

Community College of Philadelphia

The Path to Possibilities™

Meeting Minutes
Academic Support Standing Sub-Committee
September 27, 2007
3:30-5:00 p.m.
Counseling Conference Room

Delegates Present: Todd Jones, Bettsy McCoubrey, Margaret Stephens, Alison Tasch, Susan Tobia

Alternates Present: Debbie Allen, Diane Freedman, Tom Ott, Carmen Serrano

The meeting was convened by Bettsy McCoubrey and Susan Tobia, two of last year's participants.

Election

Todd Jones, Counselor, and Sandra Gonzalez-Torres, Associate Director for Act Now, were nominated as co-chairs. A vote was taken, which was unanimously in favor of the nominations. Since Sandra was not at the meeting, she will be consulted and will become co-chair pending her approval.

Susan Tobia volunteered to be the recorder and was also unanimously approved.

Meeting Dates for the Year

The Committee will convene on the following Thursdays from 3:30 -5:00 p.m. in the Counseling Conference Room, unless otherwise designated.

October 25
November 29
December 20
January 24
February 28
March 27
April 24

The student group will be informed of these dates, as well as the College community.

Topics for Future Meetings

#1 Guidelines for Standing Committees and IWC

Betsy distributed a draft of the guidelines developed by the Federation. The Committee was asked to review the document for discussion at the next meeting with an eye to adopting some of the guidelines to improve the efficiency of the group. Additional guidelines will also be entertained.

Todd raised a question concerning Counseling policies going through Academic Support, as the Counseling Department is in the Student Affairs division. It was noted that Counseling overlaps with some academic policies/issues, e. g., advising, FOS.

#2 Academic Restructuring

Dr. Gay would like to come to the next committee meeting to talk about her ideas for restructuring academic affairs. Susan will check her schedule and will ask if any materials can be forwarded prior to the October meeting.

#3 Time Amnesty

Betsy distributed copies of the proposed policy and rationale from last year's committee. The key change is that students would be required to successfully complete six credits before applying for time amnesty. She asked that the Committee review the documents and come prepared to vote at the next meeting.

A discussion ensued about the purpose of giving amnesty for Ws. Carmen raised the question that since the student's financial aid is not affected by the amnesty policy, what does the student have to gain? A response was that Ws affect academic progress; a student could end up on probation if he/she does not complete 67% of registered courses. However, the proposed policy is clear that federal student aid regulations do not provide for time amnesty or for academic amnesty in evaluating a student's eligibility for financial aid.

This led to a question by Todd about the expectation of a 67% completion rate. Some students find it very difficult, if not impossible, to reach that completion rate, which is required to receive financial aid. It thus may be more fruitful for them to go elsewhere where they can receive financial aid. Debbie informed the group that IT would run a simulation with mid-term grades to explore the impact on the 67% completion requirement. Given the results, there may be more flexibility in the application of the regulation.

Betsy provided some history on the practice of having students successfully complete 6 credits before petitioning for time amnesty. It was found that students were applying for amnesty, receiving an improved GPA and not continuing at the College, when the intent was to give students another chance to start fresh at CCP. However this practice was

never formalized and when a student recently challenged it, there was no policy to back up the practice.

This led Tom to comment about the complexity of many of our academic policies, particularly for students. Some were thought to penalize students unfairly. It was suggested that this committee consider revising such policies.

Betsy also stated that a previous group looked at amnesty policies at other institutions and found that many provided the opportunity for amnesty with the requirement that students first successfully complete 12 credits or more.

Susan explained that another rationale for the proposed 6-credit requirement (provided by last year's committee which included student voices) is that students, along with having to touch base with a counselor to apply for time amnesty, would be encouraged to continue to receive counseling support during their return semester. At a minimum, they would have to return to counseling after the completion of a semester to assess their progress.

A question was asked about the IWC response to the proposal which was sent back to last year's committee for further work. Todd will obtain the minutes from the IWC meeting as well as the minutes from last year's committee chair. Margaret recommended that before submitting the proposal again, the Committee should request guidelines from IWC for presenting proposals.

A suggestion was made that there be a form on the website for making a proposal and that the College community be informed about it. Susan and Betsy relayed that when they attended a meeting with student government representatives who are potential committee members it was discovered that the students were not aware that they could make proposals. Upon finding out, a few students said that they had some proposal ideas they would like to forward.

#4 Plagiarism

This is an issue that needs clarity for both students and faculty. Alison related that plagiarism has been explored rather extensively by English faculty as well as student affairs staff. This committee can build on their work. A differentiation was made between academic dishonesty (Academic Affairs) and disciplinary issues (Student Affairs).

#5 Drop/Add Policy

This policy needs to be clarified and consistent. Students and faculty need to have a clear step-by-step approach to the process. In response to some concerns raised, Debbie stated that when students are dropped, it is for specific reasons, often that they haven't paid their fees, but that whatever the reason, the policy needs to be clarified. For example, students who are being reinstated do not need signatures to get back in the course. Margaret asked if faculty could be informed when a student in their class has been

dropped and for what reason so they could better assist the student in the next steps to take. Debbie will investigate this.

This led to a discussion about the need for deadlines for applications, financial aid and registration. Why is the student in class if he/she hasn't paid? There is also a need for financial planning for students. Most do not understand the process. Debbie will draft a drop/add policy for the Committee's review.

Next Meeting Topics

Academic Restructuring
Standing Committee Guidelines
Rationale for Time Amnesty
Drop/Add Draft Policy

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Tobia
9/27/07