Academic Policies Committee

Meeting: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 4 pm

Attending: Dan Thorp, Keith Goyne, Keith Thompson, Susan Sumner, Michel Pleimling, Jen

Pike

Absent: Kim Smith

Revision of policy 6305 section 2.1- charge from CUSP

Section 2.1 was formerly known as Policy 91

During CUSP discussion on Oct. 23, 2023

- CUSP has agreed that the university progress toward degree requirements should no longer be related to general education
 - o Pathways won't be used as a benchmark
- 2.1.1 "Any college or department may develop, adopt, publish and adhere to the policies that are in addition to this policy with the approval of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies & Policies."
 - Michel would like this committee to consider framework for 2.1.1
 - Many students that get a policy 91 notification are not dismissed based on the criteria.
 - Despite complexity, departments are using them properly as intervention measures to keep students on track.
 - Keith G. shared peer universities' criteria
 - NC State: very complicated
 - Others: 2.0 GPA what VT uses to determine probation and suspension
 - "Satisfactory Academic Progress" is a federal requirement that is associated with financial aid
 - Must have a satisfactory academic progress policy
 - VT is convoluted and appears out of alignment with other institutes
 - It was suggested that staff and faculty should not have to spend a lot of time micromanaging departmental progress requirements
- What would it mean to simplify 2.1. for a restricted major?
 - It would have an impact in Engineering and Business
 - The check sheets don't talk about what you need to enter the major.
 - However for restricted majors, the criteria for continuing in the major are the same as getting into the major.
 - This is something to keep in mind when overhauling this policy.

- Students who have not met conditions in 2, 3a, 3b and 4 for eligibility for continued enrollment will be declared by their academic dean to be ineligible to register or return at the end of any academic semester for a specified period of time to be determined by the academic dean. Students who have not met condition 3c may be declared by their academic dean to be ineligible to register or return at the end of any academic semester for a specified period of time to be determined by the academic dean."
 - Michel suggested removing this part of the policy
 - Criteria 3b is useful for some departments/majors to get students to enroll in a degree-granting program
 - One could considerenhancing this part of the policy with something around a probationary term, that, if a student is in violation, they have a semester to recover.
 - This part of the policy is ambiguous and a more meaningful approach may be a suspension from a degree program as opposed to suspension from the university.
 - It was noted that this statement conflicts with 2.3-not coordinated language
- Michel asked the committee to agree to walk through the criteria (1, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c and 4) and determine how to modify it.
 - Criteria 3
 - 3b has meaning
 - The committee agreed that somewhere between 72 or 75 credits is a meaningful checkpoint for progress.
 - o Criteria 4
 - Should there be an in-major GPA requirement as part of continuing enrollment?
 - If in-major GPA requirement is meaningful we need to define "in-major GPA"--everyone measured the same way
 - If we define in-major requirements here we need to make sure that it all coordinates with graduation requirements
 - In-major GPA is used in so many places that we can't just define it.
 - Is it worth having a check at the 96 hour mark?
 - Susan isn't convinced that this helps us retain or help students do better.
 - In her area, a number of graduates have the 2.5 in-major GPA requirement waived if they are above the 2.0 university requirement.
 - Don't know where 96 credits comes from? Why 96?
 - It was suggested that in-major criteria could be under section 2.1.1 instead of being part of the general policy
 - Michel noted that would leave only 3B in the general policy

- 3C: is this continued enrollment in the university? Are they suspended from their major or is there a university level consequence?
 - If the committee decides that the student could be suspended from the major then that language could be in 3C.
 - Need to make the distinction between university suspension and suspension from a major very clear in this policy
 - It was suggested that suspending students from the university, as the policy is written now, is contrary to the university's goals
- Keith G suggested that at the beginning of the policy rewrite, we define types of suspensions and probations to help eliminate ambiguity.
- Systematic decline of GPA
 - Could we add something into the policy for multiple semesters of decay in GPA and have an intervention point?
 - Another way to deal with this is to rewrite the suspension policy
 - Not all GPA declines are something to worry about.
 - Something along the lines of mentioning a GPA of 2.0 or less is where intervention would take place?
 - Academic warnings
 - Sometimes effective, sometimes ignored
 - How do students get out of probation?
 - Contracts
 - Financial aid requires GPA-some disconnect
- Could we mention taking a certain number of credits per year toward your degree in the policy?
 - It was suggested that would fit in 2.1.1
 - NCAA requires that of athletes and the Corps has something about this—could look at that policy.
- Keith G has a possible draft of a new suspension policy that he will share with the committee
- Positive language should be incorporated into the new policy
- 2.1.1 best practices
 - Set some boundaries so that colleges and departments cannot put anything into their policies
 - How about restricting the number of attempts of a class to 2?
 - Registrar and others would like to restrict the use of minimum grades.
 - Would the Faculty Senate be on board with that? Don't know

•	Should there be a data requirement to show that a minimum grade supports students to be successful? The Registrar supports this.