

Provost's Council Minutes

February 27, 2020

In Attendance: P Campbell, R Doster, D Echols Tobe, S Gaulden, S Hangen, L Keller, G Khaneja, T Kwak, P Laprey, A LePore, D Nast, F Papalia, E Petkus, E Rainforth, C Romano, E Saiff, and A Vasishth



Approval of Minutes:

Council approved minutes from the **January 23, 2020** Provost's Council meeting.
(*E Rainforth has some minor edits and will email Susan her suggested changes.*)

Report from the Provost:

The February 23 – 26, 2020 Middle States Team Visit went remarkably well. The Team's exit report indicated that Ramapo is in compliance with all Standards and Requirements of Affiliation and included numerous commendations related to assessment, the general education program, campus operations, and more. Ann LePore and Yan Xu were recognized at the Provost's Council meeting for being co-awarded the *Thomas' Award*.

C Romano recognized and commended Provost's Council member, D Nast, for his exemplary leadership and phenomenal effort as Co-Chair of the Middle States Steering Committee.

Informational Items:

Provost's Council members were informed/reminded that current Ramapo College policies, procedures, and practices are in compliance with the new state law that requires all colleges to award a minimum of 6 credits for military service. At Ramapo, military credits are submitted as part of the application process and assessed along with transcripts; credits are awarded as elective credits and basic training transfers in as a minimum of 6 credits.

Policies/Procedures to be Voted on /Approved:

- **Policy/Procedure 300-J1 Student Military Leave**

Issue: Provost's Council amended the Student Military Leave Policy, and the new policy and procedure was brought to Cabinet for their review. Cabinet had one recommendation to bring back to the Council, which is to include a maximum window of time in the policy that specifies the length of time a student can return to campus and immediately assume their student status prior to military leave (i.e., not have to apply for readmission).

Meeting Notes: S Gaulden asked the Council to consider Cabinet's recommendation. The proposed amended sentence is "Within 24 months after returning from military service including partial or full mobilization for the state or federal active duty or with the permission of the Provost or designee, students can return to campus and immediately assume their student status prior to military leave." A motion was made to approve this change, and Provost's Council members voted unanimously to approve the modified procedure. The new policy/procedure will go into effect in AY 2020-2021.

- **Policy/Procedure 300-K1 Priority Registration for Students on Active Military Duty**

Issue: Some dependents of Ramapo students who are on active military duty expect to be afforded priority registration, and adding language to the Policy/Procedure will provide clarity to these individuals.

Meeting Notes: Suggested changes to the procedure were presented to the Council. A motion was made to accept the suggested changes, and Provost's Council members voted unanimously to approve the edited procedure. S Gaulden will bring the edited policy/procedure to Cabinet for their review.

- **Policy/Procedure 300X Final Examinations**

Issue: TAS requested the language in the policy/procedure be reviewed, as it prohibits administering exams in the final two weeks of the semester prior to the final exam period. It is common knowledge that some faculty violate or find work-arounds to the current policy/procedure.

Meeting Notes: Council members suggested changing the wording to include no exams or major assignments, but others thought that would still be subject to interpretation. Most were satisfied with the suggestion to remove from the procedure the sentence "No exams are to be given within the two weeks prior to the final exam period." A motion was made to remove this sentence, and Provost's Council members voted 16 in favor and 1 opposed to do so. S Gaulden will bring the edited policy/procedure to Cabinet for their review.

Policies/Procedures to be Revisited/Clarified:

- **Policy/Procedure 300-HH Teaching Overload**

Issue: Human Resources requested changes/updates to this policy/procedure to include required approval from the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources and language clarifying the need for a Flexible Work Agreement.

Meeting Notes: Suggested changes to the procedure were presented to the Council and discussion ensued. Further edits were suggested. Some of the comments from Council members are as follows:

- ✓ E Rainforth and E Saiff raised the point that teaching overload assignments often happen last minute and cause some individuals to exceed one (1) course per semester, which goes against the outlined procedure.
- ✓ P Campbell noted that although the procedure states that “normally faculty reassigned from teaching responsibilities will not be eligible to participate in teaching overload,” exceptions are allowed. A Vasishth questioned why those with reassigned time could not teach overload.
- ✓ Council members determined that the approval process for managers and staff who do not teach to teach should proceed in the following order: 1) Dean; 2) Supervisor; 3) Divisional Vice President; 4) Provost; and 5) Assistant Vice President of Human Resources.
- ✓ C Romano stated that while he agrees with the changes in principle, he is concerned about connecting the flexible work agreements with teaching assignments and strongly recommended decoupling the two for managers and staff who do not teach as part of their primary responsibility. In the past, these agreements were separate for faculty and staff who teach. He suggested shortening the relevant sentence to: “Teaching will be scheduled outside working hours; if circumstances arise where there is no other alternative for the College, the teaching assignment will only be approved on a limited basis.”
- ✓ S Hangen stated that including in the section on professional staff who teach as part of their primary responsibility the allowance that the course(s) may be scheduled at any time during the day subject to the prior approval of the Supervisor and Provost will work well for Reading & Writing Center staff who teach; this practice would address academic needs if these staff could be assigned overload in an emergency situation and then make up the Center hours.

S Gaulden will share this feedback with V Galdieri so it may be incorporated, as warranted, into a final version of this modified policy/procedure. The final version of the policy/procedure will be added to the agenda of an upcoming Spring 2020 Provost’s Council meeting so a vote can occur.

- **Policy/Procedure 300-E Repeat Course**

Issue: The Provost’s Council must continue discussion that occurred at the last three Provost Council meetings until consensus is reached on how Ramapo’s “grave forgiveness” procedure should be amended, if at all. [Note: A favorable vote to modify the method to calculate a student’s major GPA contained in this procedure (i.e., to use the *best* grade earned in each required course) occurred at the January 23, 2020 Provost’s Council meeting.]

Meeting Notes: The Council continued discussing the current policy/procedure in an attempt to reach consensus on how many RFs students should be allowed during their time at Ramapo. Highlights of this discussion included the following:

- ✓ The Math Convening Group expressed through their TAS representative and Dean that they do not support the idea of using pass/fail grading for developmental courses, as students may then be disinclined to work hard.
- ✓ The previously-shared EMSA recommendations were discussed. P Campbell shared that CA faculty were concerned about allowing students multiple opportunities to repeat a course rather than just one chance, which is what is allowed by federal financial aid guidelines. Several faculty shared with S Gaulden their concerns that allowing multiple repeat opportunities would be advantageous to those who could afford to do so and penalize those who could not.
- ✓ EMSA supports a maximum of 5 course repeats that would remove the lowest grades earned in each course from the student’s GPA calculation. Also, students can repeat courses in which any grade (i.e., not just F) was earned.
- ✓ S Gaulden and E Saiff preferred a limit of 4 courses, which would permit an entire semester for full-time students or an average of 1 course per year in undergraduate studies.
- ✓ Since medical and law schools currently recalculate applicants’ cumulative GPAs by including all grades earned in repeated courses, a warning statement should be included in the repeat courses section of this policy/procedure. Suggested language is as follows: “The original grade will remain on the student’s transcript and some graduate/professional school admission processes will re-calculate the student’s GPA to include the original grade.”

S Gaulden and C Romano will incorporate the feedback/suggested changes to the policy/procedure and bring a draft back to an upcoming Spring 2020 Provost’s Council meeting so a vote can occur.

- **Policy/Procedure 300-KK Integrity of Degree Programs**

Issue: The Provost's Council must continue discussion that occurred at the last Council meeting until consensus is reached on the definition/precise meaning of the terms "concentration" and "track." In addition, other components of this policy/procedure that must still be reviewed and decided upon are as follows: 1) should a minimum number of shared major courses be established for a track or for a concentration; 2) should students be allowed to complete more than one concentration in a major; 3) are the current 50% and double-counting rules for majors + minors and majors + second majors adequate, and is such a rule needed for concentrations + second concentrations; and 4) is the current 68 credit maximum major + school core recommendation appropriate?

Meeting Notes: The questions listed above were discussed, but no consensus was reached. A summary of points made is as follows:

- ✓ There seemed to be considerable support for establishing a minimum number of required shared major courses in majors that have concentrations.
- ✓ P Campbell noted that clear definitions of "concentrations" and "tracks" are important and must be used consistently across campus. He shared a contrasting example of how "concentration" means something very different in the Social Science contract major than in the Music major. He went on to say that establishing a minimum number of shared major courses would be easy to do in Music but challenging in Communications, as there are many courses shared by different Music concentrations but only two courses shared by different Communications concentrations.
- ✓ C Romano said that clarity and uniformity on the terminology will help greatly in recruiting students. From a recruitment perspective, some concentrations (and some minors too) might be better marketed as stand-alone majors.
- ✓ F Papalia clarified that a concentration is printed on the transcript but not on the diploma.
- ✓ A LePore expressed her opinion that completing more than one concentration in a major should be allowed.
- ✓ E Saiff asked what practices would offend the integrity of the major. E Petkus gave an example of a combination that would not seem academically appropriate – majoring in Biochemistry but minoring in Biology.
- ✓ E Petkus expressed his support for implementing the 50% rule for more than one concentration. He also stated that if any changes are made to the 68 credit major + school core caps, ASB accreditation needs would necessitate an "unless otherwise required by accreditation standards" clause. The 68 credit cap restricts the number of courses to 17, which is far less than colleges that offer 3-credit courses.
- ✓ S Hangen suggested the Provost's Council also examine certificates and create guideline to ensure these are different from "minors."

- ✓ F Papalia noted that the current policy/procedure does not include writing intensive (WI) requirements for degree programs but likely should. If WI requirements are incorporated into the policy/procedure, details should address how these requirements are treated when a student double majors.

P Campbell, E Saiff, and S Hangen will consider all feedback/suggested changes and also look at what other COPLAC and state schools do. They will draft an edited policy/procedure to share at an upcoming Spring 2020 Provost's Council meeting so a vote can occur.

New Policies/Procedures to be Considered and Developed

- **Policy/Procedure 300-?? TBD**

Issue: T Kwak requested the Provost's Council to consider developing a policy/procedure that spells out the exact expectations related to virtual contact time when, for example, the College closes for inclement weather or faculty schedule virtual meetings with their students in lieu of administering a final exam in week 15 of the semester.

Meeting Notes: Discussion occurred on whether we need a formal policy and related procedures or whether this planning should be left to the discretion of each faculty member. S Gaulden noted that it is important to document class meeting times are in line with the state definition of a credit hour, especially to address Middle States standards. E Saiff opined that this should be required of the faculty members, but a policy/procedure is not needed. R Doster shared that participation time in Canvas courses is logged for each student. D Nast thought that with the current coronavirus situation, this could come into play in the future. S Gaulden offered to draft a policy/procedure that could first be shared with Deans' Council and then with Provost's Council at an upcoming Spring 2020 meeting.

Additional Meeting Notes:

S Gaulden shared the following information about a Ramapo student who was slated to study abroad in South Korea this semester:

Because of the coronavirus situation, the South Korean university initially delayed its regularly-planned Spring semester start from mid-February to mid-March. However, the student just informed Ramapo that the university announced it will not open in March, as

conditions are unsafe. The Roukema Center staff is assisting this student to return home, and Academic Affairs will work to ensure that the student can enroll in the Ramapo Spring 2020 semester so the student will not lose the semester. F Papalia is working with B Levy and the Deans to develop a possible semester course load. There may be other study abroad students who will find themselves in similar situations and need to return to the US and enroll late in Spring 2020 at Ramapo.

A LePore suggested offering these returning study abroad students internships or faculty-student research opportunities. She offered to reach out to advisors, Conveners, and Deans to see what options might be available to these students.

S Gaulden shared proposed Academic Calendars for the next five years that were created by the Registrar's Office. Two versions (i.e., Schedule A and Schedule B) were presented for each year. Schedule A only adjusted the specific dates and followed the typical Ramapo academic year schedule, whereas Schedule B made modifications to the typical Ramapo academic year schedule (e.g., Reading Day was removed as per J Connell's suggestion) in addition to adjusting specific dates. S Gaulden asked all Provost's Council members to review both options for each year and forward feedback or preferences to her by next Wednesday morning (March 4th by 8:00 AM) so she can present the preferred schedules to Cabinet for their approval.