Academic Policy Committee Annual Report

Due Date: Submit in MSWord format to <u>senate@gcsu.edu</u> <mark>no later than 11:59pm on Fri 10 May 2019</mark>

Note: This report should represent consensus of the entire committee and serve as a historical record of committee deliberations over the academic year.

Committee Name: Academic Policy Committee

Academic Year: 2018 - 2019

Committee Charge:

> V.Section2.C.1.a. <u>*Membership*</u>. The Academic Policy Committee shall have thirteen (13) members distributed as follows: eleven (11) members selected from the Corps of Instruction faculty, at least seven (7) of whom are elected faculty senators, one (1) member who is the Chief Academic Officer or an individual appointed by the Chief Academic Officer to serve as a designee in compliance with V.Section2.C, and one (1) member appointed by the University President in compliance with II.Section1.A.5.

> V.Section2.C.1.b. <u>*Scope*</u>. The Academic Policy Committee shall review and recommend for or against policy relating to undergraduate and graduate education matters that have broad impact or implication to the university as a whole, which includes, but is not limited to, policies relating to grading, scholastic probation and honors, academic appeals, academic standing, standards for admission, academic calendar, and academic ceremonies. This committee also provides advice, as appropriate, on academic procedural matters at the institution.

Committee Calendar:
Listing of dates on which the committee met.

Date	
4/27/18	Organizational Meeting
9/7/2018	
10/5/18	
11/2/18	No Business – meeting cancelled
12/7/2018	
2/1/19	No Business – meeting cancelled
3/1/19	
3/29/19	No meeting – online vote and discussions

Executive Summary:
A narrative abstract of the main issues of committee deliberations throughout the year.

Most of the committee time was spent discussing the following:

1. Midterm feedback for upper level courses and adding grade options to the midterm feedback
2. Reviewing the current student conduct/ behavior policy in conjunction with SAPC.
3. The possibility of adding + or – grading to the current system.
4. The use of plagiarism software at Georgia College

The last item resulted in APC's only motion being sent to senate for this academic year. The motion was voted on and approved by senate and the president. The second item was recommended to SAPC for consideration and tabled until SAPC gives feedback. The other items were discussed and resolved in-house.

Committee Membership and Record of Attendance:

Name	4/27	9/7	10/5	11/2	12/7	2/1	3/1	3/29
Rodica Cazacu (Chair)	P	P	P	na	P	na	P	P
Lyndall Muschell (Vice chair)	P	P	R	na	P	na	P	P
Sarah Handwerker (Secretary)	P	P	P	na	P	na	P	P
Sabrina Hom (EFS)	R	P	R	na	P	na	P	P
Catrena Lisse (EFS)	P	P	R	na	P	na	P	P
Bryan Marshall (EFS)	P	P	P	na	R	na	P	P
Tom Toney (EFS)	P	P	P	na	P	na	R	P
Jessica Wallace (EFS)	P	P	P	na	P	na	R	P
Alesa Liles (President app)	P	P	P	na	P	na	P	P
Carolyn Denard (CAO Des)	P	R	R	na	R	na	P	P
Claire Sanders (Vol.)	R	P	R	na	P	na	P	P
Christina Smith (Vol.)	R	P	P	na	R	na	R	P
Allison Reuter (Vol.)	R	P	P	na	P	na	P	P

Motions brought to the Senate floor:

Give the motion number, and motion statement as well as the committee vote and senate action on each motion that this committee brought to the Senate body for action. Short summary of committee work for each motion, if considered necessary to explain rationale, controversial matters or content that is not evident from the motion text.

1718.APC.003.P (committee vote: 6 for 3 against)

>The 2017-18 APC members considered the problem of faculty members using the last day of class as if it were the exam period. Apparently the problem is wide-spread enough that they believed an attempt should be made to curb the practice.
>
>>Motion: "The final assigned assessment of any class should be scheduled (or due) during the finals week whenever possible."
>
>Motion was submitted to ECUS on April 3, 2018 and presented to Senate on April 20, 2018, when it was tabled to be considered at the first fall meeting, September 21, 2018, when it was withdrawn by APC after senate discussions.

1819.APC.001.O (committee vote: unanimous in support)

>Plagiarism prevention: We considered the use of plagiarism software at GC and, in unanimity, recommended the "plagiarism prevention is used" (PPU) attribute to be attached by default to all courses and sections offered at Georgia College. The "plagiarism prevention is used" (PPU) attribute will be attached to each course offered at Georgia College. This attribute will cause a specific notice to appear next to each course. When a student registers via Banner Self Service (PAWS), the student is informed that plagiarism prevention may be used in that section of the course. Setting the use of plagiarism as the default allows instructors flexibility in using plagiarism prevention technology.
>
>>Motion: "To have the "plagiarism prevention is used" (PPU) attribute attached to all courses by default."
>
>Motion passed Senate and it was approved by the President

Other Significant Deliberation (Non-Motions):

Considering the 2017-18 APC recommendations, APC looked into the issue of faculty providing timely feedback to students about grades and the implementation of the existing policy on midterm feedback for upper level courses. Suggestions for this topic were made as follows:

- having SGA representatives talk with their constituents after midterm this semester to see if not receiving midterm feedback is still an issue,
- emailing the new faculty orientation committee to see if midterm feedback is discussed with new faculty,
- the possible addition of a question about midterm feedback like "did you receive feedback at the middle of the semester" to the end of semester course surveys (SRIS). This was presented to ECUS and then passed to FAPC for consideration. However, FAPC did not approve the request citing that there was a question similar to this on the survey.

SGA representatives Senators Taylor Carswell and Brenda Solomon joined one APC meeting to discuss a draft of a resolution "To advocate for the submission of midterm grades by all course levels by the final submission deadline." They requested APC's opinion on the draft resolution, and the issue of students not receiving meaningful feedback prior to midterm. It was noted that all core courses must report midterm grades in Banner; this is required by policy. It was also noted that there is a policy requiring upper level courses to provide substantive feedback prior to midterm (although entry into Banner is not a requirement for upper level). This feedback statement is part of the required syllabus statements. SGA representatives reported that the issue of students not receiving feedback prior to midterm was occurring with some instructors in upper level majors, but not all. SGA representatives also asked if a question about midterm feedback could be added to the IDEAS (SRIS) survey. APC committee advised that this request for a question about feedback to be added had been made previously. APC committee members and SGA reps discussed the following ideas for this issue:
- have the provost or registrar remind all faculty that substantive feedback is a requirement for all courses at midterm,
- encourage deans and department chairs to remind faculty of this policy,
- students can take responsibility by going first to their instructor to request feedback and next to the department chair if needed,
- students should be aware that they have the right to file an Academic Grievance for issues including not receiving feedback,
- instructors could go over the syllabus statement about midterm feedback exclusively during the first week of class.

After discussion of these ideas it was noted that students might perceive an Academic Grievance differently than faculty. It was also noted that going to the instructor and then the department chair to request feedback/report a lack of feedback might be burdensome to students. APC committee members agreed on the following after discussion of this topic: the issue of students not receiving midterm feedback is not a policy issue but rather a "policing" issue that is the responsibility of deans and department chairs/there is a sufficient policy in place already. APC suggested to SGA representatives to collect more data from students regarding which professors are not giving feedback – then, if these are isolated events discussion with specific deans and department chairs could be made.

APC also discussed, at the request of ECUS, adding grade options to the midterm feedback, including the logistics of managing a huge drop-down menu for each student and the potential for student confusion. If a student has an A at midterm, based off 30% of the assignments for the course, and ends up with a D at the end of the semester, will that cause undue confusion for the student and extra unnecessary work for the faculty to explain how the student ended up with a lower grade at finals than they had at midterm? APC considered that it would be better to have these discussions on

an individual basis with students who are interested in understanding their grades and how to improve.

APC looked into the topic of reviewing the current student conduct/ behavior policy that was brought to the committee previously. It was noted that there is currently a conduct policy on disruptive behavior but it could be more specific, as several other examples from different institutions were presented to APC and they were more specific. APC Committee members decided to continue to investigate this topic but we decided to let SAPC investigate this from the student perspective first. We made a recommendation to Joanna Schwartz, the SAPC chair, to consider this item, but we did not hear back from SAPC during the academic year.

APC considered the possibility of adding + or – grading to the current system. The BOR policy states that only UGA and Georgia State may use +/- grading. It was discussed that there should be a common grading system used throughout GC. A study on +/- grading conducted at another institution was circulated and reviewed by committee members. In this study students were not in favor of the +/- system. Pros and cons to the system were discussed in the study reviewed and considered by APC. After consulting with faculty from their departments, APC members unanimously decided to terminate this topic.

Committee Reflections:
The Committee had several important issues to considered during this academic year. These issues kept us busy and we enjoyed our debates and discussions both face-to-face and online. The discussions with SGA representatives were enjoyable and productive. Overall, the committee worked well in a friendly yet efficient environment.

Committee Recommendations:
- We recommend to continue watching the implementation of the existing policy on midterm feedback for upper level courses and, if possible, talk with students about their experience during 2018-2019 academic year.
- Follow up with SAPC on the status of reviewing the current student conduct/ behavior policy and if possible start looking into it. Make sure any such policy considers the possibility that what appears to be disruptive behavior may be a student health issue. Good luck!

Recommend items for consideration at the governance retreat:

Appendix: Committee Operating Procedures

The committee elected to retain the operating procedures from the previous year:
"In terms of SOP, the committee agreed to keep meetings rather informal, except for votes on policies. APC is composed of 13 members, so there will need to be 7 members present to establish a quorum. To conduct committee business. Other SOP items of committee agreement were to bring up agenda items early; to be respectful of when meetings begin and end; to require approval of extended time at regularly scheduled end of an APC meeting; require consensus before new items for discussion are brought to the attention of ECUS; and when possible, to invite guests to clarify information related to committee discussions."
We also acknowledged that US operating procedures permit for electronic discussion of items if achieving and maintaining a quorum becomes difficult.