

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes 09/19/2023

Co-Chairs: Karen Bresciano, Jamie Kleinman

A. Welcome and Introductions

***Karen Bresciano, Co-Chair**, The Graduate School

***Jamie Kleinman, Co-Chair**, CLAS, Psychological Sciences, Avery Point

*Maureen Armstrong, Dean of Students Office

*Kelly Burke, Engineering, Chem & Biomolecular

*Robin Coulter, Business, Marketing

*Carrie Fernandes, Financial Aid (**absent**)

*Holly Fitch, CLAS, Psychological Sciences

*Morty Ortega, CAHNR, Natural Resources and the Environment

*Lawrence Walsh, Office of Admissions (**absent**)

Erin Ciarimboli, Office of Undergraduate Advising

Sarah Croucher, Provost's Office, Academic Affairs

Lindsay Cummings, SFA, Dramatic Arts

Jennifer Lease Butts, Honors and Enrichment Program (Ex-Officio Member)

Brian Rockwood, Registrar's Office

Lauren Schlesselman, CETL, Academic Program Assessment and Learning Initiatives

Christine Wenzel, Center for Students with Disabilities

Benjamin Keilty (undergraduate student)

Kamara Nyahuma (undergraduate student)

Olivia Viel (undergraduate student)

B. Approval of Minutes 9/5/2023

- a. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

C. Announcements

- a. Bunched Finals USG Proposal –

- i. **Olivia Viel** presented a proposal for students to be granted an opportunity to reschedule a final if there are three finals scheduled to take place during a 24-hour period. The [current policy](#) is that students may request to reschedule a final if they have three finals scheduled to take place during the same day. **Brian Rockwood** provided additional information regarding how finals are scheduled and **Olivia Viel** presented data provided to her by the Registrar's office, citing that approximately 3,000 students had three finals in 24 hours last fall, and that approximately 115 students received approval for a reschedule (fall 2022). There is no data available on how many requests were made. It was stated the registrar's office cannot provide exact figures on how many final exams took place for these students within the current policy of one day.

Additional Data:

Fall 2021	2349
Spring 2022	3112
Fall 2022	2790
Spring 2023	3194

- ii. Discussion ensued on the proposal and **Kelly Burke** added that several years ago, the finals period used to be longer, but that it was shortened due to a student body request to have finals take place over the duration of one week. Concerns were raised about accommodating additional rescheduling requests when facing limited space availability.
 - iii. **Holly Fitch** suggested that UConn offer drop-in final exam spaces in large lecture halls that could be moderated, offering more flexible rescheduling opportunities for students, citing that this is done at other universities.
 - iv. **Olivia Viel** suggested a one-year pilot program to test the impact of this change.
 - v. **Jamie Kleinman** closed discussion on this item due to time constraints.
- b. Concern about 10th day rule from Avery Point
- i. **Jamie Kleinman** presented concerns about an unusually high number of students adding classes late during this semester's add/drop period (up to the 10th day). She opened the floor to discussion on changing or limiting this period.
 - ii. **Sarah Croucher** suggested we pull data on these figures to look at the trends to see if the number of changes has been increasing, and also to look at the academic performance of these students.
 - iii. **Kelly Burke, Holly Fitch** and **Robin Coulter** presented concerns about the academic performance of these students making late changes, citing an increase in requests to delay exams or other assessments as they are catching up.
 - iv. **Brian Rockwood** said he can pull a report of students during the add/drop period by date to compare the numbers (how many students make changes on day 1 vs day 10).
 - v. **Erin Ciarimboli** raised a concern about shortening the add/drop period citing anecdotal information that students who wait until days 7- 10 are often those with billing concerns and need to stay full-time for financial aid reasons. She suggested including Nathan Fuerst for his insight on this issue. **Sarah Croucher** seconded these concerns regarding equity issues and stated that tenth day is a standard policy in US higher education.
 - vi. **Benjamin Keilty** opened discussion on the possibility of faculty scheduling exams to take place after the first two weeks to better accommodate these changes. **Lauren Schlesselman** cited concerns about shortening the period during which students may be assessed, particularly for asynchronous courses.
 - vii. **Jen Lease Butts** suggested the language changes from "add/drop" to making "swaps" and discussion ensued about the policy of withdrawing past this period with or without a W, and the impact that has on a student's transcript and full-time status.

- viii. **Christine Wenzel** added concerns regarding students who require accommodations making course changes, citing particularly those students who have visual impairments and require alternate materials to be developed for them to fully participate in a class.
- ix. **Kamara Nyahuma** shared her personal experience in utilizing “swaps” at the beginning of the semester and said that she uses an app that makes it easier to adjust her schedule. She emphasized, as many others, the need for data to better understand this issue and consider potential alternatives.
- x. **Jamie Kleinman** closed discussion in the interest of time.

D. Updates

a. Current Working Groups

i. Temporary Grades and Academic Engagement:

1. **Jamie Kleinman** introduced the topic with a summary. She suggested that this committee draft a memo to the Provost’s Office asking CETL to develop a small number of tried and true, meaningful engagement activities that could be easy for instructors to include in their classes.
2. Discussion ensued on the wording (“last day of engagement”) of the policy in question and how instructors can be compliant with this without taking attendance, which is not a university requirement. **Kelly Burke** mentioned that the reason for tracking participation is a requirement due to financial aid reasons and not just pedagogical. It was also discussed that making this change runs the risk of adding “busy work” to both instructors and students.
3. **Maureen Armstrong** stated that students must be engaged until the 60% point of the semester (for this Fall 2023, October 29th) in order to be considered full-time and eligible for their financial aid. Therefore, engagement becomes less of a concern past this point from a financial aid perspective. She added information from the Federal Financial Aid packet to the chat (below) and added that the Registrar’s Office may want to weigh in on this as well.

a. *“Federal Financial Aid, (Title IV Funds) is awarded to you, contingent upon completion of the semester. If you withdraw before completing more than 60% of the semester (October 29, 2023), your financial aid package will be adjusted, which may create a current semester fee bill balance on your account. You are responsible for paying any outstanding balance created as a result of withdrawing from the university. Federal Regulations state that a student has to complete more than 60% to earn 100% of their Aid. The calculation required for Title IV Funds is separate from UConn’s Withdrawal Tuition and Fee Adjustment Schedule. Below is a chart which specifically outlines the dates of the University’s Withdrawal Tuition and Fee Adjustment Schedule. For specific questions regarding how your aid may be impacted, please contact the Office of Student Financial Aid*

Services on the Storrs campus (860)-486-2819. If you self-pay and are not a recipient of any financial aid, including loans, refer to”

4. Discussion continued on the pedagogical benefits of adding these resources in a timely manner for financial aid, as well as the idea to inform faculty of these important dates and the reasons behind engagement requirements.
5. **Jamie Kleinman** closed the conversation for time constraints; to be discussed at a later meeting.

- b. New Working Groups
 - i. Calendaring (Juneteenth holiday)
 - ii. CSD Alignment and support
- E. New Business