

Committee on Academic Policy

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 22nd, 2022, 3:00 pm

Meeting #16 AY2021-2022

Meeting held at Campus Center 301 - Hagglund Conference Room

Attendees: O. Pavlov (Chair; SSPS), B. Calli (Secretary; Robotics), A. Hall-Phillips (Business), B. Servatius (Math; attended via ZOOM), S. Zhou (Chemical Engineering), R. Gyurcsan '24 (Student Representative), S. Levitan '24 (Student Representative), S. Miles (Registrar)

1. Meeting started at 3.15pm.
2. CAP discussed a student request regarding the "Motion to provide undergraduate students with the option to receive Pass/NR grades for undergraduate or graduate courses during C, D and E terms in AY2021-2022." This motion was approved by the WPI faculty and currently in-place. The student claimed that it is not fair to have the Pass/NR option only for C, D and E terms of AY2021-2022, and requested the policy be extended to all the previous COVID-19 impacted terms, including the ones in the AY 2020-2021.
 - a. CAP recognizes that many students have graduated already without having the Pass/NR option for the AY 2020-2021. CAP thinks that setting a retroactive policy for the past terms would not be fair to already graduated students.
 - b. CAP also recognizes that a possible excessive use of Pass/NR option by extending the policy to other terms might affect the reliability of the WPI transcripts in the eyes of other academic institutions and companies, and might eventually affect our students negatively in their future career search.
 - c. CAP also notes that the prior and current Pass/NR policies have a future-looking nature, i.e. they were put in place for alleviating the concerns of a sudden shift to online teaching and the mental health crisis. Both were regarding the students' future grades. A retroactive policy would be of a different nature, and its implications might be more complicated.
3. CAP discussed the "Learning Management System and Video Lecture Support Policy" draft that was sent by CITP for feedback.
 - a. A CAP member noted that their lectures were kept getting recorded even after they opted out. There was also a complaint that there is no confirmation mechanism for telling the faculty that an opt-out request has been successfully processed. CAP believes that it is important to have such a mechanism, e.g. a confirmation email, for the faculty to be sure that the opt-out request was processed.
 - b. CAP recognizes that the message that appears on the website to apply for opting out from the lecture recordings is misleading. The message says that the default opt-in policy was approved by CAP, which is not the case.
 - c. CAP recommends that the lecture capturing policy should not include software specific language, e.g. mentioning the names of the software such as "Echo360".
4. CAP received a copy of the new WPI Institutional Financial Aid Policy. CAP is very happy to see that the unit thresholds for keeping the financial aid and preserving the academic standing are now the same. Another positive change is that the federal financial aid requirements will now be assessed considering a full academic year as opposed to the prior policy that required assessment in 6-month intervals. Both changes will help students keep their financial aid.

Student representatives of CAP were also very happy to see this change. The changes will take effect starting from AY 2022-2023.

5. Meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Berk Calli
D-term Secretary