Instruction and Research Committee

Final Report

2014-2015

Members:

Kevin Williams, Chair (Earth Sciences & Science Ed.)

L. Anselmi (Anthropology), L. Boorady (Fashion & Textile Tech.), C. DeNysschen (Nutrition and Dietetics), R. Engelhardt (Academic Tech Services, Computing Tech Services), M. Gleason (Student rep), E. Harvey (Butler Library), J. Karlis (Communication), B. Luther (Student rep), M. McLean (Psychology), A. Nikicher (Adult Ed.), M. Pereira (Instructional Resources), K. Renzoni (Music), H. Shandomo (Elem. Ed. & Reading), M. Shaw-Burnett (Continuing Ed.)

Charge: The committee on Instruction and Research shall concern itself with those aspects of policy that relate to:

- The improvement of Instruction and the development of services and resources necessary to carry out or enhance this function;
- The use of time and resources (e.g., scheduling, registration, and the college calendar);
- Evaluating of student progress and teaching effectiveness;
- Grading, withdrawal from courses, experimental and special instructional methods, innovative practices, and maintenance of quality education; and,
- The stimulation and support of research, scholarship, and creativity

Name of Chair Submitting Report: Kevin Williams

Anticipated Vacancies in 2015-2016: The only anticipated vacancies for next year are the two student representatives.

Annual Report:

The committee met several times in person and electronically over the year to consider several policy changes that were submitted to the committee for review. Discussions of some of these items were completed and moved forward to the College Senate, whereas review of other policies were not completed this year.

Completed
After discussion, the committee supported revision to item 3 of DOPS I:16:02 Evaluation of Students. Our support was concurrent with discussions by the Faculty and Staff Welfare Committee, and the FSW Committee presented the revision to the College Senate on behalf of both committees. The revision was approved.

Also in parallel with review by the FSW Committee, we reviewed proposed revision to item 2 of DOPS VI:07:00 Guidelines for “Extra Service” Compensation. In our discussions, we made several changes that were incorporated before the policy revision was presented to the College Senate by FSW. The revision was approved.

Several policy revisions were received by the committee from the Online Advisory Committee. The committee approved minor revisions to DOPS I:15:00 Academic Freedom and DOPS VIII:04:00 Academic Misconduct, which were presented to the College Senate at the April and May meetings, respectively.

The committee reviewed the approved and tentative years in the 2015 – 2019 Academic Calendar. A few minor edits were noted before it was presented to the College Senate at the April meeting.

In Progress

A proposed policy addition of 4+1 Undergraduates Enrolling in Graduate Courses was reviewed by the committee. Although there were some questions, there was overall support for the 4+1 policy. The policy addition did not yet come to a formal vote in the committee, but it was also reviewed by the Standards for Students committee and was presented to the College Senate at the May meeting.

The committee began reviewing proposed changes to DOPS III:03:00 Interdisciplinary Units and had several questions which were answered by Dr. Kevin Railey. Discussion is ongoing in the committee, but a formal vote has not yet been taken.
The committee reviewed the **Graduate Thesis/Project Continuation Policy** as related to the 721 and 722 courses. Because the current policy does not require registration of 721, there is inconsistency across campus that leads to an underestimate of the number of active graduate students. Additionally, having students work on projects for up to two years without paying any tuition or fees is an unfair burden on campus resources and their availability to other students. The committee proposed a revision of the policy that would require students to register for 1 paid credit of 721 and would retain the existing requirement for enrollment in 722. Before this proposed revision was brought to the College Senate for a vote, concerns were made by others on campus about the financial hardship this would be on some graduate students and also about the desire in the original proposal to link these types of tuition requirements to extra service compensation for faculty. Because of these concerns and others, the policy revision was not brought to the College Senate. It is still the belief of the committee that some sort of registration should be required for thesis/project continuation as is policy at many other colleges and universities. The committee will continue to work on this issue and will hopefully come to a resolution that addresses concerns without creating undo financial burden on students. If possible, a resolution could be to have registration for 721 tied to paying fees only and not tuition.

The Online Advisory Committee passed revisions of DOPS IV:07:02 **Student Identity Verification in Distance Education Courses** to this committee. Some minor edits were noted, but the general outcome of the committee discussion is that there should be a general policy governing student identification verification instead of the proposed revisions to the existing policy for distance education courses. The committee will continue to work on this issue.

The committee also reviewed revisions to DOPS IV:07:00 **Distance Learning Policy** that were received from the Online Advisory Committee. The committee had several edits and comments about the revision that were sent back to the OAC. The committee has since learned that the OAC revisions were meant to be a first stage of revisions with more revisions expected in the next year. Discussions are ongoing, and the proposed revisions should be brought to the College Senate in early Fall 2015.

Lastly, the committee discussed the **College closure message** and practice related to online courses being canceled if the campus is closed. Although it was recognized that it is now necessary to cancel online courses if campus resources such as the Computing Help Desk
and computer labs are not available. It was suggested by some committee members that the campus should make progress in the future to expand and develop resources that would allow online courses to “meet” even if the physical campus is closed. It was recognized that, even if able to meet, these online courses could still be canceled if the instructor and/or a large proportion of the students were not able to take part in the course because of issues with electricity or other factors.