

Institution Wide Committee

Monday March 28, 2022 2:30pm

Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m. by Sam Hirsch.

II. Attendance

Federation Voting Delegates: Sean Sauer (Co-Chair), Stan Walling, Jacquelyn Bryant, Karima Bouchenafa (joined during the discussion of the Academic Integrity Policy); *Federation Alternates:* Elisa King (joined during the discussion of the Academic Integrity Policy, Cynthia Paul

Administration Voting Delegates: Sam Hirsch (Co-chair), Carol de Fries (Secretary), Dave Thomas; *Administration Voting Alternate:* Vijay Sonty; *Administration Alternates:* Vishal Shah, Leila Lawrence

Student Voting Delegate: Ahmad Mitchell

Guests: Richard Kopp, Nikki Sarpolis, Sandy Harrill

III. Approval of minutes – The minutes from Monday, February 28, 2022 meeting were presented. Stan Walling moved to approve the minutes, and Cynthia Paul seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. Old Business – No items were discussed.

V. New Business – Dr. Hirsch introduced the first of two policies for the IWC to consider.

a. Academic Integrity Policy

Richard Kopp, Nikki Sarpolis, and Sandy Harrill represented the Student Affairs Committee on the presentation of this revised policy to the IWC. Richard Kopp opened the presentation of the new Academic Integrity Policy noting that the Student Affairs Committee has been working on a revised policy for the last year (20-21) with a few changes made at the beginning of this year (21-22) so that the College can get this new revised policy moving forward through our review and recommendation process.

Sandy Harrill was on the Committee when the first set of changes were made and noted that the goals of the revision were to: establish a separate policy for this kind of violation so that it is not lumped into a separate judicial review process automatically; to provide more discretion to faculty to handle issues first; and to give more clarity to the process.

Dr. Cynthia Paul asked about an issue she encounters in Foundational Math around academic integrity, which includes students using calculators during tests when they are not allowed. She wanted to make sure that the policy's use of "unauthorized electronic equipment during exams" covers this kind of issue with the broader description in the policy. Sandy Harrill noted that other programs such as Nursing have had students using other kinds of electronic equipment, so the committee felt it best to use the broader terminology. It would be incumbent on faculty to have the delineations of what is authorized and what is unauthorized on their syllabi.

Dave Thomas brought up a specific issue he has encountered recently with a student who was accused of plagiarism on a class assignment by the faculty member. The student wanted to know what their appeal process would be for appealing an accusation around an assignment. The current policy only discusses appealing the final grade and the faculty member was indicating that the student should drop the class because they will be failed for the academic integrity violation. The discussion centered on providing more clarity about a process for appeals to the student prior to final grade being issued. There was much discussion on providing faculty more discretion in determining whether the initial issue is a violation of academic integrity or possibly something that the faculty member can address with the student directly.

Stan Walling emphasized that many initial issues that he has encountered with students over the years can be addressed among the faculty member and the student. Many issues he has encountered revolve around the student misunderstanding of plagiarism. Sandy and Nikki noted that most faculty on the Committee agreed that they have a good sense of when these issues are willful and intended versus misunderstandings. Faculty want a policy that allows them to work out these lower level issues first before it must go to a judicial review formalized process. There was also consensus that there needs to be more specific language about what a student's path can be as well and that there needs to be an avenue for appeal prior to final grade being issued.

Dean Shah recommended that we have a standardized form for any academic issue that is reported as this is important for Middle States. In addition, he recommended that the word "Final" be removed from the policy so that an appeal can be filed for any grade that is given as a result of an academic integrity issue. He asked that the Committee also make sure that the policy covers academic integrity issues beyond plagiarism or unauthorized use of electronic equipment. For example, some individuals hire others to do their work. He recommended that a 4th bullet be added to the faculty responsibility list to include, "Faculty should help students learn the importance of academic honesty in the learning process. Students must be told that the faculty and the institution does not tolerate academic dishonesty of any type. A statement clarifying the application of academic integrity criteria to the course should be included in the syllabi."

Ahmad Mitchell commented that he wanted students to have the ability to express concern about an academic integrity issue beyond just the faculty member. He asked if violations can be reported to the Board. However, Stan Walling indicated that reporting any issue immediately to the Board would be too cumbersome. Most issues can be dealt directly with a student. Beyond that it should be brought to the Department Chair and Dean. Jacquelyn Bryant noted that the policy states "should report" and she believes that the policy should use the term, "must report..." She agreed that the first step is for a faculty and student to work out the issue first, but once the violation is moving forward the issue "must" be reported. It was also agreed that the policy should be clear that a student has a right to appeal during the semester rather than waiting for a final grade.

Sam Hirsch asked that the Student Affairs Committee take the feedback provided today from the IWC and update the policy and bring it back for the April IWC meeting. He indicated that the IWC feedback is to make sure the policy is clearer for students and what steps they can or should do. That it is clear we agree that a balance is needed between giving the faculty member the ability to work out an issue with a student first, but if there is a determination that a violation occurred then the process needs to be clearer and include an option for an appeal during the semester rather than waiting for a final grade to be issued. If there is no resolution, then the issue must be reported to the department head next.

A recommendation was also made that once the new revised policy is approved that Student Affairs do a better job of making this a more prominent part of the Student Handbook. It currently is very difficult to find. Sam Hirsch thanked Richard, Sandy and Nikki for their work and asked that they bring it back to IWC in April.

b. Authentication in Distance Education Policy

Sam Hirsch presented the policy in the absence of Dean Karen Rege of Online Learning and Media Services. Dean Rege could not make today's meeting. Sam Hirsch noted that the College is required under the Federal Higher Education Act to have processes and systems in place to ensure that a person taking an online course is actually taking it and completing it; the policy presented today reflects those systems and procedures the College has in place to verify a student's identity and to codify these processes and mechanisms. It was noted that the policy is recommended by the Technology Committee, which reviewed it prior to it coming to IWC. The policy is also a Middle States requirement. By establishing this policy, we are helping with our Middle States self-study and accreditation review.

The policy helps address concerns about authentication and potential abuse with regards to fraudulent financial aid or Title IV filings. This concern has been heightened due to the increasing number of students who had to take online courses during COVID and the adjustment to more online courses and online exams. The College partnered with third party proctoring services so that faculty had the option to have online exams be electronically proctored. It was noted to faculty on the committee that faculty can speak to their Chair about the need to access the third-party proctoring services. Dean Vishal Shah asked CIO Vijay Sonty if there is more data and information available about how well third-party proctoring works due to faculty skepticism about online proctoring. It was noted Online Learning will be doing an assessment of the third party proctoring we used and to determine how many faculty are using it. This service is still a work in progress.

Jacquelyn Bryant made a motion to recommend the policy move forward as presented; Stan Walling seconded the motion. There was no opposition and no abstentions. The new policy as presented was recommended by all voting members of the IWC to move forward to the President.

VI. Information – No other items were discussed.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.