

Academic Policy Council Annual Report for 2011-2012

Council Members:

Nina Caputo
Carol Murphy
Cynthia Morton – Chair (spring 2012)
Nancy Poehlmann – Chair (fall 2011)
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This annual report summarizes discussions and issues addressed by the Academic Policy Council for 2011-2012.

Posthumous & Honorary Degrees:

The APC was asked to review the policy on awarding posthumous degrees after a request from the Provost was presented to council members. A thorough analysis of other institutions' policies on awarding degrees posthumously was conducted to better understand the range of practices that exist nationwide. Then the Council reviewed a proposed UF policy itemizing the criteria under which posthumous degrees drafted by UF faculty (Drs. Jen Day Shaw, Elaine Turner, Stephanie Hanson, and Angela Linder). After reviewing the draft guidelines, the Council suggested minor edits to the proposed document and will move to present the issue to the full Senate in 2012-2013.

Online Faculty Evaluations:

Student evaluations of faculty and courses have declined since the evaluations have gone online. The Council heard a presentation from Dr. Andrew McCullough about the statistical trends defining this issue, and discussed the issues surrounding faculty concerns about accuracy of evaluation reporting when going up for tenure and promotion. A suggestion was made that this discussion should be continued in cooperation with the Welfare Council in the 2012-2013 academic year.

Doctoral Program Improvement Process Review:

In the 2011-12 academic year, colleges were asked to conduct a self-assessment of their doctoral programs to identify the strengths, deficiencies, and potential opportunities for improvement. The University's goal in this effort was to clarify the opportunities and obstacles that contributed to strengthening graduate education at UF. The Council was charged with examining the procedures of the review process and providing recommendations to the DPIP Committee about opportunities for improving the assessment process. Dr. John Palmer, chair of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Faculty Council (CLAS), presented CLAS's experience and provided his insights after completing the DPIP assessment. This feedback prompted the need to gain broader perspective about the assessment process from other units before the APC believed it could sufficiently assert a recommendation to the Senate Steering Committee and to the Faculty Senate Chair. Therefore, in spring 2012 APC conducted a survey of colleges requesting feedback about the DPIP

process went and what was learned. The result of this survey is reflected in a comprehensive report included with this document. The APC will review the findings more closely and use the information to make concrete recommendation in the next academic.

Other issues addressed by the APC were as follows.

- Interdisciplinary Programs – The Council became reviewed issues surrounding interdisciplinary programs, especially as it reflects the University’s progress in the area, best practices between college units, and how they might be accounted for in the doctoral improvement program evaluation.
- Online teaching evaluations – Dr. Andrew McCullough made a presentation to the APC to address concerns regarding lowered course response rates and UF procedures for online teaching evaluation administration. The Council discussed the implications of online evaluations on the tenure and promotion review and faculty teaching effectiveness.
- The Good Life course – Issues associated with the implementation of the University required HUM2305 was discussed in terms of the potential effects on faculty and graduate teaching resources. The APC expressed concerns about the following: 1) if course staffing demands would drain the most seasoned graduate instructors away from other courses where they are needed, 2) if summer research productivity for Humanities faculty should it be offered in the summer, and 3) if faculty teaching, preparation, and supervision of the course would be recognized when evaluated for tenure and promotion.
- College of Medicine Review of Tenure Probation Period – The APC supported a recommendation by the College of Medicine to extend its tenure probation period to 10 years. The Council recognized the unique demands of clinical practice and scientific research among COM faculty, and expressed few reservations about this recommendation.
- Policy on course schedule conflict with block exams – The APC addressed a faculty member’s request to review the UF policy on block exams to determine if a recommendation was needed to resolved perceived conflicts between evening course schedules and evening exams for large online courses. The Council found no concern with the stated policy on course-exam conflicts, but recommended that policy in place be better communicated to faculty so that they can manage individual student conflicts more effectively.

Respectfully submitted,

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