CALL TO ORDER: 12:05 p.m.

COMMUNICATION OFFICER'S REPORT: Minutes of April 16, 2009 will be approved at the April 30, 2009 meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT: This report will be posted on the Senate’s DML website.

REPORTS & PROPOSALS [All documents are posted on the Senate’s DML website and were sent to Senators online prior to today’s meeting.]

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE PROPOSALS
Doug Meadows, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee presented four proposals today [Add/ Drop, Automated Prerequisite Checking, W’s, and Plus/Minus]. Priority Registration and Blocking Proposal was deferred due to time constraints and will return to Senate at a future meeting. All proposals on the floor were action items.

Add/Drop Proposal
This revision came before Student Government and was approved with one opposition. The revision reads as follows: The deadline for adding or dropping a course will be 11:00 p.m. of the seventh calendar day after the quarter begins.

The motion carried unanimously to approve the Add/Drop proposal as presented by the Academic Affairs Committee.

Automated Prerequisite Checking Proposal
Discussion and Q&A ensued.

Implementation of this charge will necessitate time and funding.

The last sentence of the proposal reads: The software will also allow the prerequisite requirements to be overridden at the discretion of the department offering the course that requires the prerequisites. Tim Engstrom proposed that this read: “to the discretion of the instructor.” L. Lawley also suggested this change. Other senators commented that it should remain “department” as faculty are not always on campus in the summer when students may want to register. Doug Meadows said that as it is presently written, he believes this refers to the department chair and not department instructor,

Q: Steve Gold asked if this policy includes graduates and undergraduates.
A: D. Meadows said the policy does not specify.

B. Birkett would behoove departments to deal with this issue as there could be inequities between instructors in terms of who overrides prerequisites and who does not.

J. Loffredo said the new student information systems would be able to easily enforce prerequisite checking. Our current system does not have the ability to track or enforce prerequisites. There is no immediate plan to purchase a new student information system so we will need to consider what it will take to build these capabilities into the current system. We will take time this coming year to determine this. I do have concerns about adding processing logic to each registration transaction that could further slow down the registration process, especially during peak registration days.
Q: L. Lawley asked what the argument is for changing this sentence from Department to Instructor. Overriding prerequisites limits the instructor’s ability to teach the class. L. Lawley said she would like this to read, “at the discretion of the instructor”.

E. Mineck said it is important that we communicate with the new CIO relative to this issue. We are trying to grease the wheels to make this a priority for the budget.

D. Tower DuBois said students are currently registering for summer and fall quarter. Many classes are listed as TBA, leaving many students without knowledge as to who the faculty will be. Additionally, some Photo 4 students cannot register until the end of August, a time when faculty would not be back from summer break to sign them in if the policy read at the discretion of the instructor. We should leave registration in the home department that makes it much easier for the student. Others commented on this issue and agreed.

L. Lawley proposed an amendment that reads: The software will also allow the prerequisite requirements to be overridden at the discretion of the instructor when available in the department offering the course that requires the prerequisites.

Discussion ensued on the amendment.

S. Gold said we should have it stay as is (at the discretion of the department) for matters of consistency. Other agreed. M. Laver said it is odd for a department to be over this. T. Policano said this is a department issue and that the policy is trying to make registering easier and more efficient for students. P. Amsler from SG said that from a student’s perspective it is better to be able to go to the department. He cited the example of needing an override from a mean professor.

L. Lawley moved to withdraw the proposed amendment, but commented that prerequisites are determined by the faculty and when talking about a department overseeing this process, it is not talking about faculty as a group or as a faculty decision. She said if the whole point is to make it difficult for a student to register then it needs to come from a faculty person, not an administrator. She said she continues to have concerns about the way that this is written and asked if we are fixing the systemic problem. She stated that with this policy in place as is she said she could not remove a student if a student needs to be removed.

S. Maggelakis said she does consider a faculty administrator to be faculty first and then an administrator. She said that we need to trust each other and move forward.

The question was called on the motion to approve the Automated Prerequisite Checking proposal (Policy for Registration Checking of Prerequisites) as presented by the Academic Affairs Committee. The motion carried with 1 abstention.

Using W’s in Measuring Student Success in a Course

The statement before the senate today is: Any evaluation of student success in a course at RIT should not include withdrawals that take place in the first five weeks of the quarter.

D. Meadows said this proposal reflects the committee’s opinion that withdrawals in the first half of a quarter are not generally the result of a student who wishes to avoid an F by withdrawing, whereas withdrawals in the second half of the quarter generally do reflect an attempt to avoid an F.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

Some senators commented that they are opposed to having W’s in a student’s record. The chair asked that if the Senate votes to support this statement, where would it be placed?

Q: V. Perotti asked if we actively record the date of withdrawal and is it easy to access this information.
A: The registrar responded yes.

E. Mineck said this is a Provost issue and not an assessment tool. The Provost said he would work with Institutional Research and the registrar on this issue as often W’s are pulled and we work on the D’s and F’s.

Q: S. Perez-Hardy asked if RIT ever considered grading WP or WF?
A: D. Meadows said he has not heard of this.

The motion carried with 1 opposed vote and 1 abstention.

**Plus/Minus Grading Proposal**
The committee polled the faculty in all colleges and Student Support Services. Approximately 75% of the faculty polled said that they would like a change to a plus/minus grading system. Grading schemes at many of RIT’s peer institutes were also looked at, and the majority of these do use some form of plus/minus grading. After considering a number of grading schemes that incorporate plus/minus grades, the Academic Affairs Committee decided on the proposal on the floor today for Academic Senate consideration. This will not be implemented prior to fall of 2010.

A straw vote was taken by the students and the majority indicated that they are highly opposed to this grading proposal. In response from the faculty about this grading proposal, one half said it will cause their GPA to be lowered and ½ said it will cause inflation. Information from RPI on this grading system showed no change in GPA.

P. Amsler of SG said one out of 24 voted Yes for this proposal and 96% opposed it. He said he believes having this system will bring about more work for the faculty.

L. Lawley said she is vehemently opposed to this proposal and believes it is a fallacy to say we can compute grades to a decimal point and this cheapens what faculty do. She said in her classes some are pass/fail and she sees much better work come forth from students with this grading system. She said her colleagues at NYI also have a pass/fail system. The goal is to inspire students. W. Koontz and he strongly opposes this proposal as well. He said plus/minus reminds him of performance review. S. Gold agreed as well, that students are vehemently opposed to his and it does focus too much on grades.

T. Engstrom said these comments are not related to learning but to fears. He believes plus/minus is an incentive for learning.

E. Mineck said we are out of the norm to not have this system in place.

L. Lawley said she argued that a grade is the only reward for students yet grades are at the rock of the system. Doing plus/minus grading is a terrible thing to do.

P. Amsler said this system will reward a student with a plus grade yet for every plus grade you will give minuses as well. He does not believe this will help student’s grades and will ultimately bring an adverse affect.

M-B. Cooper said she agrees with the letter grade concept and the main rationale being having a finer tune for grades yet the objection is that this is the interest of the faculty at large.

D. Tower DuBois, who teaches art in CIAS, said she would have a great difficulty when critiquing artwork to give a plus or minus to a student.

E. Saber said industrial corporations look at GPA’s to select future GPA’s and this proposal brings a finer red letter system that could provide RIT students with more opportunities.

W. Koontz said moving to a plus/minus grade system does not affect GPA.
The Provost said it is at the discretion of the faculty member to use the plus/minus grading system.

Christine Kray said that even when grading a series of papers with whole grades, a plus or minus may be the inevitable result of an average of the work.

The question was called and the motion carried to approve the Plus/Minus grade proposal with a vote of 15 In Favor, 11 Opposed and 2 Abstentions.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY [Can be viewed on the Senate’s DML website (Working Papers – Public) and was disseminated to all senators prior to today’s meeting.]

Doug Meadows, Co-Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee reported that the committee discussed the IP Policy Proposal in several meetings with Bill Johnson of CAST, who helped author the new policy, and Bill Bond, the Director of the IP Management Office, who was also involved in writing the new policy. The committee came to the conclusion that this new IP policy is well crafted and works to the benefit of RIT, IT faculty, staff and students. The committee made three modest suggestions regarding one piece of language in the policy and the presentation and implementation of the policy.

Proposed changes from AAC: (see AAC’s final report online for more detail as to what is said below with AAC’s suggestions to the proposed policy.)

1. Under 4.A.3 (General Provisions, Section A, Item 3): The committee recommended deleting the first phrase “If RIT support makes an enterprise possible or” and let the item begin with the remaining language: “If RIT provides extra or special support…”.

If this change is not made in the proposal, the committee highly recommends including a precise definition of the word “enterprise” in the definition section as it is not clear presently to the general reader that this is intended to describe enterprises external to RIT as indicated in the proposed policy.

It would be helpful to have some form of flow chart or tree diagram to help elucidate the procedures regarding ownership in section 5. This does not have to be part of the policy but would be useful when presenting the policy to others here at RIT.

3. There needs to be some serious education for administrator and faculty, as well as student perhaps, with regard to this policy and its implementation.

Discussion ensued and Q&A.

Q: L. Lawley said her concern is for graduate students who had scholarships or financial support when they created IP. The issue involved whether RIT would have a stake in this IP: The issue has been addressed.
A: B. Bond said this is addressed by the policy.

Q: Matt Bernius (Co-Director of Open Publishing Lab at RIT) commented that within our labs there are a number of research labs in which open source application development is taking place. The question was raised how does one ensure such development?
A: B. Bond responded that one has to abide by the license and the IP office is cognizant of this.

Q: M Bernius asked about research labs implementing open source resource projects. Following a specific procedure, would this be handled college by college?
A: B. Bond said the student would need to know that they are contributing to an open source project. There are derivative works as well as collective works that are covered by copyright law in these circumstances. The IP committee could give the department guidance.
Q: M. Bernuis asked who is the ultimate arbitrator of the license. He said each new source project is an open source project from the moment of conception and we want to go through the correct steps to establish the correct license. Some students are hired through department funds, and some is scholarship.

A: If you are using an open source with an outside sponsor, they need to know this as they may not want to be held to the open source license terms (in a contract deliverable). If it is part of their course then likely the student owns the IP The sponsor needs to know the student likely owns the IP unless contract terms specify otherwise.

Discussion ensued on patentable scholarship and open source issues. B. Bond said specialized issues come through the IP committee. The general policy speaks of some customized situations that have to be dealt with person by person.

E. Mineck said the Bayh-Dole Act has a lot to do with this proposal and that the spirit of the policy is to distribute the information. B. Bond said this policy is in everyone's interest and there is nothing to be fearful about, especially in relation to RIT striving to be known for innovation.

J. Schull commented that in the absence of a flow chart, all faculty should be aware that they are required to disclose all intellectual property outside of coursework but within the scope of their work; i.e. property that has a potential outside value. He commented that a flow chart would be helpful, especially in interpreting the disclosure requirements as defined in Sections 6.C and 5.H. B. Bond said the scope of work is different from non-faculty to faculty and does not include course materials or scholarly materials: The faculty own theses and that the reporting is based on triggers.

D. Meadows said there would be a need for faculty engaging in projects that generate profitable IP to have arrangements with RIT regarding rights of ownership. J. Scholl said he would feel inhibited by this each time he came up with a potentially good idea. He said this policy requires disclosure. D. Boyd of the IP Office said this does not mean we are declaring ownership and he said he does not see this as a big issue.

A. Ray said he sees this document as a solid one. Noting that not all societal benefits result from commercialization, he requested a change in wording in the first paragraph to substitute the word “and” for “via” so that the sentence reads: For further societal benefits and commercialization.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment by C. Lundgren of the IP Committee and the IP team accepted it as well. T. Engstrom suggested a change on page 7, 5E, page 7 regarding dissertations and theses publication. He stated that a request might be made by the dean of Graduate Studies that a thesis be embargoed for up to 12 months. He would like to include ‘will coordinate in consultation with the thesis advisor, for review.’ Andrew Moore responded that in the one case where this has occurred it was in consultation with the thesis advisor.

Another change made today and agreed upon to be a friendly amendment was to add the word globally to the first paragraph so the sentence will read: “It often takes the form of intellectual property which can be further developed and/or shared with others, both locally and nationally, and globally, …”

The following motion carried with 2 opposing and 1 abstention:
The Academic Senate approves the proposed Intellectual Property Policy Proposal including friendly amendments made at today’s meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE PROVOST
The Provost commented on changes made to E5.7 (Tenure Policy) regarding the third year review and external letters. Faculty required to undergo this Third Year Review would be those beginning in the fall of 2009. For the external letters there was no such clarity. The implementation of the external letters will begin 2010. It was asked if all new hires thus far have received a Statement of Expectations and the Provost said no. L. Lawley said she spoke with untenured faculty and they never received any statement on this. The Provost said he is committed to seeing A Statement of Expectations go out to each faculty that is hired.

The Provost invited all faculty and their constituents to the May 14th forum he is having on Promotion and Tenure.
The implementation of the grading system will not start until Fall 2010.

The Greater Expectations team will be confirmed by tomorrow. J. Lisuzzo said she thought there was a call for volunteers for this. The Provost said a nominations process has been set up for faculty to be selected for this summer’s retreat. K. Waterstram-Rich said there will be student and staff representatives as well.

The Provost reminded Senators of the invitation to the Open House at his home next Thursday to celebrate all the Senate’s hard work.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Feeney Bushnell
Communication Officer

5/5/2009