

**Meeting of the Villanova University
Academic Policy Committee**

Thursday, November 2, 2017
3:00-4:00 PM
Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Present

Sherry Bowen, Sepideh Cheheltani, Shelly Howton, Christopher Kilby (chair), Eric Lomazoff, Peggy Lyons, Wen Mao, Kimberly Marucci, Christine Palus, Rees Rankin, Andrea Welker, Dennis Wykoff

Absent

Danai Chasaki (on leave), Gordon Coonfield (NIA), Jennifer Dixon (on leave), Marylu Hill, Brian King, Adele Lindenmeyr (NIA), Elizabeth Petit de Mange, Michael Posner (NIA), Joseph Schick (NIA), Marguerite Schlag (NIA), Craig Wheeland (NIA), Tina Yang (NIA)
[NIA=Notified in Advance]

Administrative Items

- 1) Shelly Howton volunteered to take minutes.
- 2) Minutes from 10/2/2017 approved with zero votes against and two abstentions.

Old Business

3) Academic Integrity Subcommittee

Andrea Welker (chair) reported that the committee met on 10/25/2017. Craig Wheeland had informed the committee that the changes APC has approved that involve modifying the Faculty Handbook are on the agenda for FRRC. The committee ran an announcement about academic integrity policy on Campus Currents early in the semester, continues to develop an FAQ for faculty (mirroring what is available for students), and will meet again in November.

As reported before, the committee finds that implementation of policy, rather than the policy itself, is the key shortcoming. The possibility of a tracking system for academic integrity violations cases was discussed but, because of various technical hurdles, is not a viable short-term solution. As a short term fix, committee recommends that academic integrity issues be a standing agenda for every meeting of the Board of Assistant and Associate Deans (BAAD).

4) Academic Experience Subcommittee

APC chair Christopher Kilby called the first meeting of this committee on Wednesday, October 18. Dennis Wykoff will chair the committee for the fall semester; another member will need to fill that role when Dennis is on sabbatical in the spring. The subcommittee's original charge (attached) focused on the academic experience of high achieving students. At their first meeting, the committee members decided to expand the charge to the academic experience of all students. Issues to be considered include: 1) whether there

should be a university-wide unifying academic exercise beyond the first year experience; 2) potential “big ideas” such as limiting the number of classes or majors/minors students can take (to promote the depth of the Villanova education and avoid credentialing); 3) how the “high achiever” pool is defined; 4) initiatives to engage more undergraduates research; 5) expanding approaches already in place in some majors and colleges; and 6) allowing qualified undergraduates in upper-level graduate courses.

Christopher reported that during the president’s semi-annual dinner with the Faculty Congress Executive Committee (FCEC), Fr. Peter made a suggestion in line with a number of these ideas: instituting a university-wide integrative senior capstone taught by regular faculty and organized around their research. Classes would be capped at 15 and each section would include seniors from CLAS, CON, COE, and VSB to tackle research problems from diverse perspectives; staffing might be met through approaches such as #2 above.

Another idea floated by some APC members was restructuring faculty advising of students to extend across the student’s undergraduate tenure at Villanova (including an incentive structure for faculty to do so, which might also solve current inequities in advising loads). Opinion on the feasibility of these various proposals was mixed (to some degree linked to the accreditation requirements of different disciplines). Returning to the committee’s request to broaden its mandate beyond high-achieving students, APC voted unanimously in favor.

5) Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee

The committee met on Friday, October 28, with Gordon Coonfield as chair. Gordon reviewed the committee charge (attached), opening up discussion on changes/refinements.

Again referring to the FCEC dinner with Fr. Peter, Christopher provided some background on the genesis of the new CATS questions on diversity and inclusion. Fr. Peter indicated that he initiated the push for CATS questions but had not provided guidance on Likert scale versus open-ended questions. Fr. Peter still considers this an important priority though the pace of events related to diversity and inclusion on campus has slowed.

6) Online CATS Subcommittee

Christopher suggested the subcommittee chair should prompt Jim Trainor about further data analysis from last semester’s CATS, moving beyond simple aggregates (like response rates and overall rating averages) to consider other questions that had been raised, e.g., differentials by gender, discipline, etc.

The meeting adjourned at about 3:50 PM.

Drafted from Shelly Howton’s excellent notes. Thank you!

Charge for Academic Experience for High Achievers Subcommittee

- 1) Identify where we currently stand: how we are providing a good experience and where we fall short for the increasing number of high achieving students enrolling at Villanova.
- 2) Consider where university-level academic policy might address shortcomings.
- 3) Map out a “path from here to there.”

In formulating recommendations, the subcommittee might consider (but need not feel limited to): the first year experience; questions of depth versus breadth in education (e.g., how demanding individual classes/majors are vs. how many majors/minors/courses students pursue); research opportunities for undergraduates; undergraduate eligibility for graduate classes; preparation for competitive post-graduation scholarship/fellowships; preparation/advising for graduate study. Some colleges/departments may have initiatives that could provide models for other parts of the university.

[This charge is now modified to focus on all students, not just high-achieving students. The subcommittee now the “Academic Experience Subcommittee.”]

Charge for Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee

- 1) Examine how the current curriculum (requirements but also elective course offerings) is informed by issues of diversity and inclusion.
- 2) Assess what mechanisms are in place to improve the experience of all students, faculty, staff, and administrators with regard to issues of diversity and inclusion (including exposure, education, and institutional structures (and the power relations/structures they imply)) as these relate to university-wide academic policy.
- 3) Assess what mechanisms are in place to improve the experience of students, faculty, staff, and administrators who might experience marginalization (e.g., based on gender, gender identify, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, religious identity/views, citizenship/legal status, or physical attributes) as these relate to university-wide academic policy.

In formulating recommendations to address any limitations identified above, the subcommittee should be mindful of the evolving nature of diversity and inclusion issues (i.e., that broad definitions are more likely to survive the test of time than narrow definitions of target groups, perhaps broad definitions that focus on the underlying power relations and potential for oppression). The twin mandates of diversity and inclusion inform our collective project to educate and to promote civil and intellectual virtues essential for dialogue. Finally, recommendations should be formulated to be consistent with need for students also to complete their major requirements.