

Academic Affairs Charge 5

Joe Lanzafame and Heidi Nickisher

AA 5 Review Policy D05.0 and address the need to include language stating how in courses with multiple sections in a semester, the department head might require a common final. Propose a policy change if necessary and bring to senate for discussion and vote.

Current policy **D05.0** states:

I. STATEMENT OF STANDARD

At the commencement of the course, and as appropriate throughout the course, it is the instructor's responsibility to:

- A. Define criteria for evaluation.
- B. State the process for converting the professor's evaluation criteria to the RIT grading system.
- C. Identify timelines for announcement, submission, and the return of graded work either at the beginning or during the progress of the course.

Plaintiff's concern:

The plaintiff wants language added that essentially empowers the Chair/Head to mandate common exams.

Discussion with the plaintiff led us to conclude that his main concern was his academic freedom, and D5.0, which, as currently written, makes grading his responsibility, and that his School Head/Department Chair does not have the authority to mandate common exams or syllabi.

Our Discovery:

With regard to the plaintiff's charge, we find that it is an isolated problem and there is a grievance procedure available to remedy it. Moreover, as per RIT policy E2.0 on Principles of Academic Freedom, while all members of the faculty at Rochester Institute of Technology are entitled to full freedom in their teaching, it is also expected that the aforementioned teaching will be aimed toward achieving the educational objectives *agreed upon by the faculty*, administration and board of trustees.

In this case, a common final is an educational objective. Department faculty do not need to be unanimous in their support for a common exam but once the *majority* voice is achieved, this constitutes *agreement* by faculty and administration (i.e., the department chair).

Our Recommendation:

NO policy changes in response to the charge are necessary at this time.

Academic Affairs Charge 6

JOE LANZAFAME (ACADEMIC AFFAIRS)

BRIAN LANDI (RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE)

The ChargeS:

Academic Affairs Committee:

Per policy B05.0, review policy D01.6 – Protocols for Academic Centers (last reviewed in 2008)

The Research & Scholarship Committee:

Review policies Misconduct in Research and Scholarship C02.0 (last review (LR) 1996), Agreement for Commissioning of Educational Materials C03.1 (LR 2007), Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research C05.0 (LR 2011), Protocols for Academic Centers D01.6 (LR 2008), according to policy B05.0.

Issues:

1. Centers of Excellence would seem to better fall under the purview of the Research & Scholarship Committee.
2. There are numerous “centers” on campus. Determination of exactly which ones fall under D01.6 proved challenging.
3. The Research & Scholarship Committee was just formed and needs more time with this issue.
4. Various “Center” Directors have expressed an interest in weighing in and helping reformulate this policy.

Our (joint) recommendation:

Bring this charge back in 2018-2019 as a joint effort of Academic Affairs and Research & Scholarship.

We propose to establish a joint subcommittee with members from AAC and RSC that look at the policy in general with a specific intent to provide structure for all of types of centers and the operational aspects with benchmarking from peers such as the University of Michigan. The joint subcommittee would work closely with the Provost and OVPR offices as well as garner feedback from current center directors to inform on the policy.



Academic Affairs

Charge 7

JOE LANZAFAME

SCOTT WOLCOTT

Residency Requirements

Charge AA 7 2017-18

Review RIT Policy D 2.0 ... and modify as needed in order to clarify/update the amount of transfer credit allowable for an undergraduate degree.

Relevant current policy, Policy D02.0

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d020>

Policy D 2, Section 1.A, Transfer Credit

Under no circumstances can a recipient of a two-year associate's degree from another institution receive more than two years' transfer credit for that degree. However, applicable courses successfully completed beyond the associate's degree at the upper division or equivalent level may transfer to the student's intended program. RIT residency requirements must be satisfied. (**See Policy D.12**)

AAC does not recommend any changes to Policy D2.0.

Relevant current policy, Policy D12.0

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d120>

Policy D 12, Section II.C, Part of Graduation Requirements

A minimum of 30 credit hours shall be successfully completed in residence at the university in the college granting the degree (inclusive of service courses). If the student has successfully completed 30 credit hours in residence, a petition may be submitted to the dean to study 10 credit hours in absentia in the final year of the degree; at a minimum, 20 of the final 30 credit hours are to be completed in residence.

Essentially, three parts

1. A minimum of 30 credit hours shall be successfully completed in residence at the university in the college granting the degree (inclusive of service courses).
2. ...at a minimum, 20 of the final 30 credit hours are to be completed in residence.
3. If the student has successfully completed 30 credit hours in residence, a petition may be submitted to the dean to study 10 credit hours in absentia in the final year of the degree; ...

Transfer credit basics

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/registrar/transfer-credit>

RIT awards transfer credit for courses completed at other regionally accredited colleges and universities only.

Transfer credit is evaluated by the degree granting unit and the College of Liberal Arts.

Transfer credit at the undergraduate level will only be granted for course work completed with a grade of "C" or above.

Regardless of the total amount of transfer credit awarded, a minimum of 30 semester credit hours needs to be completed at RIT in the college granting the degree for Associate and Baccalaureate degree candidates.

Our philosophy

- Add clarity to D12 and simplify where appropriate.
- No significant change to existing residency requirement.
- Maintain flexibility for the degree granting unit to determine which courses count towards the minimum residency requirement.
- Maintain the authority of the degree granting unit, which is fully capable and obligated, to ensure the integrity of their degree.
- Use a percentage of the degree requirement rather than 30 credit hours to broaden applicability to Associate and Bachelor UG degrees.
- Aid SOIS in helping students complete their degrees.

SOIS

SOIS is helping students complete their degrees when they have left RIT but were close to completion. Their effort requires structuring individualized programs which may include courses not specifically “in residence” at RIT. They require greater flexibility than the current policy implies.

SOIS Executive Director James Hall enthusiastically supported our recommendation saying “Perfect. We love it.”

Our recommendation:

Rewrite Policy D12 to read:

A minimum of 25% of the total semester credit hours required for the degree shall consist of successfully completed RIT courses. The degree-granting program shall decide which specific courses and how many total semester credit hours shall count to satisfy this requirement.

Modification to existing policy

- Use a percentage of the degree requirement rather than 30 credit hours to broaden applicability to Associate and Bachelor UG degrees.
- Eliminate requirement for 20 of 30 final credit hours being RIT courses [this helps SOIS].

The Recommendation and the existing policy

Recommended Policy D12

A minimum of 25% of the total semester credit hours required for the degree shall consist of successfully completed RIT courses. The degree-granting program shall decide which specific courses and how many total semester credit hours shall count to satisfy this requirement.

Existing Policy D12, Section II.C

A minimum of 30 credit hours shall be successfully completed in residence at the university in the college granting the degree (inclusive of service courses). If the student has successfully completed 30 credit hours in residence, a petition may be submitted to the dean to study 10 credit hours in absentia in the final year of the degree; at a minimum, 20 of the final 30 credit hours are to be completed in residence.



Charge AA4

MICHAEL EASTMAN

KATE WRIGHT

JOE LANZAFAME

Charge AA4

Investigate the options for:

- i) A new FA grade (Failure due to Absence)
- ii) Faculty initiated student withdrawal* from a class based on a student's demonstrated absence from two or more classes during add/drop week

Make a recommendation to senate for further action and policy change, as necessary

*Note: In RIT language, a “drop” occurs during the add/drop period. No grade is assigned. A “withdrawal” occurs *after* the add/drop period and a grade of ‘W’ is assigned. As such, the charge is really considering a faculty-initiated student drop.

Failure Due to Absence Grade (FA)

Plaintiff's concern:

The plaintiff was concerned that students who fail as a result of non-attendance (rather than fully participating in the class) negatively impacting the D/F/W rate and have the potential to negatively impact a faculty member's annual evaluation

Actions taken

Met with plaintiff to understand concerns

Considered the potential benefits for an FA grade for students and faculty

Conducted a survey of two colleges (COS and CAST) that included faculty, advisors, and administrators

Met with the registrar to better-understand the implications of an FA grade (RIT does not require attendance; doing so has federal implications)

Recommendation on FA Grade

NO ACTION:

- There seems to be little benefit to students beyond what is afforded through early alert system (which also provides attendance earlier than final grade)
- Survey results (87 faculty, 4 administrators, 11 academic advisors)
 - 50% Against policy modification
 - 32% In favor of policy modification
 - 18% undecided
- Requiring attendance:
 - Requires monitoring and reporting strategies, which are very prescriptive
 - Not supported by the registrar

Faculty Initiated Student Withdrawal

Plaintiff's concern:

- The plaintiff was concerned that students who do not withdraw ended up failing the course
- Students who never plan to attend may take a seat from a student who is on wait list
- Other schools (e.g. MCC) operate in this fashion

Actions taken

Met with plaintiff to understand concerns

Considered benefits to students, including opportunity for wait-listed students to attend class

Researched a variety of other schools including MCC, Syracuse, Carnegie Mellon, Case Western, Cornell, Drexel, etc.

Met with registrar to understand implications of Faculty-initiated withdrawal (RIT does not require attendance; doing so has federal implications)

Recommendation on Faculty Initiated Withdrawal

NO ACTION

- There are possible severe negative consequences for a dropped student related to enrollment status and financial aid. As such, there would need to be a process with appropriate checks and balances for a faculty-initiated withdrawal.
- Given the likely duration of the process and the short add/drop period, it seems unlikely that a wait listed student would be able to take advantage of the opening created.
- MCC is in the process of revising their policy because of inconsistent implementation and inequitable treatment of students
- A dropped student may fall below full-time status negatively impacting his or her financial aid
- Given RIT neither requires nor wants to require attendance, it is highly likely the practice would be applied inconsistently