Provost’s Council Minutes  
November 24, 2020

In Attendance: P Campbell, J Connell, D Couzens, R Doster, S Frees, S Gaulden, J Groenbeck-Tedesco, S Hangen, L Keller, G Khaneja, T Laprey, A Lorenz, D Nast, F Papalia, E Petkus, E Rainforth, C Romano, E Saiff, S Shrestha, and A Vasishth

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the October 22, 2020 Provost’s Council meeting were approved with one correction. On page 5 in the Policy/Procedure 300-T Online Courses section, A. LePore is leading the subcommittee that is updating the Policy and Manual while E. Rainforth is leading the subcommittee that is working on writing student expectations. These names were reversed in the original minutes.

Report from the Provost:

Several changes were made to the College’s operations and the AY 2020-2021 calendar. These include transitioning to remote delivery of courses/remote learning immediately after the Thanksgiving Break and continuing for the remainder of the fall semester and eliminating Spring Break week. As per the current plans, approximately 15% of Spring 2021 courses will be holding some in-person, on-campus class meetings. Academic Affairs, the Registrar’s Office, and ITS are working to develop a more efficient automated process to replace the current practice of submitting hard copy course modification forms, which are then followed to manually update course entries in Banner.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES TO BE REVIEWED & DISCUSSED

Policies/Procedures to be Voted On/Approved:

- Policy/Procedure 300-OO Grading System

  Issue: Additional edits are needed beyond those agreed upon at the October 2020 Provost’s Council meeting, which were intended to accommodate the grading system used by the MSN and DNP programs.

  Meeting Notes: F Papalia suggested correcting the language in the Procedure for Fresh Start-related grades and adding the Z grade as a temporary placeholder for academic
integrity violation-related situations. S Gaulden will update the suggested edits document and bring the final version to the December Provost’s Council meeting for a vote.

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

**Issue:** Human Resources requested changes/updates to this policy/procedure and a draft was reviewed at the February 27, 2020 Provost’s Council meeting. Additional discussions have occurred since then.

**Meeting Notes:** At the last Provost’s Council meeting, there was consensus to remove the two non-faculty components of the policy (i.e., the Managers and Staff Who Do Not Teach as Part of Their Primary Responsibility and the Professional Staff Who Teach as Part of Their Primary Responsibility sections) and to ask HR to include these sections in an appropriate HR Policy, Handbook, etc. J Connell recommended that changes be announced to the Academic Policy and the HR Policy/Handbook/etc. at the same time. S Gaulden will share this information and recommendation with AVP Galdieri and coordinate timelines. It is expected that a vote will be taken on the revised Policy/Procedure at the December 2020 Provost’s Council meeting, and a delayed announcement will be made once HR has completed the work on their side.

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

**Issue:** The Provost’s Council began discussing the Policy/Procedure at its October 24, 2019 meeting. A fourth draft of suggested edits to the Policy/Procedure, which incorporates all of the previously suggested edits, has been written and shared.

**Meeting Notes:** A suggestion was made to change the title of this policy/procedure to Retaking and Repeating a Course. In addition, some more language should be included to clearly distinguish between these two actions (i.e., retaking a course and repeating a course), which have different meanings at Ramapo College. The Council members discussed when the revised policy, which allows undergraduates to request up to four repeat grades, would go into effect. Based on the current state of affairs caused by the pandemic and the students’ heightened concern about their grades, all agreed that it would be a good compromise to make the revised policy/procedure effective in Spring 2021 since the College is not planning to offer an emergency pass-fail grading policy. F Papalia stated that we will need some time to address the logistics required to allow for the additional repeat course requests. We may also need to double check that language related to repeating courses does not need updating in other policies/procedures. S Gaulden will attempt to
incorporate the additional suggestions into a fifth draft of the renamed policy/procedure and bring the final version to the December Provost’s Council meeting for a vote.

**Policies/Procedures to be Revisited/Clarified:**

- **Policy/Procedure 300-P Graduation with Distinction for Baccalaureate Degree Recipients**

  **Issue:** A number of possible revisions to this policy/procedure have been reviewed discussed since the June 2020 Provost’s Council meeting, but consensus has not been reached. Students who transfer to Ramapo through the RN-to-BSN articulation agreements and through the 3+1 transfer pathways being established with NJ community colleges are not eligible to receive Latin Honors per the current policy/procedure, as they transfer in more than 64 credits.

  **Meeting Notes:** The latest suggested revisions to the Policy/Procedure were reviewed and discussed. J Gronbeck-Tedesco asked what other colleges do. E Rainforth expressed satisfaction with the suggested revisions that were put forth but suggested removing the reference to “not including P grades.” C Romano pointed out that Ramapo currently allows students who transfer in from TCNJ to bring in 80 credits, so any changes made to the Policy/Procedure would also apply to them. The Council agreed that implementation of any revisions should occur before the June 2021 graduation. S Gaulden will update the suggested edits document and bring the final version to the Provost’s Council December 2020 meeting for a vote.

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

  **Issue:** Clarification is needed on the meanings of “concentration” and “track” and more, as well on the maximum number of credits required for a major plus the school core. A draft of a revised Policy/Procedure created by Deans Hangen, Campbell, and Saiff has been shared and reviewed.

  **Meeting Notes:** P Campbell stated that it is clear that all of our existing academic programs have integrity, and so revisions or clarifications that must be made should not be related to the Policy/Procedure but, rather, to current practice. An additional point was made that establishing a minimum number of courses or a specific percentage of credits to be shared by all concentrations within a major would create some issues and necessitate major curricular revisions, which are not necessary from an academic perspective. S Gaulden will update the latest suggested edits document and bring the final version to the Provost’s Council December 2020 meeting for a vote.
• Policy/Procedure 300-R Credit Hours

**Issue:** A request was made at the January 2020 Provost’s Council meeting to create a new policy/procedure that spells out the exact expectations related to virtual contact time. Instead of creating a new policy, the Council felt it may be sufficient to modify the existing Credit Hours Policy/Procedure and/or modify and retitle the Online Courses Policy and the Online Course Manual.

**Meeting Notes:** The Council is currently undertaking a revision of the Online Courses Policy/Procedure and Online Course Manual, both of which will likely be updated to include virtual delivery of courses, or remote learning. (See below.)

• Policy/Procedure 300T Online Courses Policy

**Issue:** Given the pandemic-caused remote delivery of many Ramapo courses, it is important to review this Policy/Procedure and expand it to include virtual delivery of courses. This Policy references the Online Course Manual rather than a Procedure, which should be updated as well.

**Meeting Notes:** At the September 2020 Provost’s Council meeting, two subcommittees were formed to address various issues related to online courses and virtual courses. One, led by A LePore, will update the current Policy and Manual. The second, led by E Rainforth, will create a Code of Conduct or a set of expectations for students enrolled in remote learning.

The Registrar's Office is working on revising codes used to describe courses in Banner to include descriptions other than the current LEC, HYB, ONL, SEM, etc. now that numerous other modes exist. For example, labs could be described more clearly by instituting the following: IPB = in-person lab; HAB = hybrid lab, which consists of in-person and asynchronous learning; HSB = hybrid lab, which consists of in-person and virtual synchronous learning; VSB = virtual lab delivered synchronously. It is thought that this would be very useful for internal reporting, rooming of courses, and more.

A LePore was not present at this meeting, so her update was tabled. A brief discussion of some issues that have emerged since virtual classes have started covered such topics as requiring video participation and options for video recording virtual (WebEx) class sessions. Specifically, Council members spoke about how to video record sessions while protecting students’ rights to privacy, being sensitive to students who mentally struggle with appearing on camera, students’ lack of webcams or even computers/laptops/tablets or inadequate internet bandwidth, etc. R Doster reported that a few students have been issued
mi-fis from ITS and others are using VPN to connect to campus computer labs. E Rainforth shared that some students live in areas where adequate internet signal strength does not exist. S Gaulden stated that, according to survey results, there is a decrease in the number of students reporting having difficulties with internet access and technology issues since last spring.

In general, course syllabi should include more information about expectations for participating in the course virtually and may include a disclaimer related to video recording to ensure privacy laws and FERPA are being followed. Guidelines still must be written and explained before the start of the semester, so students are aware of what is expected.

**New Policies/Procedures to be considered/developed**

- R Doster reiterated his support for the College developing and adopting a policy/procedure that establishes minimum technology requirements for students who are studying at Ramapo.

**New Business/Additional Announcements**

- S Gaulden shared her intent to include clarification of the protocol to be followed when students request GE course substitutions in her next Provost’s announcement. She summarized that students should send an email to the Registrar’s Office (i.e., reg@ramapo.edu) that fully explains the requested GE course substitution (e.g., what should be substitution in which GE category) and includes any supporting material such as a course syllabus from another college or university. The Registrar’s Office will then request review and approval, as warranted, from the Vice Provost as per the General Education Policy/Procedure (https://www.ramapo.edu/provost/policy/general-education-2/).

- S Gaulden shared information about a new initiative. Specifically, COPLAC institutions were asked to consider promoting virtual and online courses that each college has identified for a recently-launched course sharing initiative. Ramapo has already identified courses to be included in this initiative, which is modeled as a reverse transfer-type deal (i.e., Visiting students do not pay Ramapo but the enrollment credits are included in Ramapo’s total count. This means that this initiative is only worthwhile if there is an even exchange of students among institutions.). Shared courses are being offered as early as this winter and spring (https://coplac.org/shared-online-courses/), and further information will be shared by the Deans.