

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY, 2015-16
June 16, 2016

The Committee on Academic Policy (CAP) met 21 times during the academic year.

Committee members included: Joe Beck, Luke Brady '17 (C, D), Luca Capogna, Jim Doyle (Chair), Frank Egan '18 (C, D), Mike Elmes, Jim Hanlan (Secretary), Art Heinricher (Provost's representative), Anthony Romeo '16 (A, B), Johnny Ross '17 (A,B), Jill Rulfs

APPOINTMENTS

1. Jill Rulfs was appointed as CAP's representative on the Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee (UOAC).
2. CAP reappointed Craig Shue as its representative on the Committee on Information Technology Policy.

NEW PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM CHANGES

1. A proposal from the Department of Social Science and Policy Studies to drop the undergraduate major in System Dynamics was approved by CAP on September 14, 2015 and approved by the Faculty at the October Faculty meeting.
2. A proposal from the Interactive Media and Game Development program to allow IMGD majors an exception to the university wide math and science requirement (specifically, allowing IMGD2000X to count as Quantitative Science for IMGD majors only) was reviewed and approved by CAP. This change does not require a Faculty vote.

POLICY PROPOSALS REQUIRING A FACULTY VOTE

1. After significant research, outreach, and discussion, CAP completed work on a proposal to suspend the previous policy prohibiting students from being paid by sponsors for credit-bearing work on MQPs and IQPs for a trial period of 3 years. The goal of the new policy is to ensure that students continue to have access to high quality sponsored project opportunities. The proposal requires that the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of the IGSD report to CAP on the outcome of the trial period, and that CAP, prior to AY19/20, recommend to the Faculty that a new permanent policy with respect to pay for credit be instituted or that the trial period end by reverting back to the previous policy. The proposal was approved by the Faculty at the March Faculty meeting.
2. At the request of Dean Heinricher, CAP worked to develop a proposal to rename and better define independent studies at WPI, to establish under what circumstances independent studies may receive disciplinary credit, and to clarify when administrative approval of registration for an independent study is required. The Committee approved a proposal that will be brought to the Faculty in the Fall.

CAP OVERSIGHT AND GENERAL POLICY REVIEW

1. At the request of Dean Heinricher CAP discussed extending the experiment with online student course evaluations. CAP voted to extend the experiment twice, first through B15 and later through D16. The Committee also reviewed and approved a letter that was sent to the WPI faculty providing advice for interpreting data resulting from the online evaluations.
2. At the request of a Faculty member, CAP discussed a set of policy questions related to who may advise independent studies (ISPs). The Committee concluded that there is currently no faculty approved policy relevant to the questions raised.
3. At the request of Todd Keiller, Director of Intellectual Property and Innovation, CAP reviewed and approved two drafts of a revised WPI Intellectual Property Policy.
4. CAP met with Provost Bursten to discuss potential agenda items and matters of academic policy requiring CAP's attention.
5. CAP met with Carly Alfaro (Secretary-Elect, SGA Committee on Student Life Issues) to discuss SGA's desire to see more faculty allow electronic submission of papers and other written assignments. The Committee provided advice on how SGA could most productively pursue the issue.
6. At the request of Dean Comesano, CAP reviewed a draft revised ADD/DROP policy for graduate students intended to make the undergraduate and graduate policies more consistent. The draft was returned to the originator for clarification.
7. CAP reviewed a proposal from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering to change its name to Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering. The proposal was returned to the originators for clarification.
8. CAP met with a faculty and staff group (Peter Hansen, Ingrid Shockey, Tom Thomsen) working on the global learning outcomes element of the Strategic Plan for a general discussion about how CAP could effectively contribute toward discussions and plans in this area.
9. CAP met with Associate Dean Kris Wobbe to discuss the current status of and future plans for the Great Problems Seminars, and any academic policy issues that may arise as the program develops.
10. Profs. Doyle and Heinricher met with the Committee on Academic Operations (CAO) to discuss its efforts to maintain flexibility in the undergraduate curriculum in the course of reviewing proposals from the academic departments. CAO had requested that CAP formulate new policy in this area. Profs. Doyle and Heinricher shared their view that the faculty-approved Statement of Values for Undergraduate Education (p. 2-24 in the Faculty Handbook) provides sufficient guidance on the Faculty's desire to maintain flexibility in the curriculum.

ITEMS REQUIRING FURTHER ATTENTION DURING ACADEMIC YEAR 16/17:

1. CAP will need to continue to evaluate the online student course evaluation pilot, either authorizing additional experimentation, discontinuing it, or working toward faculty approval for full implementation.
2. CAP discussed the need for documentation of existing academic policies and rules. It was agreed that CAP would work to develop a web page to serve as a repository for academic policies approved by the faculty.
3. The Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee (UOAC) asked CAP to review the recent extension of the e-CDR deadline by the Registrar's Office. The Committee agreed that the e-CDR deadline should be set by the Faculty. CAP met with Christine Love from the Registrar's Office to gather information on the rationale for the deadline, but has not yet formulated a proposal on this issue.
4. CAP discussed the rationale for the designation of an Advisor of Record for qualifying projects that are co-advised and associated advantages and disadvantages, but has not yet formulated a proposal on this topic.
5. CAP received a proposal from Kent Rissmiller, Chair of UOAC, to revise the description of UOAC in the Faculty Handbook and to change its membership, but has not yet taken any action.
6. CAP received a verbal request from Khalid Saeed, the Chair of the Faculty Review Committee, to reconsider the student grade appeal policy in terms of both the process and who hears appeals, but has not yet taken any action.