Provost’s Council Minutes  
September 23, 2021

In Attendance: P Campbell, N Choudhury, J Connell, R Doster, S Frees, S Gaulden, J Gronbeck-Tedesco, S Hangen, G Khaneja, T Laprey, A LePore, A Lorenz, N Merino, D Nast, F Papalia, E Petkus, S Rice, C Romano, E Saiff, N Varma, and A Vasishth

Approval of Minutes:
The minutes from the May 27, 2021 Provost’s Council meeting were approved.

Report from the Provost:
S Gaulden provided a brief update on the start of the Fall 2021 semester, with no major issues being reported from SGA or otherwise except a few problems that occurred with implementation of Ramapo’s new Used Name Policy. Several manual overrides were done to convert legal names to used names for less than a dozen students so far because Banner 8, which is the platform for Web Self-Service and feeds a number of other softwares at the College (e.g., Connect, U.Achieve), does not have a used name field. ITS expects to upgrade Web Self-Service to Banner 9 at some point this academic year.

About 80% of Fall 2021 students are taking one or more courses that are holding class meetings on campus. This means that approximately 900 students are entirely virtual this semester, and 96% of those attending classes on campus are vaccinated (i.e., the others have either medical or religious waivers). Out of the entire student population, 81% of our students are compliant with the Student COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Banner has now been set up so that students who have not provided evidence of vaccination or been approved for a waiver are not able to register for any in-person or hybrid courses, and they will receive a message stating so if they try to register for anything besides online sections. The Spring 2022 course schedule is nearing completion and will be viewable in mid-October, which provides time for Advisement month before early registration for Spring 2022 begins on November 8th.

C Romano noted we have ~1,650 students living on campus this fall, and applications are still trickling in.
Policies/Procedures that Were Voted On/Approved

- Policy/Procedure 300-V Certificate Programs

  **Issue:** The Policy/Procedure contains outdated information (e.g., it references CIPL) and needs to be updated.

  **Meeting Notes:** The redlined version of this Procedure was discussed. F Papalia had asked whether we should apply the 50% rule to certificates similar to our practice for minors. S Gaulden and E Rainforth thought we should not, as did A Lorenz who said we should make this as easy as possible for students. E Saiff asked if this is the case, then why would not do the same for a minor. Graduate Council must be added in the review, feedback, and approval process, and S Rice mentioned he is not aware of a history of ARC reviewing certificate programs. A Vasishth mentioned he submitted a certificate proposal through ARC, and E Rainforth said when she was ARC chair, certificates (e.g., Real Estate) were being submitted. J Connell questioned what our certificate strategy should be focused on, and S Gaulden shared a summary of a discussion with the NJ Secretary of Education, Brian Bridges, at which he expressed his support for stackable credentials including certificates. G Khaneja asked whether certificates could be built into Banner, and F Papalia responded that they already are.

  A unanimous vote affirmed the suggested revisions to this Policy/Procedure, which will now be shared with the community via a Daily Digest alert and then brought to Cabinet.

- Provost Council Bylaws

  **Issue:** The Provost’s Council Bylaws have not been updated since 2007.

  **Meeting Notes:** Members suggested adding a Librarian to the membership of the Provost’s Council so that this structure runs parallel to that of the Schools. A LePore supported adding representatives from the Roukema Center for International Education and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Compliance, as well. E Rainforth and A Vasishth furthered support for these additional representatives. A few minor edits were made to the redlined copy.

  A unanimous vote affirmed the suggested revisions to the Provost’s Council bylaws, which will now be posted online.
Policies/Procedures to be Revised/Clarified

- Policy/Procedure 300T Online Courses Policy // Remotely-Delivered Courses Manual:

  **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 will take the lead on finalizing the draft/edited Manual, which has incorporated input from the subcommittee and feedback from Provost’s Council discussions.

Further guidance was offered by Council members including referring to various documents in the Manual (i.e., provide links) rather than copying and pasting the exact content of the documents into the Manual and distinguishing between routine conditions and emergency conditions. A suggestion was made to separate out the emergency situations and adopt some general language such as “The Provost, in consultation with the Deans, will establish emergency-specific guidelines to be followed and/or approve emergency-specific formats. N Choudhury stated her opinion that this Manual should be only for routine conditions and a completely different policy should exist for emergency situations; A LePore thought we could archive emergency-specific policies/guidelines/formats and refer to them as needed. E Petkus shared that the virtual synchronous mode should be only for snow days, emergencies, etc. N Choudhury disagreed, and S Gaulden expressed that remote options might be effective for winter and summer terms, graduate-level courses, etc. A LePore pointed out we may be able to hire exceptional adjuncts who live outside the region if we continue to permit remote learning. N Varma pointed out there are implications for international students, and E Rainforth said in some circumstances virtual may be more convenient for students. S Gaulden emphasized there are a lot of parameters to consider and convenience of instructors cannot be the driving factor on any decisions made.

- Policy/Procedure 300L College Honors Program Policy

  **Issue**: Co-Director of the College Honors Program, Rebecca Root, previously requested review of her redlined version of this Policy/Procedure. (The edited version was shared with all Provost’s Council members prior to this meeting.)

  **Meeting Notes**: The Council wanted to change the verb in the Policy: Ramapo College of New Jersey shall support…” They felt other options to be considered include delivers, offers, is committed to having, etc. since “support” is very ambiguous. They noted the revised proposed
Procedure (i.e., “Ramapo College of New Jersey shall support a College Honors Program serving the curricular and co-curricular aspirations of students seeking intellectual, creative, and moral engagement.”) is actually just a repeat of the first sentence of the Policy. It is not a procedure at all. C Romano noted that from a compliance perspective, this redlined version is inadequate. It must include actual procedures that describe how to apply to the program, what the criteria are, how Honors scholars are selected, what is required to remain in the program, etc. Having such a Policy/Procedure is important, as it will protect the College if someone is not accepted into the Program. The Honors website can point to the Policy/Procedure instead of vice versa, and a Handbook can also be created to provide even more detail. S Gaulden will share this feedback with R Root and request an updated redlined version of this Policy/Procedure for the Council to consider.

New Policies to Consider

- Professor’s Title Change

**Issue:** It appears there is no formal policy or procedure by which a professor’s title may be officially changed. One item in the process of the existing Policy/Procedure 300M Transfer of Faculty from One School to Another indicated the new title of the faculty member, if change is required, must be specified in writing after the Deans of both Schools and the Provost have come to agreement on the transfer. This procedure does require written approval of the Dean, Provost, President, and Board of Trustees, as well as a “BOT resolution for the title change, if needed” and a new letter of appointment.

**Meeting Notes:** At a previous Provost’s Council meeting, a question was raised whether a policy on Professor’s Title Change should be an academic policy or a Human Resources policy. C Romano stated his belief that it would be an HR/employee policy, and A Lorenz noted that business card requests are not approved by Employee Relations if the title does not match the official title of the professor. S Frees asked whether HR can have a policy and we can create an MOA with the AFT. J Gronbeck-Tedesco mentioned we should do our best to retain an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, and A LePore spoke about how our flexibility saves us time and time again. She asked whether there is any title misuse at present, and S Gaulden said she was unaware of any such cases. E Saiff shared that some faculty changed titles in the past when they changed school affiliation. He also said the external audience needs to know the discipline of our faculty who attend conferences, etc. S Hangen said she believes historically the procedure involved obtaining approval of the Convening Group, the Dean, and the Provost.

The Provost’s Council will continue discussion of this policy, if necessary, after S Gaulden consults with the AVP of Human Resources and Employee Relations.
Double Master’s Degrees

**Issue:** With the increasing number of graduate programs at Ramapo, it is likely an individual may wish to pursue two Master’s degrees at the same time. The College currently has not Policy/Procedure that covers this matter.

**Meeting Notes:** The Graduate Council is discussing double Master’s degrees at present and will forward any recommendations they come up with to Provost’s Council.

**New Business /Additional Announcements**

F Papalia shared the excellent news that students will now be able to apply for graduation online! Graduation holds should be lifted by the students’ advisors, as per the instructions to be sent out by the Provost. The new online grad app practice was well received by the Council members, as we feel it will be much more efficient and easier to track and process graduation applications.

C Romano reminded all that an Open House would be held on Sunday, September 26th.

S Gaulden mentioned the Learning Commons is not yet open to the Ramapo College community, but we are hopeful this will happen really soon. There were a few unavoidable issues that are being addressed.

Left over item from last meeting: The Provost’s Council should follow the calendar developed by the subcommittee to systematically review Policies/Procedures.