

MINUTES OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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Office of the Academic Senate
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October 3, 2007

Members Present: C. Edmondson (Chair), C. Coon, A. Faila,
K. Fugelsang, G. Gechter, F. Padilla.

Members Absent: D. Helsel (excused), M. Lowe,
S. Casares (student) (excused),
T. Friedland (student) (excused),
M. Ortiz (student) (excused).

Visitors: None.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Edmondson, at 10:15 a.m., in the University Center, Room # 203.

1. Minutes. MSC to approve the Minutes of 9/19/2007.

2. Agenda. MSC to approve the Agenda as amended:

Add #5 Responses to CSU Task Force Report on
Drops, Withdrawals, Incompletes, and Repeats.

Add #6 Policies on Accessible Instructional
Materials.

Table discussions on subsequent agenda items
until next meeting.

3. Communications and Announcements.

- a. New student members T. Friedland and S. Casares have class conflicts with the meeting time. Chair Edmondson will contact Associated Students Incorporated (ASI) to have them removed from the committee until such a time that their schedules do not regularly conflict with the committee meeting time and to appoint new committee members who are available at 10:00 the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

- b. Campus Depression Screening Event is 10/18/2007, 9:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m., Area E University Health and Psychological Services. Call 278-6796 for more information. The screening event is a service to students, staff, and faculty designed to raise awareness about, reduce the stigma associated with, and increase early intervention for depression. Screening attendees complete a questionnaire about common symptoms of mental illness, watch a video about depression, and meet individually with a counselor to discuss their responses to the questionnaire and their reactions to the video. Screening attendees should plan to spend 45 minutes to 1 hour at the screening event. The theme for the 2007 even is “Help a Friend – Know the Signs.” Committee Members received fliers and agreed to help inform the campus community about the event. A copy of the flier will be posted to the student affairs committee website along with our meeting minutes.
 - c. There is an Ethics Center lecture today at 12:00 in the Alice Peters auditorium on “Whistle-Blowing”.
 - d. The Alcohol Safety Council (<http://www.csufresno.edu/alcohol/>) is implementing their Faculty Pledge Program. The Faculty Pledge Program encourages faculty to promote alcohol safety by providing faculty members “with appropriate material and information for students who may indicate they have a concern about the effect alcohol may be having on their academic and/or personal lives.” There are three requirements for faculty wanting to participate in the program: Read policies, post a notice in their office about willingness to talk with students about alcohol safety, and attend a 1 hour training session. There was a report from Dr. Gechter that 6 one-hour training sessions have been filled with willing faculty. The committee’s consensus was that other faculty should be encouraged to review the Alcohol Safety Council webpage and join the Faculty Pledge Program.
4. Harassment and Discrimination Policy.

Chair Edmondson shared content of conversations with M. Botwin, Chair, Academic Senate, and staff in the Division of Student Affairs about the concerns with parts of the policy that pertain to situations in which students feel they may be a target of harassment. Chair Edmondson also shared the location of relevant policies on the Academic Policies and Planning (AP&P) and Division of Student Affairs and Judicial Affairs websites.

The committee discussed the issues raised in the previous meeting and came to consensus that 4 out of 5 concerns were alleviated by the information provided by Chair Edmondson regarding her research about the policy. One remaining concern is about the wording regarding how the approved Harassment Policy, “supercede[s] all prior policies addressing discrimination.” Chair Edmondson agreed to have a conversation with M. Botwin about this concern.

Additional Concerns:

Implementation issues – particularly, how a student would know what to do if they wanted to consult with someone about an informal resolution to the issue while maintaining her/his confidentiality. Subsequent discussion was about potential procedures for the education of faculty and students (i.e., standardized syllabus statements, training for faculty about giving referrals to students for confidential harassment related consultations).

The policy specifies what to do if the student is not concerned about confidentiality. Perhaps the policy needs some specification of what a student should do if they want to maintain confidentiality and attempt to resolve the situation through informal means. The discussion led to a question about whether the policy and/or law precludes confidentiality under all circumstances. Chair Edmondson agreed to contact J. Redd-Williams about this question.

The committee agreed to resume discussion of the issue during its next meeting.

5. Drops, Withdrawals, Incompletes, and Repeats (DWIR) Report.

There were questions about whether there is evidence to support the contention that students with many withdrawals, repeats, and incompletes are preventing other students from having access to the CSU. There was consensus that the rationale for the policy recommendations is not sound.

Although the committee agreed that the CSU should have policies and programs that are designed to decrease the number of withdrawals and repeated classes, there was consensus that the recommendations for withdrawals and repeating classes were very punitive.

There was consensus that the policy recommendations would undermine the goal of increasing student graduation rates.

There was consensus that the recommendations are likely to have a particularly adverse impact on transferring, re-entry, and disabled students.

There was consensus that it would require several years and substantial financial resources to implement the policy because it creates a need for comprehensive, proactive advising and personal counseling for new students and other “at-risk” student groups.

There were questions about why the recommendations even considered student performance at other institutions. There was consensus that academic performance at other institutions should not affect the students’ access to the opportunity to withdrawal and/or repeat classes after admission to a CSU.

The committee came to consensus about requesting the following revisions to the current recommendations of the task force:

- 1) Withdrawals prior to transfer count for a maximum of 4 units toward the 18 unit maximum.
- 2) Repeated courses prior to transfer count for a maximum of 3 units toward the 16 unit maximum.

There was consensus to request the addition of a recommendation that provides individual campuses the option to create policies and procedures that allow students to request waivers of limits and/or waivers of consequences for having a large number of withdrawals and repeated classes.

The consensus was that the student affairs committee continue to monitor both system wide and local proposals for policies regarding drops, incompletes, withdrawals, and repeated classes and to advocate for policies that both support student success, and limit behaviors that put the student at risk for failing to graduate.

6. Policy on Accessible Instructional Materials.

The policy was distributed to committee members to review for discussion during our next meeting.

MSC to adjourn at 12:00 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Student Affairs Committee is Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at 10:00 am in the University Center, Room # 203.

Agenda.

1. Approval of Minutes of 10/3/2007.
2. Approval of Agenda.
3. Communications and Announcements.
4. Sexual Harassment Policy - Mike Botwin (Chair, Academic Senate).
5. Policy on Course Syllabi and Grading (APM 241).
6. Background Check Policy - Initial Discussion.
7. Policy on Accessible Instructional Materials.