Provost’s Council Minutes

December 15, 2020


Invited Guests: R Brown, L Warner

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the November 24, 2020 Provost’s Council meeting were approved.

Report from the Provost:

R Brown and L Warner were invited to join this Provost’s Council meeting to introduce the final draft of the Name Policy. They have also provided a document that summarizes why this policy and practice is important and how it is relevant to Ramapo College.

Meeting Notes: R Brown and L Warner shared the Name Policy and highlighted content provided in the supporting evidence document. All present supported in theory the adoption of the policy, which will allow a student to use a preferred name on all college documents, emails, etc. except where legal names are required. Other New Jersey colleges (e.g., TCNJ, Stockton, NJIT, MSU, Rutgers, William Paterson) now have in place preferred name policies. Ramapo’s policy would incorporate the use of trans and non-binary words, which correspond to gender identities, as doing so has real potential to decrease depression and increase students’ wellbeing.

Discussion ensued about what documents and processes will require legal names versus which can use preferred names. F Papalia will review features in Banner 9 to see whether the preferred name field can be used to populate class rosters. Legal names may need to be used on diplomas, as it might be considered a legal document. M Tripodi should be consulted on what exactly is a legal document. R Doster pledged full support of ITS in implementing this policy, once it is fully approved, but mentioned that mid-semester changes could be challenging.

S Gaulden asked whether this is an Academic Policy, and EMSA Policy, or a college-wide policy. It should be consistent with what is in place related to preferred name use for employees. A revised final draft addressing all issues raised at the meeting will be brought to vote at the January 2021 Provost’s Council meeting.
Policies/Procedures Reviewed and Discussed

Policy/Procedure 300-OO Grading System

Issue: Additional edits were needed beyond those that were approved at the October 2020 Provost’s Council meeting.

Meeting Notes: A few very minor edits were suggested, which S Gaulden will include on the final version of the revised policy. F Papalia mentioned that references to the Y grade in the Transferring Academic Credits Policy will need to be tweaked to incorporate the changes included in the Grading System Policy. A vote was taken, and suggested changes to the Grading System Policy were unanimously approved.

Policy/Procedure 300-HH Teaching Overload

Issue: Human Resources requested changes/updates to this policy/procedure, and a draft was reviewed at the February 2020 Provost’s Council meeting. Additional discussions have occurred since then including removing the managers and professional staff members’ pieces from the Teaching Overload Policy and requesting they be included instead in appropriate HR Policy, handbooks, etc. since managers and professional staff cannot, by definition, “teach overload.”

Meeting Notes: A vote was taken, and suggested changes to the Teaching Overload Policy were unanimously approved. S Gaulden will inform V Galdieri of the need to incorporate the removed sections into other appropriate policies, handbooks, etc. and, once this has been done, both revised policies should “go live” simultaneously.

Policy/Procedure 300-E Repeat Course

Issue: The Provost’s Council began discussing revisions to the Repeat Course Policy in October 2019 and reached consensus on the revised Policy/Procedure at their November 2020 meeting with the understanding that the distinction between retaking a course and repeating a course be made clearer.

Meeting Notes: The Council reviewed suggested changes to the Repeat Course Policy, which were unanimously approved by a vote. S Gaulden said she will work with EMSA and SGA to publicize the revised Policy, which expands both the number and scope of repeat course options available to Ramapo students, once it is approved. The Council decided that the revised Policy will go into effect in Spring 2021 to balance the College’s decision to not extend the Spring 2020 Emergency Pass-Fail Grading Option Policy. This means that all students enrolled at Ramapo in the spring semester and beyond can follow the revised Repeat Course Policy.
Policy/Procedure 300-P Graduation with Distinction for Baccalaureate Degree

**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:** E Saiff recommended that the last sentence in the Procedure be removed in addition to the other suggested changes presented. A vote was taken, and suggested changes to the Graduation with Distinction for Baccalaureate Degree Policy were unanimously approved.

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:** Discussion regarding the exact meanings of “concentration” and “track” continued. P Campbell stated that the track should not be indicated on the transcript because there is no scrutiny or approval; E Saiff and N Choudhury felt that tracks should not be noted on transcripts for the benefit of students (e.g., who follow a LECOM program track but then pursue medical school elsewhere); and R Doster shared research he had conducted on the meaning of the words. F Papalia shared that the reason tracks currently show up on transcripts (although the original Policy stated that tracks do not show up on transcripts) is because the same Banner field is presently used to note both tracks and concentrations, and R Doster said that another option could be created and implemented.

S Gaulden suggested continuing this conversation within the Schools to discuss which programs should be tracks and which should be concentrations. S Rice said that he will bring this topic to ARC for discussion and report back to the Council in early Spring 2021.

Policy/Procedure 300-R Credit Hours

**Issue:** There is no policy that contains language which would spell out the exact expectations related to virtual contact time when, for example, the College closes for inclement weather or when faculty schedule virtual meetings with their students in lieu of administering a final exam in week 15 of the semester. There is also a need to define the required amount of asynchronous work that should be assigned in virtual courses that are delivered through a combination of synchronous class meetings and asynchronous learning experiences.
**Meeting Notes:** N Varma is leading a Provost’s Council subgroup that has drafted a document to define how many minutes of class meeting time and asynchronous learning opportunities are required per week for 1 credit hour. Discussion occurred, and one important point that was made is that an educational campaign might be needed to make sure all faculty and students are aware of the amount of time/work required for a 4-credit course. N Varma suggested including language that conveys the expected number of hours of work required for each course in the course syllabus. N Choudhury supported this suggestion, which she thought is especially valuable in virtual hybrid courses.

**Policy/Procedure 300T Online Courses Policy**

**Issue:** Given the pandemic-caused remote delivery of many courses, it is important to review this policy and perhaps expand it to include “virtual courses” and “hyflex courses.” This policy references the Online Course Manual rather than a Procedure, which should be updated as well. Particular attention should be paid to the content in the Manual on recording classes, which has FERPA implications as well.

**Meeting Notes:** A LePore summarized Policy changes that are suggested by the Provost’s Council subgroup she is leading. These include the following: a) retitling the Policy the Remote Courses Policy; b) expanding the Policy to address additional course delivery modes (i.e., hybrid, virtual – fully synchronous, virtual – combined synchronous & asynchronous, online); c) adding content to describe what student participation will look like (e.g., technology interaction, recording sessions); d) including language consistent with agreements about Intellectual Property executed with the union; and more. The suggested edits to the Policy/Manual were not voted on, and Council members were encouraged to bring back further edits and suggestions to the January 2021 Provost’s Council meeting.

**Provost’s Council Subgroup: Student Expectations for Virtual Learning – Report:**

S Shrestha reported out since E Rainforth, who leads this Council subgroup, was absent. S Shrestha noted that safety concerns, downloading issues, general expectations of students, and video recording guidelines have been discussed by the subgroup.

**New Business/Additional Announcements**

No new business was brought to the Council.