

Academic Affairs Committee

Final Report (Summary)

Academic Senate

May 12, 2016

Membership

Callie Babbitt (GIS)

Tracy Davis (COS)

James (Minseok) Kwon (GCCIS)

Benjamin Lawrance (CLA)

Chris Licata (Provost's Delegate,
ex officio, voting)

David Long (CIAS)

Joseph Miller (SCB)

Robert Osgood (CHST)

Linda Tolan (CAST)

P. Venkataraman (KGCOE), **Chair**

Carol DeFilippo (NTID) - At Large

Matthew Fluet (GCCIS) - At Large

Joyce Hertzson (CIAS) - At Large

NTID member **TBC**

AAC: Charges for the Academic Year 2015- 2016

Charges

AS Presentation

- 1.** Review Policy D02.0 and suggest revisions, as deemed necessary, to ensure compliance with MSCHE Accreditation Standards.

Nov 19, 2015
- 2.** Examine possible changes to the grading policy, including further refinements of the A and D grades.

Apr 7, 2016
- 3.** Re-assess D08.0, D18.0, and D18.1, in consultation with the Division of Student Affairs, regarding further revisions, to reflect needs such as (for D18.0) Title IX compliance on matters of sexual harassment and sexual violence that have become apparent since new processes were implemented as of May 2013.

Dismissed

AAC: Charges for the Academic Year 2015- 2016

Charges (continued)

AS Presentation

4. Investigate the intended nature of the University Appeals Board, its functions and composition in current policy and implications for proposing policy revisions with regard to appeals in academic matters

5. Evaluate and recommend changes to the stated policy for Research Center creation and review, particularly related to the Center's responsibility to be transparent about requirements and decision making process for faculty affiliation as well as overall operation. Evaluate and recommend changes to the affiliation agreement, particularly where they relate to faculty plan of work, access to Center resources, and academic freedom.

Apr 7, 2016

6. Investigate the effectiveness of the RIT Suggestion Box Program and its value-add to RIT.

7. Continue to work with the Office of Legal Affairs and the Administration on the definitions for academic units.

Charge**Sub-Committee membership**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Christine Licata |
| 2 | Joseph Miller, Matthew Fluet, Tracy Davis, David Long |
| 3 | Joseph Miller, Minseok Kwon, Linda Tolan |
| 4 | Joseph Miller, Carol DeFilippo, Minseok Kwon |
| 5 | Callie Babbitt, Benjamin Lawrance |
| 6 | Robert Osgood, Christine Licata, David Long |
| 7 | Matthew Fluet, P. Venkataraman, Tracy Davis |

Charge 1: Review Policy D02.0 and suggest revisions, as deemed necessary, to ensure compliance with MSCHE Accreditation Standards.

Recommended Changes to Policy D02.0 ADMISSION

Transfer credit at the undergraduate level will usually be granted for those courses completed with a grade of "C" or better in other regionally accredited colleges or universities and specific armed services course work which parallel courses in the program (including options, if any) for which the student is applying or is currently registered. However, if the program (or option) which the student finally chooses to pursue does not include any or all of the courses evaluated, they will not be credited toward requirements for a degree. The acceptance or denial of transfer credit, however, is not decided exclusively on the basis of the accreditation of the sending institution or the mode of delivery, but rather considers course equivalencies, including the expected learning outcomes compared with those of the receiving program's curricula and standards.

Degree-seeking RIT students who wish to take courses at other ~~accredited~~ higher education institutions and receive transfer credit towards their RIT degrees need to secure the prior written approval of the dean(s), or their designee, of their home college or, if their program is housed outside the college structure, the approval of the director or director's designee. In order to assure appropriateness of the course content and course level for Liberal Arts courses, academic units should consult with the College of Liberal Arts as needed. Transfer credit must meet residency requirements as noted in Policy [D12.0.2.C- Graduation Requirements](#).

Motion passed (minor change in wording?)

AS presentation: 11/19/15

Charge 2: Examine possible changes to the grading policy, including further refinements of the A and D grades.

Recommendation 1: No change to the grading system in Policy D5.0 (Grades) is necessary at this time.

Recommendation 2: Provide resources to analyze the results of the faculty survey in greater detail.

Recommendation 3: Charge the 2016/17AY AAC to develop a best-practices white paper to encourage consistent grading.

Motion 1: Modify Policy D5.0 II A by deleting the Description column.

Motion did not pass

AS presentation: 04/07/16

Charge 3: Re-assess D08.0, D18.0, and D18.1, in consultation with the Division of Student Affairs, regarding further revisions, to reflect needs such as (for D18.0) Title IX compliance on matters of sexual harassment and sexual violence that have become apparent since new processes were implemented as of May 2013.

Charge dismissed because of changes to above policies through Presidential action to accommodate Title IX requirements

Charge 4: Investigate the intended nature of the University Appeals Board, its functions and composition in current policy and implications for proposing policy revisions with regard to appeals in academic matters

Current State of Policies:

- There is no longer a definition in policy of an Academic Appeals Subcommittee of the University Appeals Board (formerly the Institute Appeals Board), following recent revisions (regarding Title IX) to Policy D18.0 Student Conduct. Meanwhile, the appeals process specified in Policy D8.0 Student Academic Integrity refers to the Academic Appeals Subcommittee, with reference to Policy D18.0
- **Current practice in resolving academic issues brought by or against students is performed by the individual colleges. Meanwhile, the university is striving for a multi-disciplinary integration (RIT Strategic Plan for 2025) across colleges regarding academic matters. Practices which engender the identification of issues or patterns regarding academic matters can assist the university in the generation of future policy/best practices.**
- The university pledges fair and equal treatment to all students, regardless of college or degree level. However, there is no guidance in policy regarding a formal process, uniform across the university, for **graduate students** to resolve issues relating to academic matters that pertain to graduate study or to appeal disputes about such matters (with the exception of D17.0 Final Course Grade Disputes and D8.0 Student Academic Integrity)

Charge 4: Investigate the intended nature of the University Appeals Board, its functions and composition in current policy and implications for proposing policy revisions with regard to appeals in academic matters

Recommendation: Charge the Academic Affairs Committee of 2016-2017 to draft a university policy that establishes a University Academic Appeals Board (UAAB) with consideration of the following recommended characteristics and functions:

- To consider issues and disputes regarding academic matters that remain unresolved in the opinion of the petitioner (faculty, instructional staff, graduate/undergraduate students), having applied thorough and good-faith efforts, and exhausting all available informal and formal means to resolution
- To stipulate acceptable grounds as the basis for such appeal
- To establish a process for determining which cases have merit for entering the appeal process
- To delineate a clear path that might lead to the appeal process and a definitive endpoint for terminating the appeal process and to articulate the relationship between the formal academic appeals process and (a) informal mediation processes; and (b) student conduct cases that involve academic matters.

Charge 4: Investigate the intended nature of the University Appeals Board, its functions and composition in current policy and implications for proposing policy revisions with regard to appeals in academic matters

- ❑ To describe composition of the UAAB, to include students and faculty or instructional staff from each college; with consideration of populating the Board, in part, with the existing chairs of the Academic Integrity Committees of the colleges
- ❑ To identify issues or patterns regarding academic matters and to recommend future policy/best practices, as needed
- ❑ Delineate reporting responsibilities and budgetary implications.

Charge 5:

Evaluate and recommend changes to the stated policy for Research Center creation and review, particularly related to the Center's responsibility to be transparent about requirements and decision making process for faculty affiliation as well as overall operation. **Evaluate and recommend changes to the affiliation agreement**, particularly where they relate to faculty plan of work, access to Center resources, and academic freedom.

Recommendation 1: Adopt the proposed Center for Research Excellence / Major Research Laboratory affiliation agreement

Recommendation 2: Form a Standing "Research Committee" of Academic Senate

AS presentation: 04/07/16

Charge 6: Investigate the Effectiveness of the RIT Suggestion Box Program and its Value-Add to RIT

The suggestion box program:

RIT's Suggestion Program is about a year old and was instituted to provide a vehicle for encouraging students, employees and current alumni to share their ideas about ways RIT might consider reducing costs or generating revenue. Details on the program and criteria are found on the President's website (www.rit.edu/president/suggestions). Suggestions are reviewed by the RIT Suggestion Program Committee and sent to the appropriate evaluating department for possible implementation. If a suggestion is moved to implementation, the proposer (which can be an individual or group of individuals) is eligible for a \$25.00 Dining Services gift card.

Suggestions are submitted through the RIT Suggestion Program website which provides guidance on the types of suggestions being sought; principally suggestions that will result in:

- **Saving time, labor, materials, supplies or money**
- **Efficiencies**
- **Avoiding duplication**
- **Eliminating waste**
- **Generating additional revenue without increasing fees or tuition**

Charge 6: Investigate the Effectiveness of the RIT Suggestion Box Program and its Value-Add to RIT

Recommendation:

RIT's Suggestion Program is a new initiative and given its purpose and implementation thus far, we believe the program has merit and should be seen as an open means of allowing anyone the opportunity to exercise creativity in sharing ideas that will lead to improvements at RIT.

Outcomes: Although the program did not necessarily provide the revenue generation or cost savings that were initially intended, the program became an opportunity in so many other ways as an:

- Opportunity/outlet for community members to contribute and be heard
- Opportunity for employee recognition
- Opportunity for collaboration
- Opportunity for continuous improvement
- Opportunity to improve communication

Charge 7: Continue to work with the Office of Legal Affairs and the Administration on the definitions for academic units

Current Status:

- There is no formal definition of “**academic unit**” within the office of legal affairs at RIT
- There appears to be no formal definition at most of our peer institutions. Only a limited number of definitions of academic units show up in searches
- The word academic unit (together) appears in the following RIT policies:

C22.0, D01.1, D02.0, D02.1, D05.0, D08.0, D09.0, D13.0, D17.0, E08.0, E07.0, E09.0

This does not appear to cause any problems

- It is difficult to define an ‘**academic unit**’ without a need and a motivation
- It is difficult to define an ‘**academic unit**’ without reference to the consequence of the definition on current organizational structure
- It is difficult to define an ‘**academic unit**’ without a consistent definition of administrative units across colleges

Charge 7: Continue to work with the Office of Legal Affairs and the Administration on the definitions for academic units

Recommendation : AAC believes there is no compelling purpose to delineate “academic unit” at this time. For future consideration, the following definition appears to be the least restrictive

Definition*:

“Academic Unit” means a department, center, school, college or other academic division to which University faculty are assigned under the aegis of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

*borrowed from the University of Wyoming