Dalton State College Faculty Senate Agenda

October 10, 2012

Call to Order

Old Business

• Minutes

• Travel Budget Request

• Assignments for Subcommittees

New Business

• Work Load, Early Alert, Child Care- Dr. Stone

• WDF Ratios- Hassan El-Najjar

• Evaluation Process- Carol Gavagan

Next Meeting November 14, 2012

Adjourn
Faculty Senate Minutes 10.10.12

Members Present: Dr. Sandra Stone, Roschelle Bautista, Sharon Beavers, Joey Cagle, Robert Clay, Robert Culp, Richard Collison, Emma Cooley, Mary Edwards, Hassan Elnajjar, Kent Harrelson, Leslie Harrelson, Matthew Hipps, Celeste Humphrey, Lisa Hunt, April Kay, Jonathan Lampley, Sarah Mergel, Sunny Park, Keith Perry, Vince Postell, Ryan Reece, Kelson Smith, Natalie Trice, Gail Ward, Cathy Hunsicker, Matt Chenoweth, Mike Hilgemann, DK Kim, Barbara Jones, Herbert Blankson, Sean Weitz, Robin Cleeland, Fernando Garcia

Member Absent: Dana Trowell

Member in Proxy: Shelia Coley for Dana Trowell

Guests: Carol Gavagan, Dr. Andy Meyer

The meeting was called to order by Vince Postell upon verification that a quorum was present.

Old Business:

Minutes for September Approved

A $1,000 budget for faculty senate expenses was approved by Dr. Schwenn. Approvals for purchases will be made by the VPAA.

Clarification of senate bylaws: FDW and the Intellectual Property Rights and Usage Committees can be composed of tenured faculty, self-selected from their respective committees, who are or are not faculty senators. The FDW committee will meet to decide upon the four members for the faculty development and intellectual property right subcommittees.

New Business:

1. Dr. Stone

Faculty Workload: In the spirit of shared governance, is looking for volunteers to assist with select campus issues. One issue is faculty workload. She would like feedback from faculty in relationship to what feels fair and what seems reasonable on topics such as pro-rate pay for student load, student research credit and monies, etcetera. She would like to assign this to a FS committee for further review and research. Conclusion: Assigned to FDW’s Welfare Subcommittee.
Faculty Senate Minutes 10.10.12

Early Alert System: In correlation with the Complete College Georgia plan, DSC needs a way to recognize students who are struggling early in the semester. The goal is to offer assistance before the student becomes frustrated and drops a course. Consider some form of “real-time” feedback. How can something be done early on? What resources are available? Should advisors be involved? What kind of early alert system could be developed on campus to improve retention? Conclusion: This task will be assigned to the Assessment subcommittee.

Child Care on Campus: Research indicates that the YMCA may be able to come on campus as an independent contractor who could offer services. A survey indicated an interest level that could possibly make the center self-supportive. Dr. Stone is focused on after school childcare for grade school ages. Conclusion: Dr. Stone will set-up a committee out of her office.

Policy/Procedure Books: Dr. Stone is calling for faculty to review and submit the policy and procedure books that are on campus. Dr. Schwenn is making an effort to bring all policies together into a central book/document that is divided into categories of administration/student/faculty.

2. Hassan El-Najjar (see handout)
Hassan presented a concern with WDF on campus. He feels that students are not confident with when to drop and/or perhaps some who do not understand the drop process. Dr. El-Najjar believes that this creates a disadvantage for both the student and the faculty. He proposes two motions:
   a. I move that we reinstate the previous DSC policy that allows instructors to drop students from their classes for non-attendance and non-participation in class activities. Conclusion: MOVE TO TABLE by majority vote pending more information
   b. I move that the WDF rate may not be used for the evaluation of the academic work of the faculty members at DSC. However, it may be used for explanation of these rates and for statistical reasons. Conclusion: MOVE TO TABLE by majority vote pending more information.

3. Carol Gavagan
Carol approached the FS with a recommendation from the Evaluation subcommittee to utilize a free pilot program to revamp student evaluations. The Evaluation Committee has found outside agencies that will conduct the student evaluations at a cost lower than the current cost at DSC. DSC is free to pose their preferred questions. It gathers extensive information and trending campus wide. DSC can hold grades until the student
evaluation is completed. If the campus is happy with the results of the pilot, the Evaluation Committee can then collect three bids for purchase of such program. Estimated cost per semester to purchase such program is approximately $7K.

Conclusion: MOVED TO PROCEED WITH PILOT PROGRAM by majority vote, two opposed.

Amendment put forth to do a paper and online evaluation for comparison for the spring semester student evaluations. Conclusion: MOVE DECLINED, by majority vote.

Next meeting of faculty senate will be November 14, 2012 in Sequoya 236

Adjourn
1. The Problem of Non-Attending Students

In every semester, I have students enrolled in my classes who never attend. I have others who may attend for a week or two without participation in class activities, or doing class assignments.

I report them to the early warning (alert) electronic listing and I know that they are contacted by the DSC staff but without leading to positive results.

I email them messages through Georgia View and DSC mail, urging them to attend and participate in class activities. However, they never attend, participate, or reply to my messages.

Then, I send messages to colleagues who have the same students in their classes (See examples of these messages below), asking them to deliver my messages to these students, in which I advise them to withdraw from the course to avoid a failing grade.

In most cases, I discover that these students are not attending other classes too.

Current DSC Policy

The current DSC policy penalizes these students by forcing their instructors to give them failing grades, as punishment for their non-participation. This is unfair for these students because they are not evaluated academically. It is also unfair for instructors who are forced to do so.

The current DSC policy further penalizes instructors of these students, as it increases the number of failing grades (Fs) in their classes, which is held against them in what’s called WDF rate.

Solution

This problem can be solved by reinstating a previous DSC policy in which instructors drop these students before the mid of a semester, saving them from serious consequences of failing grades. This also saves instructors from the unfair addition of failing grades in their classes.
Dr. Mary Nielsen, Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, agreed with me that a faculty member should not be held accountable for students who never attend (See her reply message to me below). But this should also apply to students who attend few times without participation in class activities.

2. Two Types of Withdrawals

We need to differentiate between two types of withdrawals.

The first type may be described as “withdrawal of non-participant students.” This type may be initiated any time before the mid of the semester by instructors or by students who do not participate in required class activities.

Instructors should not be held accountable for withdrawals of these non-participant students. Such withdrawals may be mentioned in the instructors’ annual reports, as statistical facts only.

The second type may be described as “withdrawal of participant students.” This type may be initiated any time before the mid of the semester by students who have participated in required class activities.

Instructors need to explain these withdrawals in their annual reports, as some of them are related to non-academic reasons.

For example, I have a student who has withdrawn from one of my Introduction to Sociology classes this semester, despite the fact she is an “A” student. She has also withdrawn from all of her other classes. The reason for her withdrawal is that she is going back to Mexico due to immigration issues. Another participant and passing student has withdrawn because of her full-time job and family responsibilities.

Some students withdraw because they find out that the course is more demanding than they have thought, or because of the attendance policy, or because of deadlines of tests and assignments. Instructors may try to help such students by being flexible, if this is going to help them complete the course.

So, instructors may explain these withdrawals in their annual reports. However, they should not be penalized by these withdrawals through considering the WDF rate as a method of evaluating their academic work.

3. The Goal of Using WDF Rates and Evaluation

Dr. Nielsen told me, in her attached email below, that the new DSC policy concerning the WDF rates is in response to the Governor’s Office, which requires us “to improve DWF rates as part of Complete College Georgia.”
Thus, this emphasis on the WDF rates is in response to a political initiative, “Complete College Georgia,” not to an academic concern.

As I pointed above, it is unfair to use withdrawals as part of the annual reports, which are used to evaluate our academic work. The same applies to using the number of Ds and Fs in classes to evaluate the work of faculty members.

If it continues, this WDF method of evaluation may lead to lowering academic levels of assessment, in order to place more students in the C level of grades, away from F and D levels. This may achieve the political goals of policy makers but it may also lead to lowering the quality of higher education, a result that needs to be avoided.

Motions

On the basis of the above information, I have the following two motions to be presented before the Senate for discussion and voting.

1. I move that we reinstate the previous DSC policy that allows instructors to drop students from their classes for non-attendance and non-participation in class activities.

2. I move that the WDF rate may not be used for the evaluation of the academic work of the faculty members at DSC. However, it may be used for explanation of these rates and for statistical reasons.
Email Attachments

The following are copies of the emails I mentioned above

Hassan,

When Dr. Stone comes back into town next week, I'll ask her about changing the policy. At some colleges, if a student does not log in to an online class the first day of class, he or she is automatically dropped from the course.

I agree with you that the faculty member should not be held accountable for students who never show up or who have never attended. I am assuming that you turn in the students' names when Jodi asks faculty to check the class rolls.

We are required by the Governor's office to improve the DWF rates as a part of Complete College Georgia, but we need to find a way of not being held accountable for students who never attend.

Thanks,

Mary

QEP Title: "Improving Academic Performance of High-risk Students through Learning Support English: Getting on the 'Write' Path"

Opening Sentence of DSC's Mission: Dalton State College is dedicated to providing broad access to quality higher education for the population of Northwest Georgia, thereby enhancing the region's economic vitality and quality of life.

Mary T. Nielsen, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Liberal Arts
Professor of English and Reading
Dalton State College
650 College Drive
Dalton, GA 30730
706 272-4407
Hi Mary,

This is concerning student withdrawals, as an important issue for course and instructor assessment.

In almost every semester, I have students who enroll in classes but never attend or participate in class activities. I email them through Georgia View and DSC as well as by phone, if there's a number. I tell them that I'm ready to work with them to catch up with the class. Still, some of them never reply and never drop the course.

I have three students in my current summer online sociology 1101 class who represent this category of students.

One of them has already withdrew during the first week of classes but the other two are not responding at all.

They will either withdraw on their own or receive a failing grade. Either way, it is unfair for me, as an instructor, to bear the negative consequences of their carelessness, as they will be part of my WDF statistics.

These students are:

1. Cody Paul Brumbelow (900072122)
2. Tiffany Marie Kincaid (900075330)

Doesn't this issue deserve a serious discussion and a review of policy?

Why don't we go back to the previous DSC policy of dropping such students by instructors?

Hassan.

Hassan,

Well, surprisingly, he is not attending my Math class either. However, if I do see him, I will attempt to relay the message.

Regards,
Rich
From: Hassan A Elnajjar
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Richard A Hambrock
Subject: John Craig

Hi Richard,

John Craig is one of the students enrolled in my Sociology 1101-02 course but he no longer attends class, nor participate in class activities and assignments.

I sent him several emails through DSC mail and through Georgia View course mail but he never responded.

I looked at his academic record and found that he's enrolled in your Math 1111 course. I'd appreciate it if you please give him a copy of this email.

I'd like for him to drop Sociology 1101-02 as soon as possible, before the October 23 deadline, to avoid an unnecessary failing grade, by filling in a withdrawal form and bringing it to me for my signature. He can leave it on my door if he doesn't find me in the office.

Thanks.

Hassan El-Najjar.

Hassan
Toni has not attended my class either.

Kerry

From: Hassan A Elnajjar
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 12:06 PM
To: Kerry Dunbar
Subject: Toni Ponders

Hi Kerry,

Toni Ponders is one of the students enrolled in my Sociology 1101-02 course but he never participated in class activities or assignments.

I sent him several emails through DSC mail and through Georgia View course mail but he never responded.
I looked at his academic record and found that he's enrolled in your Microbiology course. I'd appreciate it if you please give him a copy of this email.

I'd like for him to drop Sociology 1101-02 as soon as possible, before the October 23 deadline, to avoid an unnecessary failing grade, by filling in a withdrawal form and bring it to me for my signature. He can leave it on my door if he doesn't find me in the office.

Thanks.

Hassan El-Najjar.

________________________________________
From: Hassan A Elnajjar 
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 12:01 PM 
To: Lynda Kayren Ridley 
Subject: Chris Withrow 

Hi Lynda,

Chris Withrow is one of the students enrolled in my Sociology 1160 online course but he never participated in class activities or assignments.

I sent him several emails through DSC mail and through Georgia View course mail but he never responded.

I looked at his academic record and found that he's enrolled in your Nursing 2011 course.
I'd appreciate it if you please give him a copy of this email.

I'd like for him to drop Sociology 1160 as soon as possible, before the October 23 deadline, to avoid an unnecessary failing grade, by filling in a withdrawal form and bring it to me for my signature. He can leave it on my door if he doesn't find me in the office.

Thanks.

Hassan El-Najjar.