reviewed were eligible for the 'FX' option.

The Committee thus recommends that the SLA Associate Dean for Student Affairs collaborate with the Registrar to devise innovative means of informing students, faculty, and advisors of relevant policies and procedures. For example, students could be prevented from registering for the same course twice (when not a variable title course) in Onestart unless they are authorized by their advisor, who can then take the opportunity to inform students of how the 'FX' grade process works.

New and Adjunct Faculty Orientation

On this same theme, the Committee notes that new faculty—and especially adjunct faculty, who in some cases may teach no more than one course per semester and not teach every semester—may be particularly prone to being uninformed of these policies. The Committee thus recommends that SLA devise a brief orientation sheet for new and adjunct faculty which will direct them to the appropriate sources for specific policies of which they may need to be aware—e.g. policies on ‘I’ and ‘FX’ grades, change of grade petitions, and academic misconduct. On this point, the Committee notes that specific pages on the Registrar’s web-site may be a more accessible source of information than the campus bulletin.

Committee Membership

The Committee also notes that greater awareness of relevant academic policies and procedures may be facilitated for new full-time faculty by having them serve on this committee.

Junior/Senior Integrator

Furthermore, the Committee urges the School of Liberal Arts to look carefully at the junior/senior integrator course requirement, making changes that would allow students more choices of approved courses and clarifying which types of courses may count as an integrator.

Thank you

Finally, the Committee offers great thanks to Rick Ward and Jim Miller whose guidance and organization has helped the committee function effectively.

And, as chair, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all members of the Committee for their service to our students and faculty.