

## Committee on Academic Policy

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 26th, 2022, 2:00 pm

Meeting #12 AY2021-2022

Meeting held online via Zoom

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

1. Meeting started at 2:02pm
2. Meeting minutes for Meeting #11 AY2021-2022 were reviewed and approved with minor revisions.
3. CAP discussed the recommendations of the report that was disseminated by the Mental Health & Well-Being Task Force on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Specific recommendations that are related to the scope of CAP are the following:
  - a. Proactively teach academic success skills and self care in offerings for newly enrolled students
  - b. Modify policies and practices to recognize and relieve academic pressure
  - c. Prioritize sufficient periods for rest, reflection
  - d. Create mechanisms to monitor and enhance attention to course workload and flexibility
  - e. Strengthen course feedback mechanisms and faculty accountability
4. Mental Health & Well-Being Task Force had also recommended CAP to discuss policies regarding a new "Pass"/"NR" grading option and a temporary suspension of downgrading academic standing for the undergraduate students.
5. The student representatives on CAP pointed out that the risk of losing financial aid is causing major stress for some students. CAP notes that the satisfactory academic progress rules do meet the requirements for the federal financial aid. WPI financial aid rules are different than the federal financial aid rules. CAP recognizes that it does not have the authority to recommend policies that affect financial aid.
6. However, CAP discussed the academic standing policy internal to WPI. CAP recognizes that the purpose and function of the WPI academic standing policy are not to put additional stress on students but to identify students who struggle in their studies. Once such students are identified, WPI provides additional resources (academic counselling, tutoring, etc.) to them to overcome the experienced difficulties. If an academic suspension occurs despite the additional support, the students come back from the suspension stronger as a result of this process in many cases. CAP believes that the academic standing policy is instrumental to identifying and providing help to the struggling students. Moreover, and the policy helps prevent further financial stress by giving the student an opportunity to address academic problems rather than continuing to pay tuition while NRing courses. S. Miles informed CAP that some other universities have different academic standing criteria .
7. CAP discussed a motion regarding a "Pass"/"NR" policy for the C, D, and E terms of the AY2021-2022.

- a. A. Hall-Phillips, who is also a member of the Mental Health & Well-Being Task Force, noted that the recommendations of the task force is based on extensive feedback coming from the student surveys and town halls.
  - b. The implications of the “Pass” grade on the students’ financial aid was discussed and concluded that it requires additional research.
  - c. Student representatives of CAP said that during SGA meetings students suggested putting some limit on on the number of “Pass” grades a student can use.
  - d. Considering the discussions in the previous CAP meetings and the recommendations of the Mental Health & Well-Being Task Force, CAP believes that a temporary “Pass” policy can provide a degree of relief for our students in these difficult circumstances.
  - e. CAP passed a motion regarding a “Pass”/“NR” policy for the C, D and E terms of the AY2021-2022. It will be presented to the faculty for a vote.
8. Meeting adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Berk Calli  
C-term Secretary