

Student Academic & Financial Affairs Committee

November 10, 2008

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Greg Corso (Psych), Patty Sobecky (Biol), Augustine Esogbue (ISYE), Reta Pikowsky (Registrar), Susan Burns (CEE), Kristie Champlin (undergrad student), Carl Yerger (graduate student).

Absent: Mo Li (MSE), Ruperto Perez (Counseling Center),
Kristie Champlin (undergraduate student)
Guest : None

The meeting was called to order by Augustine Esogbue, at 2:00PM, in the J.S. Coon building, Room 215. The discussions of the October meeting were reviewed. Susan reported that the 2007-2008 SAFAC report was presented to the joint meeting of the General Faculty and the Faculty Senate but that no questions were or concerns were expressed on about our report and other committees. Augustine thanked her for representing the Committee.

An update on the developments from previous resolutions concerning the two excused absence cases that Reta handled was presented. She reported that upon interacting further with the instructor, as well as additional assessments of the student's performance in class to date, the instructor agreed to grant the excuse absence as recommended by the Committee.

The meeting focused on intensive discussion on one request from Reta that was raised in between meetings. This related to excused absence for "religious holiday" and whether a particular faculty's process stipulated in his course syllabus was in violation of Institute Policy. This matter was debated rigorously and with passionate stance taken by the students. There was divergence of opinion between graduate student and undergraduates and among faculty. The faculty concerned felt that his syllabus had made adequate provision for all excused absences including religious holidays while the student felt that it violated the policy. Upon Reta holding further discussion with the faculty, he made a judgment call and gave the student an excused absence for Yom Kipur. The faculty nevertheless expressed interest on the Committee's thoughts on the issue.

The Committee revisited the issue of student evaluations of course/instructor raised by Mo Li last Spring. It was revealed that an effort was afoot to review and redesign the CIOS instrument and that additional intelligence on the matter was necessary before taking any position on it. A decision was then made to invite Donna Llewellyn of the Center for Enhancement in Teaching and Learning to our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm

