Provost’s Council Minutes
February 25, 2021


Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the January 28, 2021 Provost’s Council meeting were approved.

Report from the Provost:

S Gaulden shared with the Council members that students were informed about revisions made to the newly-titled Retaking and Repeating Courses Policy/Procedure via an emailed Provost’s announcement sent on February 17, 2021.

The Fall 2021 course schedule is nearly final and will be viewable to students on March 15th. Registration for the fall opens on April 12th, and a Student Town Hall will be held the week of March 22nd to provide information about the six distinct course delivery modes, to emphasize the likelihood of changes in delivery modes before the fall semester begins, to share residential housing updates, and more. A demo of the new course mod app will be presented at the spring Conveners meeting in late March.

A reminder about personnel-related policies, procedures, and practices was shared by the Provost to ensure that course assignments comply with the AFT Collective Bargaining Agreement, State Ethics Commission guidelines, Ramapo Policies, etc.

Policies/Procedures to be Voted On/Approved

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/Procedure 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.
**Meeting Notes:** No further discussion occurred. A unanimous vote approved the suggested revisions to the current Policy/Procedure, which was shared at a previous Provost’s Council meeting and which had already been approved by the Graduate Council.

**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:** All present commended the Name Committee for creating this new Policy/Procedure, which is fundamentally important to Ramapo’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus. One point of discussion was whether a diploma is a legal document. The Provost’s Council members unanimously agreed that the Used Name should be allowed on the diploma and that this practice should be implemented as soon as possible, assuming Cabinet’s approval. A unanimous vote approved the suggested new Policy/Procedure, a final draft of which was shared prior to this meeting.

**Policies/Procedures to be Revised/Clarified**

**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:** Robust discussion occurred related to the vocabulary used at Ramapo (e.g., tracks, concentrations), and it is important to emphasize that any suggested revisions to this Policy/Procedure would be about more clearly defining terms and using them consistently rather than curricular changes. S Rice acknowledged that the definitions of concentrations and tracks and the number of credits required for each were discussed at ARC, as well.

F Papalia presented a summary of the “tally document,” which provides a detailed overview of how many credits are currently required in each major and school core, as well as in a given major’s concentrations. The number of credits required for a concentration in a non-joint program major currently ranges from 12 to 56. It is also notable that, although the Procedure states “unless otherwise required by accreditation standards, the major (including any concentration or track) and
the school core combined should not exceed 68 credits,” a number of academic programs at Ramapo do require more than 68 credits.

S Frees suggested that a track should be used for advisement purposes based on what a student wants to do after graduation. N Choudhury pointed out that Ramapo does not market tracks, and C Romano agreed saying we use attributes rather than tracks and marketing concentrations and tracks would be most advantageous for recruitment reasons. D Couzens stated that the NJPC AIC Manual refers to “program options” rather than tracks. E Saiff asked what other schools do. P Campbell said we can look at other models and also suggested a concentration may need to have some tracks. S Rice felt that another field is needed in Banner so that tracks do not appear on transcripts, which is the expectation set by the existing Policy/Procedure but not what is current practice; however, doing so will necessitate a lot of work in degree audit software to implement. R Doster assured that the tech will follow a decision that prioritizes academics.

J Gronbeck-Tedesco noted that revisions to the current Procedure should explicitly include language to make it clear that the additional writing intensive courses required for a second major must be fulfilled.

A small group (i.e., P Campbell, S Hangen, F Papalia, S Rice & E Saiff) will continue to work on suggested revisions to this Policy/Procedure. S Gaulden requested that all Provost’s Council members review the tally document, discuss this matter with their colleagues, and share their thoughts with the members of the small group.

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

**Issue:** It would be helpful if the College adopted and promoted written, clear expectations for students who are engaged in virtual learning.

**Meeting Notes:** S Gaulden shared an updated version of the original draft, which was completed by the working group led by E Rainforth, prior to this meeting. P Miyashiro expressed concerns about the working title of the document, *Student “Code of Conduct” for Virtual Courses*, as this implied there would be consequences or disciplinary action if expectations were not met by students. All present agreed that the title should be changed to *Expectations of Students Taking Virtual Courses*.

C Romano suggested that the expectations should be split into requirements and recommendations, which S Gaulden agreed to prepare prior to the March Provost’s Council meeting. Once this document is finalized, it should be housed on the IDC website and can link to the existing How To videos and pdfs (e.g., how to blur your background in WebEx).
Additional discussion focused on recording WebEx sessions and expectations for appearing on video. Highlights of the recording conversation included the following: A LePore suggested imposing a penalty if a student records any sessions without permission; N Choudhury noted that waivers would have to be signed if the recording was to be shared with individuals not enrolled in the course; and S Frees shared that student participation increased in his classes once he stopped recording them. Main points that emerged about the video expectations included the following: E Petkus offered to share the language used by ASB faculty, which seems to be successful; T Laprey noted that instructors should make their own expectations known and be sure to clearly present this to their students; N Varma stated that the percentage of Business students who participate in virtual classes with their cameras on has increased considerably from last semester; S Gaulden suggested that faculty include language about video recording in their syllabi and inform students about e-signing waivers. R Doster asked whether instituting a global waiver made sense, but others felt that may stress students and not align with individual course needs.

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:** S Gaulden shared a marked-up version of the original draft, which was completed by the working group led by A LePore, prior to this meeting. It was decided that links to AFT memoranda of agreements (e.g., Intellectual Property MOA), rather than full excerpts of language, should be included in the *Remotely-Delivered (Virtual & Online) Courses Manual* since these agreements may be updated or have expiration dates. S Gaulden will make these agreed-upon changes in the Manual and share prior to the next Provost’s Council meeting.

C Romano suggested that a parallel student-facing document be created by pulling content from various sources including the *Expectations of Students Taking Virtual Courses* document.

N Choudhury expressed concern that not enough faculty have seen the revised Manual to bring this item to vote yet. S Gaulden will post the suggested revisions in the Policies in Review folder on the Provost’s website and make the campus aware of this through a Daily Digest post. This will allow Units to have time to review the revised Manual and share their feedback before the changes are voted on in Provost’s Council later this semester.
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: Information contained in this Policy/Procedure should be referred to in the Expectations of Students Taking Virtual Courses document, as well as the Remotely-Delivered (Virtual & Online) Courses Manual and any parallel student-facing document that is created. A link to N Varma’s course workload calculator can also be embedded, as appropriate, in the procedures and manuals intended for faculty. S Gaulden noted that we need to conduct a college-wide educational campaign centered on this Policy/Procedure so that students, faculty, and staff are fully aware of the minimum amount of instruction time/minimum number of weekly class meeting time, as well as the time students should expect to complete course assignments outside of class time, as per the US DOE definition of a credit hour.

New Business /Additional Announcements

E Saiff asked who exactly should be responsible for reporting to their Unit members on items discussed at or decided upon by the Provost’s Council. S Gaulden shared her opinion that it should be the Provost’s Council representatives who communicate the information to the Unit they are representing on Provost’s Council. For example, the School representatives should be reporting out at the Unit Council meetings. S Gaulden agreed to include information about personnel-related policies, procedures, and practices as they relate to course assignments in an upcoming Provost’s announcement.

C Romano encouraged everyone to read announcements of our competitors about Fall 2021 plans. A very competitive environment exists right now for first-year students and transfer students, so language/messaging about fall semester operations is critically important to meet enrollment targets. S Gaulden shared that a review of the preliminary fall course schedule reveals approximately 50% of the courses offered will hold some on-campus, in-person class meetings, but this is certainly subject to change.

F Papalia thanked everyone for reporting 130 No Show students this semester. After performing much outreach, the list was whittled to 23 No Show students who will be dropped from their Spring 2021 courses.