

**Meeting of the Villanova University
Academic Policy Committee**

Monday, December 2, 2019
9:00 - 10:00 AM
Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Minutes

Present: Jennifer Altamuro, Sherry Burrell (by phone), Kathy Byrnes, Matt Clarkin, Scott Dressler, Elizabeth Greco, Stacey Havlik, Stephanie Katz, Christopher Kilby (chair), Stefanie Knauss, Rory Kramer, Eric Lomazoff, Christine Kelleher Palus, Lesley Perry, Elizabeth Petit de Mange (by phone), John Shindelar, Javad Siah, Ani Ural, Andrea Welker, Craig Wheeland

Absent: Marylu Hill, Zuyi (Jacky) Huang, Adele Lindenmeyr (NIA), Stephen Napier (NIA), Joyce Russell (NIA), Michael Posner

Administrative Items

- 1) Stefanie Knauss volunteered to take notes.
- 2) Minutes for 10/2/2019 approved with no negative votes and three abstentions.

Business, Old and New

3) Faculty Guide to the CATS:

Craig Wheeland called APC members attention to the updated “CATS: A Guide for Faculty Members.” Updates are related to the CATS going online and to diversity questions; otherwise, the content is unchanged. Craig noted that this guide is intended for Villanova faculty (available on the Provost’s website with faculty login [here](#)); it is not intended for wider distribution and APC members are asked to respect that.

4) University Shop Proposal

Stephanie Katz, representing APC on the Working Group on the University Shop Proposal, provided an update, with additions from Craig Wheeland and Scott Dressler. Stephanie and other faculty gathered some data on students’ actual textbook expenses; those data indicate that many students spend considerably less than what Follett proposes to charge. OPIR attempted to conduct a more systematic survey but reports a low response rate and has not yet shared results with APC.

Both SGA and the Faculty Congress have issued strong worded resolutions opposing the current Follett proposal. Matt Clarkin, SGA representative to APC, emphasized the importance of allowing a student opt-out. The details of an opt-out process at Villanova are unclear. At schools Follett highlighted, the requirements of the opt-out policy were prohibitive. Eric Lomazoff stated that if Villanova were to pursue this textbook proposal, process for opt-out must not present too high of a hurdle.

Craig Wheeland pointed out that financial aid assumes a \$940 per year textbook cost and that Follett’s proposed cost is lower and ensures that books are available to all Villanova students.

Other APC members pointed out that Follett's cost benchmarking was done against the maximum cost (new books from Follett without discount or new books from Amazon.com), not against actual student costs, which the survey should provide.

In the interest of being on record, Christopher Kilby suggested that APC vote on the following resolution:

“Resolution: APC does not support the Follett proposal in its current form and given available information; if there is a revised proposal and additional information on which to base an updated decision, APC will reconsider the issue.”

The vote was: 18 Yes, 1 No, 0 abstain

4) Subcommittee Reports

A) Student Course Load: Scott Dressler (Chair) reported that his subcommittee is unlikely to make progress on this issue because of clear structural differences between colleges. The subcommittee's new mandate is to address conflicts between departments and programs related to course attributes and staffing. The APC chair continues to receive reports of programs either assigning attributes from or running sections of courses in departments without the department chair's consent (and in at least one case even after the department chair declined a program's request to do so). This practice violates current policy but mechanisms to enforce the policy are weak. Chairs must uncover the problem by checking the master schedule and then must ask the registrar to correct it—all in a relatively short window before registration begins. The subcommittee will: 1) identify more clearly what the issues are; 2) survey department and program chairs to assess the extent of the problem; and 3) explore more robust enforcement mechanisms (e.g., a double sign-off system run by the Registrar's Office). All committee members opted to stay on subcommittee to pursue its new mandate.

B) Add/Drop: Eric Lomazoff (Chair) stated that there was no new information from Registrar about the Course Preview Policy (i.e., no response to repeated requests for information) and so it is apparent Course Preview will not be implemented for spring 2020. The subcommittee will continue try to get a response from the Registrar.

Regarding the subcommittee's new mandate (see attached report: accommodation letters and recording of class sessions (including issues of consent and intellectual property)), progress on both issues will require conversations with experts, which are on the subcommittee's agenda for the Spring term.

C) CATS: Rory Kramer (Chair) outlined his subcommittee's agenda for the Spring term: the use and effectiveness of the “diversity and inclusion” questions; the role of CATS as one component of evaluation of teaching effectiveness (likely including staff from VITAL in the discussion); and a report from OPIR on implementation of online CATS (ideally at January meeting).

D) Out of College Programs: Christopher Kilby (Chair) briefly reviewed the draft proposal for policy recommendations for starting and continuing Out of College Programs (OCP). Christopher stated that the key feature of such programs is that they do not fall within a single college with respect to their governance and so report directly to the Vice Provost for Academics. Current OCPs include Honors, Cyber Security, Sustainability Studies, and VIA. APC members are encouraged to review the draft proposal before a more in-depth conversation in January 2020.

5) Retirement

Lesley Perry (Associate Dean of Nursing and representative-delegate for FCN Dean Havens) reminded APC that she is retiring at the end of the semester; Bette Mariani will be taking on Lesley's APC role. A warm farewell to Lesley after many years of dedicated service to Villanova. You will be sorely missed!

Thanks for Stefanie for thorough notes on this meeting!

APC Student Course Load Subcommittee
Meeting Report, 10/28/19, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

The committee met to assess the committee report from previous academic year and make suggestions on how to move forward. The discussion of the existing report revolved around two main topics.

Is the overloading and ‘credentialing’ of students’ schedules necessarily a problem? Some committee members felt we lacked clear evidence and an identification of any problems or issues directly stemming from student course loads. With previously gathered evidence on student withdrawals not painting a full picture, the committee felt that focus groups might be useful in uncovering any issues pertaining specifically to student course loads at VSB and CLAS for both students and faculty. In addition, recent policy changes effectively reduce the number of courses CLAS majors need to take, potentially making this less of a problem than previously thought.

Will the proposed policy change of increasing 3000+ level courses by one credit hour solve the problem? A similar policy is in effect at Penn State, and it was unclear that students were less overloaded than at any other university. In addition, faculty compensation under this policy was very convoluted. Some committee members felt that instructors should maintain the current amount of credit hours of their course and make the course as rigorous as they wish, especially since the current proposal did not ask for additional hours of contact time.

In conclusion, while committee members agreed with some outcomes of the policy (i.e. signaling) that upper-level courses are considered more important and given more weight in GPA calculations, this policy is focusing on two colleges (VSB and CLAS), and not even those colleges entirely (i.e. mostly humanities and social science courses of CLAS). Some committee members felt that given the issues above, as well as the fact that other colleges (i.e. engineering and nursing) are not interested in pursuing such a policy, that this is not worth APC’s time moving forward.

Meeting of the Add/Drop Subcommittee of the Academic Policy Committee

Friday, November 22, 2019
10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

I. Attendance

Present: Kathy Byrnes, Matt Clarkin, Eric Lomazoff (chair), Stephanie Katz Linkmeyer
Absent: Ani Ural (NIA)

II. Accommodation Letters

One of the subcommittee's tasks is addressing non-specific accommodations that have begun to appear in ODS/LSS accommodation letters.

Discussion focused on two issues: (1) which non-APC members should be invited to join us for future subcommittee meetings, and (2) what ODS/LSS accommodation letters should include.

Discussion of the first issue identified Nancy Mott (LSS), Greg Hannah (ODS), Joan Whitney (Health Services), and (if necessary) someone from the General Counsel's office.

Discussion of the second issue did include acknowledgment that some ODS/LSS letters include non-specific language (e.g., one of the "reasonable academic accommodations" provided might be "[o]pen discussion on extensions on assignments"). A question was raised about who would adjudicate a student-faculty dispute over the meaning of such a provision (General Counsel? Ombudsperson?) This is a good example of why non-APC members should be included in future subcommittee meetings. There was also some discussion about ways to circumscribe the problem. One possibility is having faculty in courses where completion of certain time-sensitive functions is absolutely essential identify those functions on the course syllabus. Another possibility is asking the University to provide both faculty and students with advice on how to deal with non-specific accommodations.

III. Recording/Use of Class Sessions by Students with Accommodations

Another subcommittee task is addressing faculty concerns arising from the fact that some students with note-taking accommodations record lectures "and then send those recordings (plus slides, pictures, etc.) to a commercial outfit that generates notes for the student." These concerns include — but may not be limited to — consent, namely the question of who, if anyone, must consent for a class to be recorded.

As with accommodation letters, discussion here focused on (1) which non-APC members should be invited to join us for future subcommittee meetings, and (2) the substance of the issue.

Discussion of the first issue again identified Nancy Mott (LSS), Greg Hannah (ODS), and someone from the General Counsel's office.

Discussion of the second issue revolved around numerous questions that subcommittee members have. For example, federal law mandates certain accommodations for certain students, but Pennsylvania is a "two-party consent" state when it comes to the recording of conversations (meaning that "every party to a phone call or conversation" must consent, including other students in the course who might speak¹). Must every student plus the faculty member consent to the recording, or does federal law preempt state law here? This seems like an issue where it would be useful to have someone from the General Counsel's office present. In addition, questions concerning the intellectual property rights of the faculty member were raised. One subcommittee member suggested that Brown and Rutgers have policies on this that the subcommittee should examine. Another raised the possibility of having students who record expressly acknowledge the intellectual property rights of the faculty member. Again, these issues suggest the need to consult with/gather information from non-APC members.

IV. Course Preview Policy

The subcommittee's final task — and the initial reason for its creation — pertains to the prospect of modifying one or more aspects of the existing Add/Drop period at the start of semesters. In this vein, a proposal for a Course Preview Policy (a two-week audit for students interested in learning about a course in advance of enrolling in it in some future semester) was approved by APC in the Spring of 2019.

Matt Clarkin reported three unsuccessful efforts to solicit feedback from the University Registrar on the approved proposal. Eric Lomazoff asked Matt to forward those e-mails to him and promised to follow up directly with the Registrar.

¹ "Recording Phone Calls and Conversations," Digital Media Law Project of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society (Harvard University), available at <http://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/recording-phone-calls-and-conversations> (accessed 1 December 2019).