

CASL Meeting Minutes #10
February 21st, 2022
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Meeting held via Zoom

Attendees: Scott Barton (Chair), Francesca Bernardi (Secretary), Paul Reilly, Greg Snoddy, Meha Chopra Mohapatra, Edward Gutierrez, Jeannine Coburn. Invited guests: Rachael Heard (Associate Director, Multicultural Education and First-Generation Success).

Agenda

1. Call to order

Chair Barton called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from CASL Meeting #9 were approved. They will be circulated to the faculty this week.

3. Review of 2017 report “Recommendations on Improving Academic Advising at WPI”

Paul Reilly, Francesca Bernardi, and Rachael Heard reviewed the report.

- CASL could compile official definitions for Professional Advising and Faculty advising on WPI campus to clarify expectations and roles for both students and faculty.
 - The language regarding advising on the undergraduate catalogue (pages 9 and 10) is general and would benefit from further specification. The catalogue does not make clear that faculty are the primary advisors while Academic Advising plays a supporting role.
 - **Action Item: Paul Reilly** will find existing language from the National Academic Advising Association to use as a starting place for our revised definitions.
 - Depending on where we want to publish these updated definitions they may or may not need approval from the full faculty. If we want the updated definitions to be in the catalogue or to become a policy, then it needs to go through CAP and CAO.
- CASL could survey which departments have advising resources on Canvas that are accessible to students and faculty.
 - This system seems to work well for both departments and students.
 - If the goal is to create a policy where all departments/programs are required to create their own Canvas course site for advising, this proposal needs to go to CAP.
- CASL could develop a rubric for assessing advising and ask departments to report on their faculty and advising practices.
 - With the data collected we could make suggestions to departments/deans on how to address issues that arise.
 - Advising loads are very different from department to department. CASL should develop something that can be adapted to varying departmental needs.
 - **Action Item: Paul Reilly** will find existing rubrics from the National Academic Advising Association and others to use as a starting place for our own rubric design.

4. Departmental Advising Practices

CASL has been collecting information from departments and programs on campus about their existing advising practices.

- Not all departments have responded to our inquiries, but we have good representation. We will reassess whether to continue with the data collection at our next meeting.
- Finding out which departments/programs have existing Canvas pages should be part of the survey.

5. Academic Advising Day

Academic Advising Day is scheduled for Thursday, February 24th and on that day the schedule of Fall courses will not be published yet.

- It will be quite difficult to do academic advising day without having classes registrations available.
 - BME is delaying Academic Advising Day until courses are posted but is still offering students who want to meet now a chance to do so on Thursday.
 - CASL should make a case for postponing Academic Advising Day until D-term in the future. Having support from the registrar's office would allow us to present the idea to CAP or CAO to push it forward for next year.
 - Why is it in C-term now? It would be interesting to know the thought process for this decision.
 - **Action Item: Scott Barton** will follow up with Art Heinricher to understand the procedure to propose changes to the academic calendar. We could be in time to squeeze in the change already for next year.

6. Communications Plan with Rationale for 7-Week Terms

Jeannine Coburn reached out to Allison Duffy, Director of Strategic Communications in the Marketing and Communications Office.

- Currently, the information and rationale surrounding 7-week terms and effort hours is on WPI websites and on the catalogue. It needs to become more forward-facing: in advising, during new student orientation, during new faculty orientation, etc.
- One of the main reasons for 7-week terms is IQPs.
- The current wording to describe effort hours for 3-credit courses is as follows: "at least 15-17 hours per week."
 - The wording "at least" is problematic.
 - Faculty members have drastically different ideas on what effort hours should be for students taking 3-credit courses. So, clarifying this wording would benefit both students and faculty.
 - CASL could propose changing this wording to "on average" so that it covers the ups and downs of a 7-week term, where in the first week usually less work is required than late in the term.

Communicating time on task for courses:

- **Action Item: Jeannine Coburn** will reach out to Chrys Demetry (Director of the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center) to make sure that this information brought is up in faculty syllabi, especially for first-year courses.
- **Action item: Jeannine Coburn** will reach out to Rory Flinn (Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies) to make sure this is on the forefront of graduate student orientation as well.

7. Success at WPI

The *Tech Bible* was a document prepared to help incoming WPI students understand WPI customs and traditions. It is not in use anymore and WPI transitioned to using the course catalogue.

- CASL could reach out to the Alumni Association to see if a shortened version of a document similar to the former Tech Bible could still be developed and distributed to incoming first-year students.
- Jeannine Coburn suggests also working to reinforce the content of the document for students as they arrive on campus. Maybe Insight and NSO (both undergraduate student and graduate student) is the natural place to do this by distributing a pamphlet or maybe having a presentation about WPI traditions, etc.

8. Title IX Reporting

Francesca Bernardi will meet with John Stewart (Title IX Coordinator) and report back to CASL at the next meeting.

9. Network of Support on Workday

One possible option is using the “Academics” app / worklet within Workday to show a student’s “support network.” Professionals (not peers) will be part of the support network which will be extended to include more than just academics. For example, it could include financial aid, accessibility, etc. Amy Curran (Director of Accessibility Services) is interested in pursuing this.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 AM. This is the last CASL meeting for C-term. We will reconvene in D-term.

Minutes prepared by:

Francesca Bernardi
CASL Secretary