

MINUTES

Ramapo College Board of Trustees

Deans' Council

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Thursday, June 3, 2021, 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Webex

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 21 meeting were approved.

B. Student Liability Insurance

S. Gaulden welcomed Brian Webb and C. O'Keefe.

B. Webb provided background on the desire to ensure all students placed in off-site facilities are covered by insurance. This particular consortium is for professional liability insurance; coverage also includes general liability as well as property damage, bodily injury, etc. Professional liability insurance is focused on the delivery of professional services and performance of those duties. Historically, there is a low incident rate for claims expression. The consortium policy would provide legal defense costs for the student and the institution. Coverage is specific to curricular internships, however, there is no definition of what qualifies a "curriculum-based" internship. Currently, six institutions are participating in the consortium and approximately 5,000 students are covered.

S. Gaulden inquired if students already receive coverage for their internships. C. O'Keefe clarified the only coverage in place now is for clinical fieldwork for SWRK and PSYC. E. Saiff inquired about NURS. S. Gaulden shared that K. Burke determined NURS students have adequate coverage; B. Webb added that the Board of Nursing requires students to carry individual policies. E. Saiff inquired about students conducting onsite and offsite research projects. He gave the example of conducting research in a forest. B. Webb responded that the coverage is designed if a third party brings a suit against the student, or if the student causes damage to someone else. This coverage does not take the place of health insurance. E. Saiff asked about students volunteering in a lab for no credit. B. Webb clarified in general, students are individually liable.

There was further discussion about types of placements. S. Gaulden noted it may be possible to find more placement sites if students have coverage. C. Romano added that fieldwork is different from a co-op. There is inherently more risk associated with fieldwork.

E. Petkus asked if students or the institution would pay for the coverage. C. O'Keefe noted that is an institutional decision. Currently, this kind of insurance is built into course fees. B. Webb added that individual counts of students are not adding; numbers are anticipated for the coming year. There are challenges with charging students through a course fee. He can provide information about how other institutions structure it.

There was consensus to provide coverage for students in co-ops/internships, fieldwork, and other off-site placements such as teacher education practicums. S. Gaulden offered to review Fall 2021 enrollments in the relevant courses and provide a ballpark estimate of students that would require coverage as a next step.

C. Faculty Involvement in Events

There was a general discussion about various events faculty are or can be involved in across divisions, and the best way to provide the opportunity to those interested.

D. Addressing Student Concerns/Appeals

S. Gaulden shared a summary of feedback provided by the FA President. The Deans discussed both the formal appeals which are managed through Policy 300-JJ and informal concerns or requests brought forward by students. Students are directed to faculty first for resolution.

E. Course and Lab Fees

S. Gaulden requested the Deans begin tracking course and lab fee-related expenses and referenced the examples shared. This exercise will help better define the associated expenses. E. Saiff noted Adaptive shows each purchase; the exercise may be duplicative. S. Gaulden mentioned it can be difficult to determine what purchases are associated specifically with course and lab fees. E. Saiff and S. Gaulden will talk offline.

S. Gaulden added that she will write to the Deans regarding their budgets in Adaptive.

F. New Business

Faculty feedback: S. Gaulden summarized feedback and concerns expressed by the FA President.