

**Meeting of the Villanova University
Academic Policy Committee**

Thursday, February 23 2017
2:30 PM – 4:00 PM
Fedigan Room, SAC 400

Minutes

In Attendance:

Sherry Bowen, Gordon Coonfield, Marylu Hill, Shelly Howton, DeVon Jackson, Christopher Kilby (chair), Eric Lomazoff, Peggy Lyons, Christine Palus, Krupa Patel, Lesley Perry, Elizabeth Petit de Mange, Michael Posner, Andrea Welker, Craig Wheeland, Tina Yang.

Absent:

Danai Chasaki, Jennifer Dixon (NIA), Sandra Kearney, Brian King, Adele Lindenmeyr (NIA), Rees Rankin, Joseph Schick (NIA), Eriny Tawfik, Daniel Wright (NIA), Dennis Wykoff (NIA).
[NIA=Notified in Advance]

Administrative Items

- 1) Minutes for the meeting: Eric Lomazoff volunteered to record the meeting's minutes until 3:40 PM. Christopher Kilby recorded the minutes after that.
- 2) Approving minutes for the January 27, 2017 APC meeting: APC approved the minutes unanimously without amendment.

Old Business

- 3) Reports of sub-committee chairs (as needed):
 - (a) Academic Integrity (Andrea Welker): The subcommittee is working on (1) amendments to the existing academic integrity code and (2) continuing to advertise the academic integrity survey for faculty on the Faculty Congress website
 - (b) Online CATS (Michael Posner): It appears that the decision has already been made by the University to employ online CATS in the Spring 2017 semester (for 80%-85% of classes, including those taught by untenured tenure-track faculty). A discussion ensued about whether the APC would like to comment on this decision, in particular the sense that insufficient feedback from faculty was solicited before the decision was made. Craig Wheeland acknowledged a communication failure in this regard as to informing APC.

Some sentiment was voiced about giving faculty discretion as to when during the term to "activate" the online CATS but concerns about the logistics of this (when to email students) were also voiced.

The discussion also touched on a problem comparing response rates from the paper system (which includes WXed students and thus artificially deflates response rates) with those from the online system (which excludes WXed students). This difference in response rate denominators means there is a larger gap between response rates for paper and online CATS than reported by OPIR.

Michael Posner reported that faculty scores from the online CATS are between 0.1 and 0.2 lower (on a 1-5 scale) than they are in a comparable sample of paper CATS. Given this gap, APC discussed value of including a statement in the tenure and promotion files on the CATS shift (its impact on scores and the importance of comparing the instructor's scores to contemporaneous averages to control for this). APC encouraged the subcommittee to continue working with OPIR to analyze these data and will return to the issue when more complete information is available.

- (c) Honors (Dennis Wykoff): The subcommittee presented a draft of a recommendation to the Provost with respect to the staffing of and assignment of attributes to Honors courses. Craig Wheeland asked that the recommendation be addressed to him (Vice Provost for Academics) rather than to the Provost.

After a number of questions were raised and edits offered, the Chair asked APC members to send revision recommendations to Dennis Wykoff with the goal of having a revised document ready for electronic vote within the next week to ten days.

- 4) Update on APC protocol: Christopher Kilby reported that the "General Protocol for Free Standing Committees" (included in the meeting packet) is still being actively discussed within the University administration.
- 5) Discussion of "Vision for Teaching & Learning": At APC's invitation, Dr. Randy Weinstein, Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, joined the committee to discuss his recently-publicized statement on teaching and learning at Villanova. Randy said that he was present to solicit feedback and gather thoughts on the statement.

Some APC members suggested that the statement may not have struck precisely the "right balance" between pre-professional/career-oriented goals and more general educational aspirations of the liberal arts and sciences. A subsequent comment suggested more emphasis on the University's commitment to cultivating "critical thinking" skills.

On the question of resources available for enacting/pursuing the objectives outlined in the statement, Randy suggested that the University was ready to allocate new resources for these purposes.

Responding to a question about the meaning of "breaking the mold of the traditional classroom setting," Randy indicated the phrase was intended to address the gap between existing pedagogical facilities and the facilities that instructors would choose if left to their own devices. Several members rejoined that the bullet-point carried an "anti-Socratic" or (more broadly) anti-traditional sentiment. Randy indicated this was not the intent and will consider revising the vision statement accordingly.

Clarifying the difference between "academic coaching" and "tutoring" (as referenced in the document), Randy indicated that the former involved more "holistic" support for students with cross-course difficulties, e.g., general study skills and time management.

Regarding efforts to "raise [the level of] intellectual engagement" on campus, Randy spoke to both the influx of high-achieving students (defined by SAT scores and high school class rank) and the university's need to respond to this in some manner.

New Business

- 6) Discussion of diversity/inclusion initiatives with student leaders. At APC's invitation, Madiyah Gant and Clare Grindinger, CLAS students involved in recent initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion on Villanova's campus, joined the committee to explain their efforts and goals and to learn which of these might be related to APC's mandate. The student representatives outlined their progress to date, including the different initiatives agreed to individually by the deans and the students' interaction with the Board of Trustees. Madiyah and Clare also discussed their hope that required ACS and theology courses would include more alternative topics and perspectives, including feminist and non-western viewpoints, and that diversity and inclusion initiatives spread beyond Student Life programs. The ultimate goal is that such perspectives would be integrated throughout the curriculum in all colleges and that all Villanova students (and faculty) be challenged to consider alternative perspectives and experiences. APC members expressed support for this goal; some members suggested that focusing on required ACS and Theology courses might provide a practical starting point. One APC member suggested the committee return to this topic in a future meeting and another suggested that an APC standing committee on diversity and inclusion might be appropriate.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Drafted from Eric Lomazoff's notes. Thank you for volunteering!