

Meeting #1

September 11, 2002

The Academic Council met on Wednesday, September 11, 2002, in the Kiowa Room of the Clark Student Center. The following members were in attendance: Dr. Friederike Wiedemann, Dr. Robert Clark, Dr. Michael Collins, Dr. Ron Fischli, Dr. Martha Harvey, Dr. Norman Horner, Dr. Grant Simpson, Dr. Susan Sportsman, Dr. Chuck Burke, Mr. Brandon Dawson, Ms. Clara Latham, Ms. Darla English, Ms. Kerrie Cale (for Ms. Barbara Merkle), and Ms. Diane Spiller.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Wiedemann called the meeting to order and called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the July 1, 2002 meeting. Dr. Collins made the motion for approval with a change to the following section as follows:

Humanities Core Change

Dr. Collins presented as a motion a change to the wording under Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts of the Academic Core Requirements listed on page 90 of the Undergraduate Bulletin. The English requirements would be changed to English Literature. Dr. Fischli seconded and the motion passed.

The motion was seconded and passed.

Acceptance of D's in Transfer Work

Dr. Wiedemann announced that Dr. Rogers will uphold the motion passed by the Council in June 2002 that MSU would no longer accept D's in transfer credit effective Fall 2003.

Development of Radiologic Assistant Program

Dr. Sportsman announced the MSU Radiologist Assistant Program in development. Dr. Donna Wright, Associate Professor of Radiologic Science, distributed a FAQ sheet about the program. She reported that this program would involve advanced clinical practice for post baccalaureate certification. The Radiologic Science department is pursuing a curriculum development grant. This program will be unique to MSU, and a certification examination is being created. This is a non-substantial program change according to the THECB, and the projected effective date is Fall 2004.

Dr. Sportsman made a motion to accept the program in concept. Dr. Fischli seconded and the motion passed. (Copy of FAQ sheet available upon request.)

Time Between Finals and Grade Posting

Dr. Burke, Faculty Senate representative, brought concerns from the faculty in regard to time between finals and grade posting. He reported that the sentiment of the faculty is that this period of time is too short to allow for proper evaluation of student work between Friday's exams and Monday's grade posting deadline. Ms. English agreed to move the deadline to noon on Tuesday.

Dr. Wiedemann asked to examine the possibility of forming a committee made up of Dr. Burke, Dr. Collins, and personnel from Academic Services to research how many classes this would affect.

Teaching Load for Problems Courses

The issue of whether a faculty member would receive teaching load credit for teaching problems courses was addressed. Dr. Collins stated that the courses we currently teach as problem courses even though the enrollment is much higher than provided for in the catalog could be listed as special topics. This would allow for the actual title to appear on students' transcripts and would make it possible for them to take several topics courses with the same course number but different titles.

Courses for Student Recitals

Dr. Fischli presented as a motion new course additions, AMUS 3961, 3963, and 3863. He reported that these were developed in response to the Music Department's recent NASM Accreditation report suggesting that they develop a method to transcript recitals. Dr. Collins seconded and the motion passed. The addition of these courses will not affect course loads for faculty. (Copies of course additions available upon request.)

Academic Probation/Suspension Policy

Dr. Clark presented as a discussion a letter from Dr. Ralph Fritsch, Chair of the Academic Readmissions Committee, in re early intervention measures for students at risk of academic suspension and probation. (See attached). Dr. Clark and Dr. Fritsch proposed the following:

1. Beginning Freshmen with less than 30 hours and a GPA less than 1.7, including transfer students and students on probation would be identified on the SIS.
2. When grades go out, these students would receive letters informing them that they are on probation and that their next semester's registration has been placed on hold.
3. The letter would instruct them to meet with an advisor or someone in the Academic Support Center by a certain date or their registration would be cancelled.
4. The student would be required to repeat at least two of the courses in which they received a grade of D or F and enroll in a "Skills for Success" class.

Dr. Clark stated that Academic Services would like to see this program start in spring 2003. Discussion followed. Dr. Wiedemann asked that the Academic Council hold a special meeting to discuss this plan when Dr. Clark has the letter and details worked out.

Spring Schedule of Classes Production

Ms. English distributed a timeline of the production of the Spring 2003 schedule.(Copy available upon request.)

Other Business

Members of the Council were asked to express other concerns or make announcements:

- Dr. Fischli expressed his concern that the brochure developed a couple of years ago seems no longer to be in existence.(Side note: Ms. Janus Buss informed the Office of Academic Affairs that a new brochure is being designed and should be in production soon.)
- Ms. Latham announced that there would be a reception to be held September 25th, 5-7 pm, for faculty who were promoted and/or received tenure during the previous academic year.
- Ms. English reported that enrollment figures as of 12th day were at 6193 after 77 voids. Another count will be announced after 20th class day, September 18th.
- Mr. Dawson reported that 91 students attended the Student Government Association's first annual leadership conference on Saturday, September 7th.
- Ms. Spiller distributed an overview/update and a flyer for the Majors Fair to be held Tuesday, October 29th.She also handed out a listing of MSU's pre-professional programs to be listed at the Majors Fair. She asked the faculty to urge students, especially those who are undecided on a major, to attend the fair.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be October 9th, at 2:00, in the Kiowa Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Parker

Assistant to the Vice President

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May 6, 2003

Dr. Robert Clark

Vice President for Academic Services

Midwestern State University

Dear Dr. Clark:

I have been a member of the Academic Readmissions Committee for the past four academic years, serving as Chairman last year and this year. The members of that committee have the opportunity to see a large number of the students who are about to begin academic suspensions. We discussed the problems we see in the current academic probation/suspension process at our August meeting and wanted to present them to you, along with some suggestions for their solution.

Every year, we see a substantial number of students with two semesters at MSU who are about to start their first academic suspension. Typically, these students fail most of their courses the first semester (which puts them on probation), and then repeat all the same mistakes in the second semester with a new set of courses (which results in a first suspension). At this point, they have cumulative GPA's below 1.0 and 15+ hours of "F" on their transcripts-an academic "hole" from which few students will recover. By "repeating all the same mistakes" we mean taking heavy course loads along with full-time jobs, failure to withdraw from courses they are failing, failure to repeat D's and F's and a general lack of understanding about how a college-level academic environment works.

We feel that there should be earlier intervention than currently exists in this process. Because of early registration, in many cases a student has already registered for the second semester before they receive their first semester grades. We suggest that when a student goes on probation, any existing schedule for the following semester should be cancelled, along with telephone and on-line registration privileges. The student should receive a letter along with their grade report requiring them to return to their advisor to make a new schedule that includes the following: 1) No more than four courses other than kinesiology activity courses; 2) One of these courses must be Skills for Success (unless already completed); 3) Two of these courses must be repeats of D's or F's; 4) Participation in the probation program. We feel the probation program is particularly important because it provides continued contact during the semester that should help students on probation to make realistic decisions about dropping courses they are failing.

Students returning from suspension would continue on probation and be subject to the above restrictions. Our committee regularly readmits students because the readmissions contract is currently the only way to enforce restrictions on what they take when they return to school. Currently a student returning from suspension has to complete either Skills for Success or the probation program, but no other restrictions apply.

Sincerely,

Ralph B. Fritsch

Chairman, Academic Readmissions Committee