

Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee
Minutes
February 18, 2016

Name	Term	Affiliation
Conte, Tom	[14-17]	CoC-CS
Mulford, Charles	[13-16]	Business
Nobles, Greg	[11-17]	Honors Program
Perez, Ruperto M. #		Counseling
Pikowsky, Reta †		Registrar
Pollock, Anne	[14-17]	LMC
Poproski, Ruth	[15-18]	CETL
Nukuna, Nagela	[15-16]	U Student
Onken, Decker	[15-16]	U Student
Gable, Thomas	[15-16]	G Student
Cottle, Mark #		Faculty Executive Board Liaison

10 Voting members/5 required for a quorum.

Attending: Reta Pikowsky, Anne Pollock, Ruth Poproski, Nagela Nukuna, Justin Eisenberg (Filling in for Decker Onken)

Guests: Omar Rodriguez (Registrar's Office)

1. The religious observance policy was passed by the Academic Faculty Senate. The Committee discussed the procedures and process that will be needed to implement the new policy.

Students will have the option, as they do now for other absences, to work directly with the instructor to make up the work. Or, the student can use the same form as student use for other types of requests. After the first two weeks of the term, the form on the Registrar's Office website will serve as an appeal form.

The requests will be reviewed for approval by the Registrar's Office during the first two weeks of the term. If they are for an acceptable period of time and seem to meet other criteria, they will be processed administratively. After the first two weeks of the semester, students will submit an appeal using the current request form and SAFAC will be asked to review and vote on the request.

Also, the group agreed to include Student Honor Code information on the Institute Approved Absence information website.

Following the meeting, the Registrar's Office drafted some language for the website which is attached to this set of Minutes and will be approved by SAFAC.

2. The Registrar's Office reported on the Institute Approved Absence request for the fall 2015 term. The total number of requests for fall 2015 was 111, and the total number of students from all requests was 1878. The average number of students per request was 16.9 and the average length of an event in days was 2.2. It was noted that the students with more than one request were involved in groups that attend seasonal events based on their student organization. GT Band and Music are relevant examples of such requests where a student will appear on an absence request more than once throughout a semester.

The group determined that the Institute Approved Absence process is working as intended by the Institute. Committee members also agreed that this information indicates that the number and nature of these requests is within reason and that we are not being overcome by the numbers or the types of requests.

Committee members suggested including the actual number of instructional days missed on the spreadsheet. The draft report only provided a total number of days requested. The report will also be amended to include the median number and the athletics absences will be added as a separate sheet with the team listed along with the travel dates listed for each term.

Now that the data is being tracked, starting with Fall 2015, the Committee will have comparative information in the future to know how well, or not, the process is working and whether or not the numbers of excused absences are becoming of concern. The information will be included in the Annual Report that is presented to the Academic Faculty Senate in the fall.

3. Committee members also discussed the role and direction of SAFAC. The group raised interest in becoming a supporting unit for academic advising system and financial aid programs. After some discussion, the group determined to reach out to the financial aid office this semester for an update and to explore with them how SAFAC might at least lend some verbal support on their efforts. More information will be shared at the next meeting.

4. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 15, at 3:00 PM in the Registrar's Office Conference Room, 1st Floor Savant. This is "Faculty Appreciation Day" so the date needed to be later in the afternoon, rather than earlier, as was a possibility discussed at a past meeting.

Adjourned,

Dr. Anne Pollock, LMC