

## Committee on Academic Policy

### Meeting Minutes

Monday, 02-08-2021, 1:00 – 1:50 pm

#### Meeting #11

Meeting held over Zoom due COVID 19 restrictions.

In Attendance: J. Dudle (Chair), A. Heinricher (Provost's office), A. Hall-Phillips, J. Rulfs, S. Zhou, J. deWinter (Secretary), O. Pavlov, S. Miles (Registrar), Ryan Candy MA '21, Sam Levitan '24, A. Gold (visitor)

- Approved Minutes for meeting #10.
- Faculty feedback concerning meeting minutes #9: Two faculty members contacted CAP to express their concerns that the calendar process is an example of faculty disempowerment. The university did not query the faculty about changes to the faculty schedule and policies, and a non-faculty group now has a lot of power over something that affects faculty.
- Graduation date change: This proposal was discussed at two meetings in November 2020.

Motion: The Committee on Academic Policy (CAP)/Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) recommends, and I move, to change the degree conferral date (date on diploma) for students completing requirements in a summer semester as follows:

| Semester of Completion | Deadline for completion of reqts              | Degree conferral date |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Summer                 | Last day of Summer semester/E2<br>(no change) | August 30             |

The committee revisited concerns about impact on student loans and impact on international students. International house has assured the committee that this will have no negative effects. The proposal passed.

- A discussion of project issues, namely required language on the cover page of IQPs and MQPs based on a motion that was passed in 2007. This motion required all IQPs and MQPs to include a statement on the cover page that indicates reports are without editorial or peer review. However, this language is not applied across all projects.
  - Summary of study regarding this language
    - IQPs, 2020: 187 total
      - Language doesn't appear, or alternate language: 92 (49%)
      - Language appears: 85 (45%) - 32 appear with additional URL about Projects Program at WPI
      - Embargoed: 10 (5%)
    - MQPs, 2020: 327 total
      - Language doesn't appear: 195 (59%)
      - Language appears: 111 (34%) - 53 with additional URL about Projects Program at WPI

- Embargoed: 19 (6%)
- The language from the 2007 motion is: “This report represents the work of one or more WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its site without editorial or peer review.”
- Anna Gold is leading a discussion about how the library might help to facilitate compliance with this statement. One option is to automatically generate this statement for every project, creating a new cover page. This would change the archival documents. An alternative is to add the statement to the metadata page that every project has in the database that follows the abstract. It would not embed the language into the document, or add a new page to the many thousands of documents uploaded. It doesn’t change the archival status of the documents, is relatively easy to implement, and may give the faculty and students more flexibility for non-standard reports.
  - How difficult might it be if you need to check a box acknowledging the statement? Would this deter people from use?
  - The document can also be separated from this student work page after downloading
  - What are the implications of adding a front page to all of the documents?
  - We might lose the variability if we include the same page on all documents.
  - Do we need to have a new motion since the original motion asks for this to be on the cover page.
  - Graduate work does not need to include this type of language. The question is posed about why we need this language at the undergraduate research level. A. Gold explained that it has to do with the fact that it’s undergraduate work. Graduate work has professors signing off. Undergrad is reviewed in order to give it a grade. There is a different expectation of review for undergrads and grads. If there is a sponsoring organization, then there is still no guarantee that they have read the report. It’s not clear from the report who reviewed it and to what level.
  - Is there a way for the checkboxes to prompt students to do this at the time of uploading? A similar prompt can be provided to faculty. Or is there a way to check through an algorithm whether the language is here and then reject when it’s not there. A. Gold does not want to entrust a high-stakes situation to a non-human when it matters so much to the students who are trying to complete a project. We can apply the statement to the metadata page going backwards, and going forward, we can require students to put it into the documents by having students and advisors certify that the statement is included before it is approved. For those documents that are impossible or inappropriate, it would still be covered by the statement on the “pseudo cover page” or the metadata cover page. A cover page can be required for everyone with just a one page that is uploaded with other media. The solution with the uploading prompts would have to be developed in coordination with eProjects and people working with IT. We

ask them to upload a primary document and everything else is supplementary. The worry is that the “primary document” is the one-page cover page, and not the actual project, that will need careful thought.

- Regardless of the solution moving forward, is CAP interested in putting this statement on the metadata page? We should probably do it for both past and future projects.
- Interestingly, quite a few students introduced an additional sentence directing people to a URL to find out more about the project. URLs change. Do we want this online direction included into the metadata pages? Students can put these into their own documents.
- We will be moving forward with crafting a proposal to bring to the faculty. This proposal will look to include the above statement in the metadata while still maintaining previous faculty will that includes this language on the cover pages of IQP and MQP reports.
- Meeting adjourned at 1:49pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer deWinter