

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY
Minutes, Meeting #7, 2015-2016
November 2, 2015

Present: J. Doyle (Chair); J. Beck; L. Capogna; M. Elmes; J. Hanlan; A. Romeo; J. Ross; J. Rulfs; C. Wobbe; Provost B. Bursten

The minutes of the meeting of Oct. 12 were approved as amended.

Prof. Wobbe sat in place of Prof. Heinricher who was travelling. Provost Bursten joined us to share ideas about academic policy matters.

Provost Bursten articulated his belief that a first principle of academic policy formation ought to be the preservation of the central kernel of the WPI Plan: advocacy of project based learning. Discussion followed about the need for formalizing written policies in some areas.

Discussion shifted to the so-called "pay for credit" issue, i.e., can an undergraduate student obtain academic credit for a project on which (s)he is working while receiving pay from the project sponsor. In principle there was support for not allowing credit if a student is being paid and not allowing pay if a student is being awarded credit. However, there was support for a flexible policy in a changing world, especially when desirable project opportunities may be lost if a company insists on paying students. A budget model was briefly discussed whereby funds would accrue to the university, to the student, or to both. It was agreed that an essential principle was that the faculty advisor(s) must always retain academic control of the project. There was some confusion about a committee that CAP believed had been appointed by the Provost to study this issue. The Provost will look into this matter.

Professor Doyle raised the issue of how CAP could engage in the strategic planning process, particularly how and when to become engaged in the process. Provost Bursten cited several important issues on which CAP could engage: global project policies; safety issues at project centers; the formation of new project centers. Professor Wobbe cited policy formation for online education and competency based online modules.

After Provost Bursten departed, CAP began a discussion of a request from IMGD to provide an alternative way for IMGD majors to fulfill the requirement for quantitative literacy which would not involve courses offered by Mathematical Science. L. Capogna indicated that the Math Department had considered the IMGD proposal and does not oppose it. Discussion of this issue will continue at our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
James P. Hanlan