FINAL REPORT AS/SA Committee 2017-2018

AS/SA Committee membership (listed alphabetically)

- Farid Barquet (SG President)

- Rebecca DeRoo (CLA)

- Raluca Felea (COS)

- Wendy Gelbrand (Student Affairs Delegate)

- Hany Ghoneim (KGCOE)

- Lucas Granan (SG representative)

- Neil Hair (Provost Appointee)

- Brian Larson (CIAS)

- Stephen Luxmore (SCB)

- Corinne Mendieta (SG representative)

- Bobby Moakley (SG representative) (co-chair)

- Elizabeth Ruder (CHST) (co-chair)

- Jennifer Swartzenberg (NTID)

- Gretchen Wainwright (CAST)

- Linwei Wang (GCCIS)

- Brian Barry (at large)

- Irene Evans (COS)

- Jason Listman (NTID)

Charges for AY2017 -

1. Explore the costs and benefits of a fellowships office at RIT and make a recommendation to the Senate regarding the creation of such an office.
2. Evaluate the need to extend the admissions window to 1.5 years and investigate possible modifications to the application-to-admission timetable.
3. Regarding Final Course Grade Dispute Policy, make appropriate changes to policies related to D17.0 to address issues with references to the Academic Appeals Sub-committee. Make necessary changes in order to revise inconsistencies in Policy D08.0 and D18.0.
4. Investigate the will for RIT to become a "Sanctuary Campus".
5. Investigate what elements students need to be centralized in RIT's electronic course management system and whether to require faculty to use RIT's electronic course management system. Identify the barriers for more widespread faculty use and write appropriate policy, as necessary, for full senate review.
6. Assess how well faculty needs are being served by ITS. Investigate the appointment of a Faculty representative, "ITS Liaison" for the university or for each college as part of the review on committees (ASEC 5 2017-18). (This charge (originally ASEC charge 7) was approved to be moved to this committee on 9/21/2017).
7. Investigate policies at other universities regarding a minimum time for students to consider job offers and make a recommendation concerning whether RIT should have such a policy.
8. Several other universities have a policy that requires employers to give students a specific minimum time to consider offers (and receive competing offers). It appears to work well for their students, so it might work well for ours as well.

Charge 1: Explore the costs and benefits of a fellowships office at RIT and make a recommendation to the Senate regarding the creation of such an office.

Subcommittee members: Raluca Felea (chair), Irene Evans, Jennifer Swartzenberg

Recommendation: The subcommittee recommends that RIT establishes a fellowships office

Justification:

Background research on other fellowship offices:

 Receipt of Fellowships not only helps the students, but helps to increase the recognition and prestige of RIT. Many other universities have fellowship offices and they market them heavily. Specifically, the sub-committee researched the Fellowship offices at University of Rochester, Rutgers, and University of Michigan and noted that these universities had distinct Fellowship Offices that were staffed to help students locate and apply for Fellowships.

Presently at RIT, "RIT Global", the international student office, helps international students find fellowships. Recently RIT Global has picked up the Goldwater and Fulbright Scholarships and are taking care of a lot of the legwork with respect to those two fellowships. Creation of a designated Fellowship Office would increase student awareness of fellowship opportunities and could potentially open up RIT Global to other initiatives that it doesn't have the opportunity to do now.

A centralized Fellowship Office would serve both domestic and international student populations identify Fellowships they are eligible for and assist with the application process. Additionally, if there was a central office to take care of the administrative tasks related to the application, allowing the mentors who help students prepare to apply would be able to use their time more efficiently and productively with the student applying. This way the mentor could focus on honing in the student's application to make sure it is the best that it can be.

If RIT had a fellowship office of our own, this would directly help our students to obtain more fellowships, which in turns increases the prestige of RIT.

The cost of creating a Fellowship office or where this unit would be housed was not explored by the subcommittee.

Charge 2: Evaluate the need to extend the admissions window to 1.5 years and investigate possible modifications to the application-to-admission timetable.

Subcommittee members: Stephen Luxmore and Farid Barquet Ramos

Recommendation:

The subcommittee recommends no changes to the current admissions window and process.

Justification:

For Graduate Studies:

1. Colleges can current offer admissions on *any* timetable. Although many colleges with RIT use a Jan 15 deadline for Master's programs and Feb 15 for Doctoral programs, this is not a required timetable. If a specific college believes a longer admission window is required, that can be decided at the college level. In addition, some graduate programs use a rolling admission.
2. Despite there not being a required timetable, most other Universities have deadlines similar to those described above. Requiring a longer admissions window for all programs at RIT may adversely impact the number of completed applications since potential applicants will not expect a longer / non-standard admissions windows.
3. For RIT colleges and programs using the Jan 15 and Feb 15 deadlines, the Graduate Admissions Office tracks applicants, including the Visa status. If Visa issues interfere with a student's ability to start at the pre-established time, they work with the student to revise the start date.
4. Some colleges/programs at RIT are on a rolling enrollment timetable, with admissions possible in any semester. This strategy can be employed at the College level and may be used to accommodate visa issues.

For Undergraduate Studies:

1. Consultations with Undergraduate Admissions office revealed that very few students each year are affected by visa issues (usually fewer than 5). Those with Visa issues are usually late applicants. Visa applications begin as soon as the student has submitted all required paperwork, which could be as early as November.
2. Any admitted students may defer for a semester or for a year. In some instances deferment may be extended beyond one year. Students with Visa issues can utilize this option.

Charge 3: Regarding Final Course Grade Dispute Policy, make appropriate changes to policies related to D17.0 to address issues with references to the Academic Appeals Sub-committee. Make necessary changes in order to revise inconsistencies in Policy D08.0 and D18.0.

Subcommittee members: Elizabeth Ruder, Brian Larson, Rebecca DeRoo

Recommendation: revisions to Policies D08.0, D17.0 and D18.0 are detailed below.
Action by Senate: Senate voted to APPROVE these revisions on 5/3/18.

Revisions to D08.0

Rationale for revision: The existing policy refers readers to the incorrect location for information on the Academic Appeals Sub-Committee

Academic Integrity Appeals states: "The instructor or the student may appeal the findings of the Academic Integrity Committee to the Academic Appeals Sub-Committee of the University Appeals Board (see Policy D18.0, ~~section VI~~ section IX, item G).

Revisions to D17.0 Final Grade Disputes

Rationale for revision: Since D08.0 is the Academic Integrity Policy, the proposed revision corrected what was deemed to be an error.

Part III, section B: "**Final Course Grade Dispute Committee Membership:** The Final Course Grade Dispute Committee shall consist of three instructors (senior or principal lecturer, tenured, or tenure-track) and may be part of the same pool of instructors who sit on the Academic ~~Conduct~~ Integrity Committee (See Policy D8.0-Academic Integrity Policy)."

Revisions to D18.0 Student Conduct Process

Rationale for Revision: The current policy is inconsistent in specifying timelines in terms of *business days.* The text in red shows the revisions.

 Section IX. Appeal for the Student Code of Conduct
Cases originating from the Center for Residence Life. For cases heard by the Center for Residence Life, the follow is applicable:
a.   Within three (3) business days, the Student intending to appeal must submit the basis of the appeal in writing to the Student Conduct Appeals Coordinator.

G. Procedure for UAB Appeals
1.   Within three (3) business days of receiving the determination of a conduct hearing, the Student must submit the basis for appeal in writing to the Student Conduct Appeals Coordinator.

Charge 4: Investigate the will for RIT to become a "Sanctuary Campus".

Subcommittee members: Corinne Mendieta, Jason Listman and Wendy Gelbard

<mark>This charge is to be carried over to AY 18-19 to receive legal consultation from Bobby Colon</mark>

Recommendation: The subcommittee recommends RIT becomes a Sanctuary Campus

Justification:

Students at RIT deserve to feel safe while pursuing their educational experience here. In the recent political climate, it is up to us to ensure that our students are still enjoying a positive college career. In addition, RIT has a high rate of international students, diversifying the abilities, people, and successes of our institution. In summary, if we are to continue in our mission of "preparing our students for successful careers in a global society through a unique blend of curricular, experiential, and research programs delivered within a student-centric culture", we must continue to welcome and protect people of all different backgrounds.

Sanctuary campus will protect members of the campus community who are undocumented immigrants by
- Not allowing Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) officers to come on campus without a warrant
- Providing online courses for deported students to complete their degrees
- Ensuring undocumented students receive scholarships equivalent to Federal aid
- Providing legal support if necessary
- Not identifying who is undocumented immigrants to the local, state, and federal officers

Charge 5: Investigate what elements students need to be centralized in RIT's electronic course management system and whether to require faculty to use RIT's electronic course management system. Identify the barriers for more widespread faculty use and write appropriate policy, as necessary, for full senate review.

Subcommittee members: Neil Hair, Gretchen Wainwright

Recommendation: Revisions to D05.8 are recommended

Action by the Academic Senate: Revisions to D05.8 were approved on 4/12/18.

Committee report:

Part 1. Elements students need to be centralized in RIT's electronic course management system

After surveying students, it was determined that the elements that need to be centralized in the electronic course management system (hereafter called myCourses) are grades and the syllabi (which should include a description of how the final grade is calculated). Students report that while many faculty use myCourses for grades, other faculty use a variety of online portals for grades, and yet other faculty use no online grade reporting at all. Students expressed a variety of concerns around the need for online grades; and specifically for those grades to be on myCourses and not on other online platforms. The largest concern being that many students have to go through several different websites/platforms to find and calculate their grades. While some faculty use publisher's websites exclusively, other faculty use both the publisher's website for certain portions of the course and myCourses for others. Students desire grades to be posted to one centralized system where it is easy for students to track their progress. Students reported that the myCourses gradebook was easy to use and understand held them accountable for their own grades. Students also reported that they could call/email TLS for help with myCourses, but they do not know who to contact for tech support with the publisher's site.   Overall, many students expressed if they if all of their grades are available in myCourses, they would be more motivated to visit office hours and have conversations with their professor if they felt that their mark was subpar. Students did not express many concerns about the lack of calculated grades in the case that individual grades were posted-bringing about the request for a syllabus with a grade breakdown.

EXAMPLE of Syllabus grade breakdown

Every class has a different composition of grades. Students request that at minimum, faculty provide a breakdown of types of assignments and the corresponding percentage. For example:

Homework: 25%

Quizzes: 15%

Tests: 25%

Final Exam: 35%

If assignments have individual weights, faculty can *elect* to list additional details. For example:

Grading Policy	1. Test 1 14% 2. Test 2 16% 3. Presentation 20% 4. Homework (3-4 times) and in-Class Quiz (if any) 15% 5. Class room participation 7% 6. Final Exam 28%

Part 2. Barriers for more widespread faculty use

While many faculty are already posting syllabi and grades to myCourses, some faculty are not posting grades online at all. The AS/SA Committee believes failure to post syllabi and grades online is an impediment to student success. Online syllabi and grades increase transparency and accountability.

Some faculty are posting grades online, but not on myCourses. Specifically, some faculty use online platforms developed by textbook publishers to record grades. A common feature of these sites are online quizzes that are automatically graded and output grades to a gradebook hosted on the site. Faculty expressed concern that having to re-enter those grades in myCourses was redundant and not a good use of time or other resources, if they are even available (i.e., graders). In an effort to estimate how many courses at RIT utilize publisher's platforms, the AS/SA Committee reached out to Janice Decker at Barnes & Noble RIT to determine how many of the courses require textbooks with an e-learning platform. Ms. Decker reports that book bundles or books with access to an online portal accounted for 177 titles or 9% of total books for the Spring 2018 semester. However, faculty may not necessarily be using the online access that comes with the book bundle, so 9% is likely an overestimate of the number of courses using a publisher's platform.

Meetings ILI/TLS personnel revealed that several of the large publishers have integrations in place to merge the publisher's site into myCourses. These integrations allow for publisher's site to be merged or integrated into the myCourses platform.   A list of currently available integrations is available at: https://wiki.rit.edu/display/myCoursesHR/Third-Party+Integrations. Faculty who desire to have one of these publisher's sites integrated into myCourses can follow the online instruction in the aforementioned URL, or set up a 1:1 meeting with TLS for assistance. Of these available integrations, Cengage - MindLinks / WebAssign, MacMillan - LaunchPad, Wiley-Wiley Plus, and most Pearson products have gradebook integrations currently available. Gradebook integration is currently under review for McGraw-Hill-Campus and is expected to be available for the Fall 2018. For publishers without a gradebook integration, most, if not all, have export options for which faculty can export grades and then import into the MyCourses gradebook. A 1:1 meeting with TLS staff can assist faculty to utilize these features. Faculty should be cautious of posting grades on publisher sites not listed on: https://wiki.rit.edu/display/myCoursesHR/Third-Party+Integrations, as those platforms have not been vetted by TLS and may not uphold privacy standards, including FERPA.

Another barrier to faculty use of the myCourses gradebook is the concern that the myCourses gradebook is not sophisticated enough to handle complex grade calculations. Faculty using complex grade calculations can meet 1:1 with TLS staff to determine if a solution exists. If the calculation cannot be accomplished in myCourses, one potential solution is to import a .txt or .csv file to myCourses. However, it is important to note that by requiring the syllabus to contain

detailed information on the grade calculation, our recommendation does not require that final grades be posted on MyCourses.   For example, if an instructor gives 5 quizzes and allows the lowest 2 quiz grades to be dropped, the grades for all 5 quizzes should appear in myCourses, but the final grade calculated from the highest 3 grades does not need to be calculated in a separate column.

Part 3. Course continuity in emergencies

Use of myCourses benefits course continuity should an emergency situation prohibit an instructor from teaching a course mid-term. TLS can transfer ownership of a myCourses site to another instructor should the original instructor not be able to fulfill his / her duties. TLS has no ability to add users to publisher's platforms.

Part 4. Recommended Policy Changes to D05.8

VIII. AVAILABILITY~~SUBMISSION~~ OF GRADES AND COURSE MATERIALS

1. It is the instructor's responsibility to provide~~provide~~~~inform~~ students with course related information necessary to support their success~~of their grades on completed coursework~~ in a timely manner. A syllabus and t~~T~~he completed grades for coursework are expected to be posted and accessible for students regularly throughout the course.

2. Faculty members must provide feedback for all submitted work within two weeks of the submission deadline. Posting grades to RIT's Electronic Course Management System~~an online system~~ is required.~~recommended.~~, ~~however returning physical copies of graded work is sufficient.~~ The two-week posting requirement is waived in the case of deadline extensions, late submission of work, any extraneous circumstances, or when explicitly stated in the evaluation criteria.

3. Faculty members must post a syllabus before the start of any credit-bearing course on RIT's Electronic Course Management System. The syllabus must contain a comprehensive grade breakdown of how the final course grade is determined.

4. Although not required, faculty members are strongly encouraged to post relevant course documents such as powerpoints and worksheets on RIT's Electronic Course Management System.

5. Students may address concerns regarding the timeliness of posted syllabi or coursework feedback by following the procedure outlined below.

   1. If a student is not receiving syllabi or coursework feedback in a timely manner as prescribed above and wishes to address the concern, the student must request a meeting with the instructor for the purpose of reaching an understanding of when coursework grades would be made available to the student. It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of the meeting occurrence.

   2. If the meeting with the instructor does not result in either a mutual understanding or if the student does not receive a syllabus or coursework feedback according to their mutual understanding, then the student may arrange a meeting with the instructor and the instructor's academic unit head to address the concern. It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of the meeting occurrence.

   3. If a meeting between the student, instructor, and instructor's academic unit head does not result in a mutual understanding regarding the timeliness of the syllabus or coursework feedback, the student may arrange a meeting with those parties and the Dean or Dean's Designee from the college in which the course is offered to resolve any misunderstanding regarding the timeliness of coursework feedback. It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of the meeting occurrence.

4. If the meeting with the instructor, the instructor's academic unit head, and the Dean or Dean's designee does not result in the student receiving a syllabus or coursework feedback according to their prior mutual understanding, then the student's concern and records of the meetings occurrences may be used and presented by the student in a final course grade dispute (see D17.0 Final Course Grade Disputes).

5. A student may elect to bring an advocate—defined here as a current RIT faculty, staff or student member—with them to all meetings outlined above.

6. All communication regarding the arrangements of meetings shall be made using the RIT email system.

7. If at any point in the procedure outlined above the student is denied a meeting with the respective parties without a plan to reschedule, or no response is given to the student after a meeting request attempt, then the student may elect to proceed to the next step of the procedure. A student must allow 3 business days for the respective parties to initially respond to any meeting request.

Charge 6: Assess how well faculty needs are being served by ITS. Investigate the appointment of a Faculty representative, "ITS Liaison" for the university or for each college as part of the review on committees (ASEC 5 2017-18). (This charge (originally ASEC charge 7) was approved to be moved to this committee on 9/21/2017).

Subcommittee members: Hany Ghoneim and Brian Barry

 Recommendation: ASSA does recommend creation of a Faculty representative or "ITS Liaison" for each College.

Committee findings: An online Qualtrics survey was developed and distributed at the College level to ascertain whether or not faculty needs were being met by ITS and perception of the usefulness of a faculty liaison to ITS. Approximately 5.5% of total faculty responded. CIAS, CAST, COB and KGCOR reported high satisfaction. GCCIS and COS reported moderate satisfaction. CHST and COLA had low satisfaction, but had small sample sizes (n=7 and n=2, respectively).   Overall, faculty were not supportive of creation of an "ITS Liaison" and skeptical that it would be useful. KGCOE and COS already have liaison positions (Matthew Marshall is the liaison for KGCOE and Larry Buckley is the liaison for COS), and Jeanne Casares, Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer, confirmed that she meets regularly with all Associate Deans.

Charge 7: Investigate policies at other universities regarding a minimum time for students to consider job offers and make a recommendation concerning whether RIT should have such a policy. Several other universities have a policy that requires employers to give students a specific minimum time to consider offers (and receive competing offers). It appears to work well for their students, so it might work well for ours as well.

Subcommittee members: Bobby Moakley & Elizabeth Ruder

Recommendation: The subcommittee recommends that RIT does not institute a policy regarding a minimum time for students to consider job offers.

Justification:

Discussion with several faculty, staff and students revealed reasons both in favor and against instituting a timeline for job offers. The subcommittee also reviewed a report compiled by student Stefanie Sequeria which detailed the job offer policies at 48 colleges and universities.

Reasons in favor of policy to allow students a minimum amount of time to make a decision on a job offer:
- Will give students less restrictions in accepting a co-op/job offer
- Several higher ranked universities successfully employ such policies, there may be a trend toward universities adopting such policies
- Students seem to enjoy their jobs more under this policy and have less regret about accepting jobs

Reasons in opposed to policy to allow students a minimum amount of time to make a decision on a job offer:
- Unclear how it would be enforced
- Employers may decide not to recruit at RIT, which could have the most adverse effect on students with most limited job prospects

In order to get further clarification before making a final recommendation, Bobby and Liz met with Maria Richart, Interim Director of the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education and several representatives from that office. It was determined that RIT's current policy is to follow the recommendation of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), which in regard to deadlines for job offer acceptance states:

"The role of NACE is not to enforce a specific time frame, but rather to encourage practices that are reasonable and appropriate for both employers and students, recognizing that, ultimately, the employment decisions are between the student and the employer."

We learned that the overwhelming majority of employers give 2 weeks or more to make a decision on job offers. "On-the-spot" offers are extremely rare. Students who feel that they are unable to make an informed decision within the timeframe provided by the employer should consult with the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education about how to request an extension. The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education reported that a timeline policy would likely have the most adverse effects on coop placements since some of those placements are to fill a near-term need by the employer. Overall, the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is concerned that instituting such a policy would have far more consequences than benefits for students. Rather than policing students and companies on job offers and acceptances, the ASSA sub-committee saw more benefits in working to educate students and companies around best practices in accepting or offering positions. Student Government has agreed to work with the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education to hold workshops and organize online resources to ensure students are well-supported in discovering career opportunities.

Recommendations for New and Carry-over Charges

The ASSA Committee recommends that the charge: "Investigate the will for RIT to become a "Sanctuary Campus"", be carried over to next year to allow for consultation with RIT's Legal Department.