

College Recorder: Norie Flowers

Welcome

Drs. Harper and Knights called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Approval of September 9, 2014, minutes

A motion was made to approve the September 9, 2014 minutes, seconded without objection, and carried.

College Calendar Discussion - Dr. Chad Knights

- **Background:** Some college calendar concerns were raised by the College Senate and while it may be too late to do anything for this coming year, ISSC members engaged in a discussion on the Senate concerns and possible recommendations for consideration on the calendars beyond 2015-16.

- **Questions Addressed by the ISSC Committee:** Should the non-instructional days in October be kept? Should classes start on days other than Mondays?

On the first question Dr. Knights launched the discussion by saying the two days in October were challenging to any Monday classes as 16-week classes turn into 15-week classes with Labor Day and then another Monday lost with the non-instructional days. He asked Committee members whether it was realistic to do away with the non-instructional days or possibly move them into Thanksgiving week – two suggestions also brought up by the College Senate.

There was no overall consensus on the issue of keeping or doing away with the non-instructional days. Some members felt students needed the October break and others said the non-instructional days were an impediment to instruction and resulted in a disconnect with students, and it took effort to get students back into the “grove” of studying again. One member
suggested that the college might be moving against the norm as some senior four-year institutions are trending toward a full fall break. Given the final exam schedule, other members felt that moving the non-instructional days to Thanksgiving week would not be a good solution.

On the Monday class start date question some members felt flow and consistency in the classes that start on Monday was a problem as you have to account for the lost instruction time due to Labor Day or MLK Day. Committee members representing the MEC campus stated that SDV courses were not offered on Mondays. One member suggested that no classes be held on Mondays and replace Monday with Friday (Wednesday/Friday classes). Additionally, committee members representing MEC pointed out that running the semester late into December interferes with clinical placements. It was stated that practitioners/hospitals reduce staff for the holiday season and this displaces students placed in a clinical observation/rotation. Dr. Knights relayed information discussed at the Senate that since the issue is MEC specific that it should be taken up with Dr. Schiavelli and MEC campus administration. Dr. Loochtan supported this option. It was also noted that Monday start dates can be difficult for ELI faculty because the end date is a Sunday and students wait to go to the testing centers until the last Saturday, making it difficult to get tests back to faculty to be graded before grades must be submitted.

A motion was made to maintain a Monday start for the academic calendar for all three years, seconded, with no objections, two abstentions, and carried.

A second motion was made to keep the fall break for just the 2015-16 college calendar and in consideration of the six new policy changes and their outcome, seconded, with two objections, one abstention, and carried.

Discussions were postponed on the other college calendars.

- **Additional information from the 9-14-14 College Senate Minutes:**

Dr. Robertson explained that in order to better plan ahead a committee was formed of all stakeholders to focus on the three years of the college calendar. She specifically addressed the updated census dates, more time for wait list, the two non-instructional days in October, the Fall class start date and dates for dynamic sessions (14-week, 2-week, 10-week and first and second eight-week sessions).

The College Calendar Committee recommended starting Fall classes on a Monday. There are October non-instructional days built into the schedule and Dr. Robertson explained that if the Senate felt these should be eliminated, they may elect to do so. She also made the recommendation that faculty give thought to not scheduling a Monday-only class given the Fall federal holidays coupled with the October non-instructional days.

Senate members expressed both pros and cons of removing the two non-instructional days: some felt the pause was beneficial to students; others indicated that students just get started and then have Labor Day and then two other days off and this was intrusive to instruction; the suggestion was made to move the two non-instructional days to Thanksgiving week. A final suggestion was made for a Fall floating start date of plus or minus two days. Dr. Robertson said
this had been discussed previously and vetoed by VCCS, but with a new Vice Chancellor in place this issue could be brought up again if the Senate chose to do so.

It was pointed out that the ELI session dates were not on the calendar. Dr. Robertson offered to add them if ELI chose to do so.

Dr. Robertson was clear in stating that amendments could be made to the calendars in the future and asked that any new information they wished to see in the calendar be forwarded to her as soon as possible.

A Senate motion was made to accept all three calendars, seconded by 16 senators, with 12 objections and 1 abstention and the motion carried.

Dr. Mucci encouraged Senators to bring the calendars back to their Campus Councils and provide feedback to her immediately for the 2015 calendar and by February or March for the farthest out calendars and she will follow up with Dr. Robertson.

**E-forms Update** - Dr. Beth Harper

Dr. Harper solicited input on how well the electronic forms (NVRK and others) appeared to work on the campuses. She also explained that the log in was changed to the My NOVA sign in, as a result of the difficulty for adjuncts who do not have Lan accounts, the only glitch of which she was aware. Alexandria representatives felt the procedure worked well. The new electronic forms also being developed will be the Pathway to Baccalaureate contract for acceptance into the program, request for transfer credits from other institutions, with the exception of international students who must have their transcripts officially evaluated, and ordering NOVA transcripts. An electronic work flow process is planned and will be developed once a consistent process is determined across all campuses.

Dr. Harper reported that students withdrawn before 60 percent are not equally affected by a “W” or an “F” when SAP is computed (the 67% successful completion requirement) for financial aid or when the student is receiving Veteran’s benefits. However, putting the last date of attendance on a record is important for financial aid students who because the student or the College may be required to reimburse the federal government for aid received.

Dr. Harper then opened a discussion on the two Withdrawal forms, a withdrawal initiated by the Instructor (125-034) and one initiated by the student (125-047) with a number of questions directed to the Committee:

- Do we want to faculty to withdraw students prior to the 60 percent point?
- After the 60% with mitigating circumstances: Is there a need for both forms? Could we get down to one form for the instructor who would initiate the action based on the conversation by the student and/or his family?
- Can we come to an agreement by all campuses on a consistent withdrawal policy?

Committee members initially discussed whether the purpose of the instructor is first to help “save” the student by not giving them a failing grade. Others felt that for students who do not
attend classes that incorporate a great deal of participation the instructor should be justified in withdrawing that student. Committee members agreed that it was important to put their withdrawal policies in the syllabus to make it very transparent and clear when the class begins so that students fully understand the policies.

The Alexandria campus standard policy withdraws students after four missed classes. Dr. Knights emphasized the driving rationale to treat students equally and that it was essential to avoid putting the college at risk if international students do not show up after four weeks. Inconsistency also creates grievances and lawsuits when we don’t treat all students equally.

Another comment brought was that students who receive an “F” could be put on probation and then would be eligible for needed support.

Dr. Harper reiterated the current withdrawal procedure of two forms: one initiated by the student and one by the instructor. Students must go through the Instructor and the Academic Dean. She asked whether members felt they could get down to one form for the instructor who would initiate the process based on the conversation with the student. She also asked whether Committee members felt the instructor needed to be involved at all after the 60 percent point. Members felt that they needed to be involved only if the student was not in good standing but that “good standing” was in itself a vague term. Others felt that “good standing” provided flexibility in decision making.

Committee members felt the student form, with the instructions contained, helps adjuncts who might not be aware of the policies.

On a non-academic related mitigating circumstance, the Dean of Students verifies the circumstance with the Academic Dean and then asks the faculty member for the grade the student received to date to ensure the student was in good standing. The role of the Dean of Students is to be the intermediary.

Committee members agreed that it was not prudent to cut the instructor out completely as some students feel uncomfortable meeting with a dean and all agreed that good communication was paramount.

Committee members finally agreed that the withdrawal policy is vague and felt that given the importance of the policy the final decision should be made at the college level as opposed to the campus or college committee level.

Topics for Rest of the Year:

Veterans issues (November)
Adjunct faculty survey
Information literacy
SDV redesign including how plagiarism is presented in that course
Update on Developmental English
Parking
Update about implementation of student success policy changes
Hobson’s CRM and QEP update
Future Meeting Dates:

- Friday November 21
- Friday January 16
- Friday February 21
- Friday March 20 (may be moved to a conflict with the Student Services Day of Learning)
- Friday April 17

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. with the next Instructional and Student Services Committee meeting scheduled for Friday, November 21, at 9:30 a.m. in the large boardroom of the Pender Administrative complex.