

Meeting Minutes Academic Calendar Committee March 23, 2010

2:00-3:35 p.m., Vista B206.

Recorder Colette Morey

Members present: Brad Summerhill and Joe Gonzalez co-chairs, Jeff Wallace Carola Naumer, Maria Arigotti, Mel Lawler, Beth Baines, Sharon Lowe, Steve Schenk

Guest Present Christine Parawin (student), Scott Hueber (NFA) Ted Lambert (Faculty), Ted Plaggemeyer (Dean).

Approval of the February meeting minutes was unanimous.

Brad Presented Items for the Agenda verbally for approval.

1. Thoughts from Guests
2. 2 Reconsideration of Student Survey
3. Discussion of different models
 - a. Classroom availability
 - b. Proctoring center
 - c. Last meeting before report to Faculty Senate
4. Discuss format for report to Faculty Senate
5. Where do we go from here

Request made by Brad made for action items

Mel -We should vote yes or no before making a discussion for the report

Brad-Need to discuss if a vote is necessary

Jeff- Need to define the arguments for or against

Agenda Approved unanimously

Item 1 Comments from Guests

Scott- On the topic of changes in contract days, the strengths and weaknesses- this can then go to contract for senators to think about and vote on.

Discussion:

Brad- Emphasis is that nobody will be forced to hold a final during finals week

Beth-We will lose a week of Professional Development and then begin classes earlier in the Academic Calendar.

Brad- Extra days designated as finals week will be defined as instructional contract days. Also will need to address separately how this will impact summer school in our report despite it being ancillary

Mel- Need to consider how students are getting financial aid secured prior to the start of instruction

Brad- Summer school can be rearranged

Steve- Summer school is a separate issue

Brad- No calendar change would be necessary for summer and fall except perhaps lengthening the calendar in December by 2 days.

Sharon-Were other schools models examined?

Mel- There is not data available from schools that made a transition

Ted L. Math department doesn't want to lose instructional days but doesn't need an extra week of instruction either.

Brad to Scott: Can NFA contract allow for the change?

Scott- This is not really an issue for NFA but rather for the President/VPAA.

Brad- Administration will likely approve of the change because they already have expressed that there are excessive professional development days.

Scott- NFA contract will not get in the way of the proposed changes- yes contract can be amended with proper consensus.

Ted P. Dean's perspective: Colorado had a model with 2 finals days. The consequence was that there was a need to provide extra pay for adjunct faculty and was not free from problems. From a Dean's perspective Ted does not recommend making finals week optional, will need to hold some form of class is the days are instructional days.

Ted L. UNR has the same requirement.

Ted. P. Finals time could allow for alternatives like student presentations. There is emphasis on Student Assessment so equalization is important. We could begin finals week on a Friday, and could modify the date when final grades are due.

Scott: Recommendation to create a plan to submit to Faculty Senate.

Brad: Need to discuss the argument against a finals week, no one has yet come forward with an organized argument against it.

Discussion:

Ted L. Is for a finals week, wants to create a common assessment with UNR which is not possible due to the time. The current class time is too short to conduct a comprehensive exam. UNR students have an advantage over TMCC students due to the length allowed for finals assessment.

Brad: Please define an argument against (i.e. it is extraneous and unnecessary). English does not need a final exam, but they would not be impacted unless they were "forced" to hold one.

Mel: Many faculty may view it as needing to work more hours.

Jeff: Some may feel it will take from faculty prep time- will need to define a uniform procedure because some may complain about the loss of that time

Ted. L.- TMCC students are currently at a disadvantage

Beth: Being forced to show up for finals week may be perceived as a threat to academic freedom

Ted P- The time could be used to prepare students for their transition to the next level

Christine (input from student government): Read an email from Kat: Finals week is a good idea, it requires organization, could even be longer than a week to allow for flexibility and more breathing room . (Christine gave a copy of the email to Brad)

Discussion on pros and cons continues:

Ted L: Finals week will not change the fact that some students will have to come to campus for class that last week. Math would really benefit from having the extra time block for assessment.

Scott H: Recommendation to reconcile the differences between the disciplines.

Carola: The issue addresses concerns over fairness-Additional concern is the due dates for final grades

Scott: Recommendation to seek feedback from students

Mel: Some departments have compelling reason for a finals week. We are not likely to reach a consensus where everybody is completely happy.

Steve: Majority of Biology faculty are in favor

Jeff: Must consider the concern that there may be limitations in available hardware for specialty testing

Brad: Report on input from the faculty survey

1. Finals week should come from professional development days
2. Faculty do not like the idea of a block schedule
3. Faculty do not want to be forced
4. 2 hours would be a good length of class time.

Steve: Those who want a finals week do not want to force it on others

Jeff: There are many approaches that could be considered.

Ted P.: Finals should be optional but the day will still be a duty day.

Item #2

Brad was asked to make a motion to reconsider the student survey, seconded by Colette. Not approved by majority vote.

Carola: Motion to pass on the student survey to Faculty Senate for consideration. Seconded by Beth and approved by majority vote.

Item #3

Discussion of various models

Brad: There are 2 day and 4 day models where the additional days would be instructional days taken from professional development days- Could be discussed together when we discuss the format of the report

Item #4

Format or the report to Faculty Senate

Brad: Recommend the following

1. Background and history of issue
2. Rationale for finals week
3. Rationale against finals week
4. Presentation of various models
 - a. 4 day finals week after week 16. Monday-Thursday same classroom as class, grades would be due the following Monday
 - b. 2 day model-optional for depts. To hold exams- it would be opposite UNR's 4 day schedule and will be a compressed time block likely Monday/Tuesday
 - c. Finals Friday of week 16, open campus for optional finals would be in different classrooms
 - d. Large exams conducted by entire departments
 - e. No change from current process
 - f. Create a schedule that mimics UNRs

Brad: Joe will meet with Department chairs as well as the VPAA and will report their input. Meeting time exceeded therefore Brad will delegate parts of the report to the various members of the committee and communication will continue via email.