

Student Policy Committee (SPC)

Faculty Senate report – 10/13/2021

Student Policy Committee Meeting on 10/6/21

Voting members in attendance: C Broadbridge, W Farley, B Cook, M Diamantis (Chair), M Dodge, W O'Brien, M Ouimet, K Marsland

Non-Voting members in attendance: K Mashia-Thaxton - SGA Representative

Guests: R Prezant, C Barrett, K Jones, H Marx, H Twyman, A Carroll

- Meeting focused on reviewing the policies on Course Incompletes, Course Withdrawals, and Pass/Fail. General consensus to not change the P/F policy this semester. Committee will pursue options to support the use of the incomplete contract and revisit course withdrawal policy following information shared with SGA by Kyle
- Kyle suggested perhaps using the SGA outreach and communication committee to help with informing students about the options with regards to pass/fail, course withdrawal, and course incompletes.
- Discussion re: Course Incompletes
 - Alicia Carroll in attendance at the request of the committee to discuss the incomplete policy
 - Gave us statistical information on course incompletes from the semester's effected by COVID, so that it will help us review the policy for the Fall 2021 semester.
 - By the numbers, the contracts seem to have had a positive impact
 - It does not make it clear that a student's Incomplete will convert to an F regardless of what their grade might have been if they did not take the Incomplete
 - Some faculty are still giving students' incompletes without the student's knowledge or permission
 - We may need to adjust programming to actually enforce the incomplete contract system. Can we get IT to create a programming solution, so that students can submit a contract for incompletes which then is signed by the professor – this makes sure the student is on board with an incomplete
 - Concerns were raised about adding chair responsibilities at the end of the semester with the incomplete contracts – but it was clarified that the chair is taking no action, rather has a record of such for any future need to intervene if faculty is not available
 - The department chair is just supposed to receive the contract and does not need to approve it – therefore the committee agreed that clarity on the language for the incomplete contract is necessary on the role of the department chair
 - There needs to be more communication with both faculty and students about the Course Incomplete process

- The provost suggested and there was some agreement that the incomplete contract needs to have a due date for completion – no consensus was reached by the committee.
- Discussion: Course Withdrawals
 - Alicia Carroll provided data on course withdrawals over the same period
 - There were a lot of withdrawals, especially in Fall 2020, and the numbers remain high
 - UCONN and CCSU allow withdrawals until later in the semester (last day of classes at UCONN)
 - Withdrawal rates were historically high during the pandemic
 - Recognize that withdrawal has long-term impacts on student financial aid (although it does not hurt their current semester financial aid so long as it is after ~3rd week of the semester)
 - Should we have all students, including transfer students, get permission from their advisors before taking a W (like they already do during their first semester with their INQ professors)
 - Slowing down the process has impact on how much students can get in terms of refunds
 - The provost and guests from the Academic Advising Center, suggested not making major changes in the middle of a semester as this has many unintended consequences for students
 - Can we collect information on how these policies hurt students? We need this information because there are definitely many faculty who want to see these emergency policies stay in place for this semester
 - Concerns were raised about relying on the late withdrawal process because it requires instructor permission and can be cumbersome.
 - Kyle, SGA representative, spoke on student government's feelings: They are not advocating for the expansion of the p/f policy, however they do think the withdrawal policy should be extended to the 15th week or end of semester.
 - SGA would like to see a withdrawal but Kyle will go back to SGA to discuss the normal late withdrawal process available to them.
 - Concerns were raised about relying on the late withdrawal process because it requires instructor permission and can be cumbersome.

Respectfully submitted
Maria Diamantis