

Faculty Assembly

May 8, 2012

Library Conference Room

Ralph Olliges, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order.

Grade Reflecting “Unofficial Withdrawal”

Nancy Hellerud, Associate Provost, came to introduce the unofficial withdrawal grade.

Background: She has been at Webster about a year and has been working with student and policy issues. She asked financial aid and admissions to look at students who sign up for classes but never attend. Processes are then identified to take care of the issue of students who think that they have dropped a class, but did not. There is also a policy that reserves the right to drop a student administratively if a student does not attend class. Many students take the initiative and drop a class if they cannot attend. There are about 2,500 withdrawals per semester.

The Issue: Most instructors who have students that do not attend class give those students a grade of F. Almost 1,200 Fs are given per semester and many of those Fs are for failing work. However, some instructors leave the grade as In Progress which then remains on their transcript forever. Other instructors give the student an incomplete. Incompletes turn to ZFs after one year.

The University needs to identify those students who stop attending class as this affects financial aid. Financial aid then needs to recalculate and adjust the student’s award.

Out of 1,200 students who stopped attending class, the last date of attendance was entered on four of those. Many of those students get Fs and can request a grade appeal. One way to deal with this issue is to have an option so instructors can identify on the grading system those students that have failed because they stopped attending class. There needs to be policies and procedures in place to identify those students so that financial aid can readjust the award.

Nancy was surprised that so many students withdraw late. She did not know of the practice until she received the numbers.

The question was asked if it was still within the instructor’s discretion to give an F or WU? If a student dropped sometime after mid-term would the instructor give an F or WU. Nancy answered that in both cases, it is at the instructor’s discretion.

Another question asked was can you submit a WU before the end of the semester? You cannot submit a grade until the grading period opens.

In whose interest is the WU grade? It could be helpful for instructors to tell a student that they are getting a zero for GPA because they stopped coming to class. It could also be beneficial to financial aid to be able to discern who did not complete a course.

Is it possible for a WU to be recalculated? If a student is given an F and the last date of attendance was not entered, we cannot operate under the assumption that the student earned a grade of F based upon their work.

Is there a way to require a last date of attendance when you submit a grade of F? That is one idea to try, but at this time we do not have a system to handle that.

The WU will now be an option in the drop down menu if the instructor feels that it reflects the work.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the WU. A friendly amendment was made to change the WU to WF on the form. With the exception of one abstention, motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Amendment to the section on Schools and Colleges in the University Handbook

The first paragraph of the proposed amendment is what is currently in the Handbook. The Senate was alerted by several of the faculty who were concerned that the administration might move forward and create new schools/colleges. The second paragraph is what the Senate created.

Further discussion on the language followed. Question was called and seconded to stop discussion. With the exception of two opposed, all were in favor.

A motion was made and seconded that the Faculty Assembly endorse the Proposed Amendment to the section on Schools and Colleges in the University Handbook. With the exception of one abstention; all were in favor. Motion carried.

With no further business, the assembly adjourned at 3:30 p.m.