Provost’s Council Minutes
January 28, 2021


Approval of Minutes:
The minutes from the December 15, 2020 Provost’s Council meeting were approved.

Report from the Provost:
The Provost’s Council welcomed a new student representative, Paolo Miyashiro. Introductions of all present at the meeting occurred.

S Gaulden reported that Cabinet endorsed the four revised policies that were approved at the December 20, 2020 meeting. These include the newly-titled Retaking & Repeating Courses Policy, which will go into effect in Spring 2021; the Grading System and Graduation with Distinction for Baccalaureate Degree Recipients Policies, which will be implemented once they are included in the next Catalog; and the Teaching Overload Policy, which will be implemented as soon as the “non-faculty content” that was removed from this Policy during the revision is able to be incorporated into HR/personnel policy, handbooks, etc. (Note: S Gaulden has informed AVP of HR V Galdieri of this work to be done.)

S Gaulden shared with the Council members that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Academic Integrity Policy violations reported during the pandemic, which includes a significant rise in students who are using Chegg to cheat on gradeable homeworks, quizzes, tests, and exams in a variety of math and science courses. She has requested that this topic be further discussed by faculty at a faculty forum or other appropriate venue. We must determine effective methods to deter plagiarism, cheating, etc. and then adopt these best practices across the College.

S Gaulden also informed the Provost’s Council that Professor S Frees has voluntarily created a course mod app and is collaborating with staff from the Registrar’s Office, ITS, and the Office of the Provost to implement the app in the building of the Fall 2021 course schedule. Preliminary use of the app by Unit personnel has been deemed successful, although a few minor glitches are being worked out. The new automated process will be user-friendly, as well as more efficient, for all involved. A demo of the app will be presented at the March 2021 Conveners meeting.
**Policies/Procedures Reviewed and Discussed**

**Policy/Procedure 300-XX Name Policy**

**Issue:** Ramapo requires all students to use their legal names rather than their preferred names. Implementing a newly-developed Name Policy will allow students including non-binary and transgender individuals who prefer to be referred to by a chosen or “used” name rather than their legal name to be able to do so on non-legal documents, which will ensure that the College can continue to be a positive and affirming environment for all students.

**Meeting Notes:** A final draft is being completed and will be brought to vote at the February 2021 Provost’s Council meeting. Determination of which documents are legal versus non-legal and work that will need to be done in Banner and by ITS (e.g., building a Used or Preferred Name field, changing Ramapo email addresses) is being finalized. F Papalia shared two documents via the P: drive Provost Council folder, which are as follows: 1) COPLAC schools’ lists of preferred name versus legal name documents; and 2) preferred or “used” name policies from COPLAC schools. (Note: Montclair State University has a good example.) R Doster shared that other NJ colleges were working on how to include non-binary individuals in Banner, documents, records, etc.

**Policy/Procedure 300-H Assessment of Prior Learning for Academic Credit**

**Issue:** The current list of credentials or prior learning experiences for which graduate students can be awarded credit is rather limited. Revisions to the Policy will expand the list to include professional development, certifications and licenses, community service, and other accomplishments and clarify the procedure related to how to apply and what is required in the applicant’s submission. The revised Policy/Procedure has already been approved by Graduate Council and will be voted on at the February 2021 Provost’s Council meeting.

**Meeting Notes:** F Papalia presented on behalf of a working group that included B Chinni, A Dovi, T Laprey, B Neill, J Norflus-Good, E Petkus, and C Ucci. The group attempted to mirror the well-utilized undergraduate assessment of prior learning procedure in revising the graduate section of the Policy/Procedure. Revisions included adding more structure to the procedure and allowing awarding of 500- or 600-level course credits. (Note: No more than 8 credits can be awarded for prior learning experience, and all 700-level courses must be completed at Ramapo.) Graduate students must submit requests for assessment of prior learning by the end of their first semester at Ramapo for a proposed fee of $250 per credit, which must be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Additional discussion focused on whether all graduate programs should have a Handbook. S Rice shared that ARC felt strongly this should be the case since Handbooks could include important
information that is not in course syllabi as well as general information about graduate studies at Ramapo. C Romano mentioned that we have a Graduate Policies webpage, but we need to fully develop and embrace a graduate studies culture at the College.

**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:** S Rice informed the Council that these issues had been discussed by ARC in December 2020. S Rice will work with F Papalia to provide an updated inventory of current tracks and concentrations offered across Schools at Ramapo. This information will be shared at the February 2021 Provost’s Council meeting.

**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:** The Provost’s Council previously recommended that an educational campaign should be undertaken to make sure all faculty and students are aware of the amount of time/work required for a 4-credit course. It was suggested that language that conveys the expected number of hours of work required for each course should be included in the course syllabus, as this is especially relevant in several of the new course delivery modes (e.g., those that include asynchronous learning components). This information should also be explicitly outlined in the soon-to-be-finalized revised version of the Online Courses Policy.

**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’s subgroup has shared their marked-up Policy/Manual, which received no feedback to date. S Gaulden promised that she would review the document and share edits before the February 2021 Provost’s Council meeting and encouraged all other Council members to do the same. A LePore noted that she was especially interested in receiving input on two sections that are earmarked with ?s in the draft document.

Brief discussion occurred about guidelines related to video recording virtual class meetings. One question that was posed was how faculty can block/prevent students from downloading shared video recordings. A LePore noted that language related to video recording in the draft manual document was written as guidelines rather than policy-style. D Nast clarified that OSS-affiliated students who are allowed to record class meetings as an approved accommodation have the right to *audio* (not video) record the sessions. The Office of Civil Rights requires “reasonable accommodations,” which equates to audio rather than video recording. Furthermore, NJ law allows audio recording without obtaining consent of those being recorded as long as the person doing the recording is present. D Nast further clarified that OSS-affiliated students (i.e., not the instructors) are responsible for actually doing the audio recording.

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

E Rainforth, who leads this Council subgroup, provided a brief update explaining that the draft Student Code of Conduct for Virtual Courses her group wrote attempted to emphasize what students should do rather than what they should not do. T Laprey noted that the notion that virtual learning requires the same level of student engagement and the same approach to learning was also emphasized.

Council members discussed how to encourage students to attend virtual sessions with their cameras on, the best utilization of the chat feature in virtual sessions, and the need to allow individual faculty to set expectations that align with the guidelines that are customized, as appropriate, for their courses. It was recommended that the draft Code of Conduct be shared with SGA to obtain student input/perspective. S Gaulden will send the draft document to P Miyashiro.

S Gaulden reminded the Provost’s Council members that the Governor’s Executive Order 175 requires all NJ colleges to allow students who choose to participate remotely to do so. This means that we have to offer students remote options (e.g., a virtual or online course) or otherwise accommodate their needs to participate remotely until this Executive Order is withdrawn. S
Gaulden will include more details about this requirement in an upcoming Provost’s Announcement that will be sent to all faculty.

**New Business/Additional Announcements**

S Gaulden shared an update on Fall 2021 planning. She noted that preliminary course mod app entries indicate that more hybrid and in-person courses will be delivered in the fall and stated that priority should be given to first-year courses, senior experiences, and programs that require face-to-face learning when bringing courses back to campus.

F Papalia reminded all present that No Show reporting is due by February 10, 2021 and asked that all faculty be sure to take attendance in class meetings so that No Shows can be accurately reported.

E Petkus asked what can be done about the caps for online course sections (i.e., 25 students) since this is unfair when one considers that many in-person, virtual, and hybrid courses are capped at 30 to 35 students. N Choudhury strongly encouraged faculty involvement if course caps are to be revisited. S Gaulden will conduct research to determine if there are any MOAs with the local union that prescribe course caps.

R Doster shared that WebEx session hosts can access previous meetings in their accounts to determine attendance at former sessions.

C Romano announced that it was the first day of Spring 2021 residential student on-campus COVID-19 testing and provided a summary of the newly-implemented testing protocol. He also shared some enrollment information, which included that next year’s “freshmen” class was being admitted and that 4+1 program applications are up quite a bit.

E Saiff recommended that Provost’s Council include an end date on all policies. S Gaulden countered that we should institute a Policy Review Cycle/Calendar.

S Gaulden asked whether any College Units that should be involved in Provost’s Council are missing from the current membership.