

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND POLICIES
FEBRUARY 12TH, 2024
3:00 PM
VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: D. Zahm (presiding); K. Albright; K. Goynes; R. Holloway; L. Hungerford; S. Huxtable; M. Kimbrell; M. Norris; G. Novack; S. Over; M. Pleimling; M. Seref; S. Shupe; N. Staley; S. Sumner; K. Swaby; K. Thompson; D. Thorp; J. Tokuhisa; A. Zink-Sharp

ABSENT: K. Edgar; N. Nassan; V. Nguyen; C. Ruktanonchai; K. Tran

GUESTS: E. Anderson; X. Ma; R. Pitcher; L. Rose; N. Smith; R. Sparks; Z. Tucker; K. Wells

D. Zahm called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM. A quorum was present.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF OR ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPROVAL AND POSTING OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 27TH, 2023

D. Zahm noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

Academic Policy Discussion

Policy 6305 (Policy 91) Revisions Recommendations

M. Pleimling presented and provided an overview of the five main changes discussed by the Academic Policies Committee:

❖ Section 2.1

Topics Included:

- The expectation for students to meet major requirements at 72 credit hours even though students may have transferred from other institutions or majors.
- Colleges and departments vary in-major GPAs and probationary periods for students to meet outstanding major requirements.
- Even though students are “kicked out” of majors, it does not mean that they change their major. We need to consider the correct timing of this process for a student to change their

major considering the change of major application deadlines. Also, if students do not or cannot change their major during that period, it is possible they could be moved to an undeclared major.

- The policy states “degree-granting” but if students are in an undeclared major they may be “degree-exploring.”

❖ Section 2.1.1

Topics Included:

- Progress to Degree statements need to align with Graduation Requirements and university policies. For example, some departments limit retaking some courses to only two times. However, the university policy states that a student can repeat a class three times. Aligning Progress to Degree statements, Graduation Requirements, and university policies will more clearly communicate to students what is expected.

❖ Section 2.2

Topics included:

- Currently, a student on probation may take no more than 16 credit hours per semester. The Academic Policies Committee recommends reducing this to 14 credit hours.
- R. Holloway asked to consider the number of 4 credit hour classes we have. Also, if a student needs to drop a course at 14 credit hours then they will likely be below full time for financial aid.
- There was general concern for students to keep their scholarships with this number of hours because of the requirements to complete 30 credit hours per year and to obtain a specific GPA. If there is a consistent group of students, this could potentially be included within the policy to allow them to take more credit hours. Also, the dean can approve for students to take more hours on a case-by-case basis.
- M. Kimbrell asked if there is data to support whether students taking 14 credit hours are more successful than students taking other numbers of credit hours. It was decided this is information that needs to be obtained per college.

❖ Section 2.3

Topics included:

- Currently, students cannot take classes at another institution while they are on suspension and transfer the classes back to Virginia Tech. This rule needs to be removed. Often, students can go to a community college to learn study habits, prepare for a major they want to pursue when they return, and/or establish a routine for mental stability.

- M. Pleimling supplied specific student examples to demonstrate that numerous semesters with unsatisfactory academic progress can occur before a student is flagged for academic suspension.
- It was suggested by the Academic Policies Committee that students who have two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring) with a term GPA under 2.0 be suspended for the following semester.
- It was discussed whether the Summer semester should be included in this calculation. Often, students take numerous Summer classes and perform poorly. However, there are some students who only take one or two courses. It was concluded that the Summer term would be challenging to include because of the varying numbers of credits students take.

❖ Next Steps for Draft Policy

Topics Included:

- M. Pleimling requested a conversation between the Academic Deans and Directors of Advising to occur and determined that a draft policy and slides will only be sent out to the Deans and Directors of Advising. CUSP members agreed this would be helpful for the revisions, but that the process should occur within a week to ensure the policy revisions continue moving.
- D. Zahm and M. Pleimling agreed that the Advising Network Steering Committee be added to the proposed next steps as advisors will be the foundation of these proposed changes.
- D. Zahm also added that the draft should not be published yet because Faculty Senate policy is potentially changing and the furthest these revisions should proceed is submitting the topic to the senate, until further review can occur.

NEW BUSINESS

ACCEPTANCE AND POSTING OF COMMISSION/COMMITTEES/SUB -COMMITTEES REPORTS AND/OR MINUTES

Academic Support Committee

No report.

Academic Policies Committee

M. Pleimling presented the minutes of the November 7th, 2023 and November 28th, 2023 Academic Policies Committee. A motion was made and seconded to

accept the November 7th, 2023 and November 28th, 2023 minutes of the Academic Policies Committee.

Athletics Committee

No report.

Commencement Committee

M. Kimbrell presented the minutes of the November 1st, 2023 Commencement Committee. A motion was made and seconded to accept the November 1st, 2023 minutes of the Commencement Committee.

M. Kimbrell provided spring commencement updates including that colleges are preparing for commencement volunteers and finalizing their ceremony deadlines.

D. Zahm discussed multiple issues with the commencement process at this time including the commencement schedule overlapping with the final exam schedule, the high expense of commencement and use of campus facilities, the absence of a graduate conferral ceremony and the potential of no ceremony for Northern Virginia students. A proposal will be presented to CFA so that the commencement schedule and exam schedule never overlap again.

Honor Council

No report. Not present.

Library Committee

No report.

University Curriculum Committee for General Education

No report. Not present.

Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate

No report.

Staff Senate

No report.

Faculty Senate

No report.

Undergraduate Student Senate

No report.

Graduate and Professional Student Senate

No report.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Nominations of CUSP Sub-Committee Chairs and Representatives For Academic Year 2023-2024

The following individual accepted the nomination to serve as Chair and Representative of CUSP Sub-Committees for Academic Year 2023-2024:

- Academic Support Committee
 - Commission will revisit at the February 26th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:08 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Rachel Pitcher and Zach Tucker, Office of the University Registrar*