Academic Standards Committee
Chaired by Virginia Usnick

Spring 07 Report

The Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee met six times during Spring 2007 with two more meetings scheduled before the end of the semester. Most meetings were spent reviewing student petitions and grade grievances. Many of the petitions involved requests to be reinstated into courses in a previous or the current semester. In most instances, students had been purged from courses for non-payment of fees. Other requests involved changing of grades from F to W, reinstatement or extensions of “Incomplete” grade, acceptance of more than 32 credits earned as a non-admitted student, dropping of courses after the drop date, or early readmission of a student on university suspension. Two petitions presented ASC with a request we have not previously heard: waivers of the 124-credits required for graduation. These petitions have been tabled pending input from the Provost's office.

Two new members joined ASC: Amanda Brewer representing the Office of Student Enrollment Services and Gayle Juneau representing Academic Advising. The position for Academic Advising is a new one for ASC.

In addition to student petitions, ASC discussed several issues. Newly-admitted students are now being allowed to register for classes prior to meeting with an advisor. ASC has received its first petition from a student who activated his enrollment without advising input, accepted a Millennium scholarship, and then decided not to attend UNLV. This resulted in a semester of Fs that he is requesting be changed toWs. This may be the first of many such petitions. ASC members are concerned that this policy may have some unforeseen consequences.

Again, there seems to be a misunderstanding about the use of the “Incomplete” grade. Some faculty members are requiring students retake the entire semester. This is an inappropriate requirement for completing the “I” and may cause problems for undergraduates. At the undergraduate level, students have one semester in which to complete the requirements necessary to remove the “I.” If a course were not offered the following semester, students would not be able to “sit through it again” before the grade automatically rolls to an F. ASC is requesting that deans and department chairs clarify the use of “Incompletes,” especially with part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants.

Early in the semester, ASC again discussed the Fall suspension process and problems caused due to missing grades (about 150 classes did not have grades posted by the end of the Fall 2006 semester) and the closure of SES during Winter Break (week between Christmas and New Year’s Day). Some students who were suspended at the end of the Fall 2006 semester could not make appointments with advisors in time to appeal their suspension. Since a) SES closes during Winter Break, b) suspension
letters therefore do not get processed until early January, and c) some advising offices do not have appointment times available for suspended students, this may be an ongoing problem.

In order to address the problem with posting of grades, ASC was asked for input regarding a possible change in the start dates of fall semesters. A recommendation was presented by the SES to begin the fall semester one week earlier than usual. This earlier start date would provide SES with an extra week at the end of the semester to collect grades in order to process suspension lists, etc., prior to closing for the Winter Break. ASC did not support the recommendation.

A proposal regarding “Honors Designations” was reviewed. ASC supported the notion that application of percentages should be consistent across colleges.

ASC later reviewed the academic calendars for 2008-09 and 2009-10. A question was raised regarding the start of instruction in the fall semester 2008 (after Labor Day, a week LATER than usual). ASC recommended the calendars not be published at this time. Questions still exist regarding the Fall 2008 start date and commencement dates for each semester. Several committee members expressed a concern about the affect Monday holidays have during the spring semesters. ASC sent a recommendation to the FS Executive Board suggesting an ad-hoc committee be formed to investigate ways to even out the number of teaching days for spring semesters.

A discussion late in the semester related to whether or not the university-wide commencement exercise should continue or whether individual colleges should hold their own commencements. ASC recommends the commencement exercise remain a university-wide activity since the university, not individual colleges, confers degrees. However, units should be allowed to hold convocations to which faculty and students could wear regalia, but hoodings should be reserved for the university-wide activity.

The final major “issue” addressed by ASC during the Spring 2007 semester relates to academic advising. At one time, newly-admitted students were required to meet with an academic advisor prior to enrollment in their first semester of courses. Academic holds were placed on their files in order to prevent enrollment without advisement. This policy has changed and now students are allowed to enroll as soon as they receive notice of acceptance. This may lead to unforeseen complications, especially with students who enroll but then attend elsewhere (without dropping their UNLV courses). ASC recommends the new policy be revisited.

Attendance (voting members):

Ackerman, R. (Educ)       Attended 5 meetings
Alpert, P. (Health Sci)    Attended 4 meetings
Bernatis, B. (Fine Arts)  Attended 4 meetings
Dalpatadu, R. (Sci)       Attended 3 meetings
Epstein, B. (UA)          Attended 6 meetings
Kim, Yoohwan (Eng)        Attended 5 meetings
Marwah, R. (Univ Col)  Attended 5 meetings
Seneviratne, R. (Undergr)  Attended 4 meetings
Smith, D. (Bus)  Attended 2 meetings (left UNLV mid-semester)
Stahura, K. (Hotel)  Attended 5 meetings

Attendance (non-voting members):
Chair (Usnick)  Attended 6 meetings
Aca Advising (Juneau)  Attended 5 meetings
SES (Brewer/Stover)  Attended 5 meetings
Outreach (Davis)  Attended 4 meetings
FS Office (Pratt)  Attended 6 meetings