



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Faculty Senate Meeting

Friday, March 12, 2010, 1:00 p.m.

Ledbetter Rooms A & B, Donaghey Student Center

MINUTES

Present: CAHSS— Anson, Bailey, Chapman, Clausen, English, Eshleman, Garnett, Giammo, Groesbeck, Ramsey, Vinikas, Yoder. CB— Edison, Holland, Nickels, Watts. CE— Bandre, Hughes, Kuykendall, Pack. CEIT— Anderson, Chan, Jovanovic, Tramel, Tschumi, Tudoreanu. LAW— Goldner. LIBRARY— Russ. CPS— Collier-Tenison, Driskill, Faust, Rhodes, Robertson, Smith-Olinde. CSM— Chen, Guellich, Kosmatov, McMillan, Seigar, Sims, Tarasenko, Wright, Yanoviak., EX OFFICIO— Anderson, Ford, Williams.

Absent: CAHSS— Amrhein, Webb. CE— Hayn. LAW— Aiyetoro, Fitzhugh. CPS— Barnes. CSM— Douglas, Perkins, Prince, Thompson., EX OFFICIO— Belcher, Davis, Smith.

I. Welcome & Roll Call

President Ford declared it to be 1:00 and convened the meeting. The secretary called the roll.

II. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the February 19, 2010, meeting of the Senate were reviewed and approved on unanimous voice vote.

III. Announcements

Ford announced that the Committee on Committees will begin its work immediately after spring break. He reminded the Senate that along with making appointments to Assembly and Senate committees, the Committee on Committees is charged with developing a slate of nominees for the University Assembly president, who also serves as the president of the Faculty Senate. He asked that interested parties contact him.

IV. Introduction of new topics

Ford opened the floor for senators to bring up items that need to come to the Senate's attention.

Eshleman reminded us that the item of new business on today's agenda came first before the Senate as a new topic introduced under this part of the agenda in a late-fall meeting.

Eshleman distributed a handout (appended to these minutes) about the grade appeals process, which he anticipates will come before the Senate in the form of new business at the next meeting. The issue at hand relates to the third step in the process, the point at which the associate vice chancellor receives the appeal. Some questions have been raised about the intent of this step as it was first enacted, and about what would be the best interpretation of

it now. The handout sets forth some possible options. Eshleman asked senators to read and think about it before the April meeting.

V. A short debate on a topic related to "Rethinking the Bachelor's Degree"

Resolved: Students must complete at least their last 30 credit hours from UALR to be awarded a Bachelor's degree from UALR..

Speaking in support of the proposition: Sen. Art English.

Speaking in opposition to the proposition: Chris Lloyd

English began the debate with the pro position. Following is a paraphrase of his remarks:

Why do we need that thirty hours of residency to award a degree? Consider the role of numbers in so many of our endeavors: the framers of the Constitution requiring the vote of three-quarters of the states to amend; sixty votes required to end a filibuster in the U.S. Senate. We do have particular numbers to which we attribute significance. Sixty means something different in baseball. Even though we change the numbers, we still know who hit the sixty.

Similarly in academia, we have our numbers of traditional significance: four years, at least 120 credit hours to get a degree, for example. Why do we have residency requirements for degrees? We don't want to make this Transfer Tech. We want the educations of a graduate of this program to bear the mark of this faculty's work. We want to claim them as our own.

Find myself resorting to a favorite piece of Constitutional law here: Dartmouth College v. Woodward, a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case dealing with the application of the contract clause of the U.S. Constitution to private corporations. If Daniel Webster had known UALR, he might have said about it, as he did about Dartmouth to the Marshall court, "Sir, you may destroy this little institution.... It is, sir, as I have said, a small college, but there are those of us who love it."

Keep the thirty hours.

Lloyd followed with the con position:

Instead of waving the flag of tradition, I'll wave the flag of science. We should have a sound basis for whatever we do. And there is none here. Very few schools have a clear rationale for their residency requirements for degrees.

In my research, I could find only a couple that do. One is the University of Chicago, which requires two years in residence, and completion of the common core. Chicago is very clear that its unique core shapes the education of students.

Without such a rational basis for a residency requirement, all it is is a thirty-hour tax on students.

Another option is half one's hours (any half) in residency, or the last one-quarter of total hours. Schools have various policies, but only Chicago and Oberlin have articulated a clear reason for the requirement.

In my discipline, and others concerned with psychotherapy, students occasionally have been known to ask why we meet with clients for fifty minutes out of an hour. The answer? Because it's convenient, and because Freud did it. Neither is a sufficient reason to believe that fifty minutes is more effective than thirty or even fifteen. Similarly, without a sufficient reason, no residency requirement makes as much sense as thirty hours.

Comment from Groesbeck: Why thirty and not sixty? Shouldn't a degree from UALR represent that you have been largely educated at UALR? Comment from Yoder: That seemed to be the thrust, finally, of Chris's argument, Comment from Holland: What about students who already have one degree and are expected to do the thirty in the second? Do we apply the requirement again? Ought we to? Comment from Ramsey: Does anyone think we should have no study-in-residence requirement at all? His comment was met with laughter and a loud

growl of many small conversations, but no public response was made. When order was restored, Tramel talked about a student who had done 120 hours here out of 140 required for the degree, but still required an exception to be made in order to be awarded his degree.

This led to some general discussion about having a residency requirement not be specific to the last however-many hours.

Yoder and Giammo spoke to the sense of having the requirement.

Comment from Lloyd: If you believe a degree is a degree is a degree, it doesn't matter. Mentioned an institution with a requirement that students also do their major hours at the institution.

Comment from Ramsey: The discussion has surely provided a little guidance to the committee-to-come. President Ford clarified that while these debates might indeed serve that purpose, their primary purpose is to get us thinking about the issue.

The chair sensed that there was no need to repair to a committee of the whole and take a straw vote. The debaters were given another hand by senators, and praise from the chair.

VI. Reports

A. Chancellor Anderson

(The following paragraph has no real place in these minutes, but the story drew yet another big laugh [see below], and the secretary thinks it ought to be shared with those who were absent.)

At a recent lunch of Chinese take-out, the chancellor said, Sandra Robertson got this message in her fortune cookie: "Handle any problem with dignity." He thought that especially fitting for the university's budget director, and it gave him some confidence that his might be equally so. It said, "There is a good chance of a romantic encounter soon." It wasn't so much the fortune itself, he said, that offended him; it was the reactions of the others in the office.

The chancellor announced his intent to be brief, and mentioned "one thing you've noticed, one perhaps you haven't":

- The women's basketball team is doing us proud.
- Law underwent its every-seventh-year accreditation process and came through with flying colors.

The *inclement weather committee* has, he thinks, for all practical purposes been constituted. John DiPippa, dean of the Law School, will chair, and the chancellor has asked them to complete their work by the end of the semester.

He had not much new to report *about the budget*. Reminded us that he's asked the deans to consider three scenarios: worst case, an additional \$5M cut in next year's budget; middle case, a \$3M cut; and best case, a \$1.5M cut.

Uncertainties are resolving themselves. The fiscal session of the General Assembly is over. Revenue stabilization is complete. The big, lingering one is the continuing impact of the recession and how it's going to affect the nation and the state.

The question about whether we can raise tuition will still be out there for several weeks. There might be another round of federal stimulus money. Health insurance premiums are almost certainly going up; they'll hit the university hard, and may hit employees, too. He said Budget Director Robertson is trying her best to put a budget together that will include the ability at least to give some bonuses for faculty and staff in a time when we cannot raise salaries. The hiring freeze remains in effect; we're making exceptions occasionally. Early retirement options

will almost certainly happen, but can't be announced yet. UA System President Suggs's approval is required. The Planning and Finance Committee of the Senate, he observed, is working hard, and what it's doing is likely to be helpful, not just this year but over the next two or three. We hope we're moving toward a more normal budget environment, but we can't count on getting there after this year.

B. Provost Belcher

The provost had an unavoidable conflict for today, and could not be present.

C. Roles and Rewards Task Force II, Catherine Lowry, chair

Lowry announced she cannot today match her 15-second record for a report, set in January. She thanked the members of the task force, Tom McMillan, Paul Yoder, Carol Thompson, and JoAnne Matson.

They decided early on they do not want this document to mirror Roles and Rewards I. We're not talking, she said, about a path for promotion, but we are talking about ways that full-time, non-tenure-track (FTNTT) faculty can gain advancement.

The task force is suggesting a three-tier system. After five years, FTNTT faculty will be eligible to apply for tier two; after ten, they may apply for tier three. The working names of the tiers are Instructor, Advanced Instructor, and Senior Instructor. What's required to be recognized for the latter two tiers is going to be up to departments. Basically, instructors, she said, are hired to teach. Yet many across the system are heavily invested in and contributing to research and community service, as well.

The task force sees their job as making recommendations to the Senate, to this body, at this level. They're not making recommendations at the departmental level. The task force has found there is virtually no consistency in the way that instructors are used across the university. Service and research are part of the job in some departments and not in others.

There is language in the current draft that allows a department to bring in exceptionally qualified people at tiers two or three.

Yesterday the task force held an open forum and got some twenty-five people there to give their input.

Q from Jovanovic: Putting together the two draft documents (R&R I and R&R II, it seems that nontenure track faculty will be expected to teach twelve hours per semester and tenured faculty to teach nine. *A:* It's different everywhere. We don't have anything in here about the number of hours required for teaching.

Comment from Pack: Happens to teach in one of those departments where half our faculty are non-tenure-track. There is no distinction there about workloads. Is there anything in this proposed policy to supply a right of appeal, should advancement be denied? He also noted that faculty are hired in as assistant professors in non-tenure-track positions. *A:* They didn't include traditional academic titles for just that reason. The matter of appeals, Lowry said, is still being considered.

Comment from Jovanovic: Recently saw an advertisement for a "teaching assistant professor" position.

Q from Ramsey: Have you a formal proposal for us? *A:* Next meeting.

Ramsey recalled that R&R I quite strenuously recommended a nine-hour load and it's not happening.

Comment from Robertson: Thinks the five-year mark perhaps ought to serve as an equivalent to the up-or-out decision for tenure-track faculty. We should have an expectation that academic units will make a decision and not consign less than satisfactory members to being stuck forever.

Ford and Lowry expressed their intent to get the final draft distributed to senators before the agenda for the April meeting is out.

Robertson hopes R&R II will recommend that departments include FTNTT faculty in their governance documents, and make it clear there how these matters will be dealt with.

Jovanovic noted that he thinks the committee is recommending an entirely voluntary process, while he hears Robertson asking for much more directive policy.

Robertson said he believes the right thing to do is to agree that we should have a policy about whether instructors can be hired without any expectation of advancement in performance.

Clausen asked for more guidance from the committee as to what constitutes excellence in teaching.

Tschumi said, about the up-and-out question, one alternative is that if you're just doing the job we hired you for, you can go up. Another is to say we expect you to do the job we hired you for; if you go beyond that, you can be eligible for advancement.

Ford suggested we should wait until we have an actual document, a specific proposal before us.

Smith-Olinde questioned Robertson: Did he mean that people who are doing a more than acceptable job might not have an option about whether to go up for promotion or not? Can they stay and choose not to go up? *A from Robertson:* If we're doing our jobs as chairs, we should be evaluating everyone, and if the evaluation is meaningful, it should include some kind of response. If we believe full-time teaching faculty are a valuable part of our university, then we should spell out consistent, decent standards for evaluation and rewards.

Ramsey commented that former chancellor Fribourgh holds that anyone employed full time for more than six or seven years has "passive tenure."

D. Planning and Finance Committee, Larry Holland, chair

Holland reported on the committee's recent activities. The chancellor e-mailed him one Saturday night two weeks ago, and asked if Planning and Finance would be willing to take on an effort to find out what other universities have done to deal with budget cuts. The committee has met weekly since then, developing a quick survey to use in interviewing chief financial officers of fourteen of our peer institutions to find out what's been going on with them regarding budget cuts and strategies to deal with them: size o cuts, enrollment changes, tuition rises, stratagems for cost reductions, and so on. The committee will have a report prepared, probably by the week after spring break. Holland gratefully recognized people who have stepped up to this effort, including committee members Barrett, Ortega, Macheak, Chan, Parker, and Smith-Olinde.

Ford clarified, and Holland affirmed, that the report from Planning and Finance Committee will go to the chancellor as well as to the Senate.

VII. Old Business

A. *MOTION, postponed from 02/19/2010.* Undergraduate Council, presented by Jeannette Clausen, chair. (Legislation; no second required; majority vote at one meeting required.)

A task force responsible for conducting the review and reporting of requirements for the UALR baccalaureate degree to the Faculty Senate shall be appointed by the provost and the Faculty Senate president by the end of the current semester. It is expected that a task force, unlike a standing committee such as the Undergraduate Council, will have the review of degree requirements as its sole responsibility and will have a stable membership to see the task through from beginning to end. This task force will be appointed by the provost and the Faculty Senate president from a slate of nominees who have been selected according to accepted practices in their units and who can commit to serving on the task force for two years or possibly longer, as needed to complete the work. The task force membership should include senior faculty steeped in UALR's culture and values who are familiar with the current baccalaureate degree requirements and their rationale, as well as more recently hired faculty who will be the ones to implement and champion the requirements that are ultimately adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate. The task force will consult with stakeholders in all academic and support units, students, and alumni. It will report at regular intervals to the Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Council, the Student Government Association, and other bodies as deemed appropriate. To ensure that the review can begin without delay in Fall 2010, the membership of the Task Force shall be determined by the end of the current semester.

Clausen offered a substitute motion from Undergraduate Council:

The provost and the Faculty Senate president shall appoint a task force responsible for reviewing and drafting changes to the UALR baccalaureate degree requirements. The task force shall be appointed before the end of the current semester from a slate of nominees. Nominations may be made by undergraduate academic departments, or faculty members may nominate themselves. All colleges with undergraduate programs shall have at least one voting representative on the task force and all of its voting members must have faculty standing. This task force shall review all university-wide aspects of the baccalaureate degree, including but not limited to the core curriculum, the minor requirement, minimum hours required for completion, and residency requirements. While reviewing and drafting, the task force shall consult with all relevant stakeholders and shall maintain active communication with the Faculty Senate. After completing its study, the task force shall draft and propose legislation to the Faculty Senate concerning the baccalaureate degree.

Commentary: Faculty members who agree to be nominated to the slate must be willing to serve on the Task Force for the duration, i.e., until the task is completed.

Ford asked the parliamentarian for clarification about substitute motions, which she offered, reading from *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Clausen said the substitute motion is probably not perfect, but it certainly answers some of the important questions raised in the original discussion.

The substitute motion clarifies that all appointments will be made only from the slate of nominees. This one makes clear that departments may nominate

candidates and individuals may nominate themselves. And it makes clear that all voting members of the task force will be faculty.

Question: Do the president and provost have to agree on each appointment?

A: Ford spoke from his experience with another task force jointly appointed by Senate president, saying they both agreed to every person put on the task force. He referred the question to former president Williams, who said that was exactly his earlier experience of joint appointments to the Roles and Rewards I Task Force.

Question: Has this been vetted with the provost and the chancellor? Clausen said it had not been by her. Ford said he had presented it for the provost's review, and the provost has no objection to it.

Motion carried on unanimous voice vote.

VIII. New Business

A. *MOTION, Executive Committee*, presented by Andrew Eshleman. (Legislation; no second required; majority vote at two meetings required.)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee moves to amend the "Academic Dishonesty Procedures for Students Enrolled in a Course," as described in the Faculty and Student Handbooks, in the manner shown below:

~~The student has the right to attend classes until the appeal is resolved. In the event the case has not been resolved before final grades are due, the faculty member will withhold the grade until the appeal is resolved.~~ *The student may not withdraw from a course while an allegation of academic dishonesty in that course is being adjudicated. If the student withdraws from a course after receiving notification of an allegation of academic dishonesty, the student will be reinstated, pending final adjudication of the allegation.*

At the conclusion of the adjudication process:

- If academic dishonesty is found, and a grade of "F" in the course is assigned, then the failing grade will be recorded and remain on the student's transcript.*
- If academic dishonesty is found, and a penalty less than a grade of "F" for the course was assigned, then the student may continue in the course or withdraw from the course at that time.*
- If academic dishonesty is not found, the student may continue in the course or withdraw from the course at that time.*

If the adjudication process is not completed before the end of a semester, a temporary grade not affecting the student's GPA will be submitted until the adjudication process is completed.

The student may re-take a course in which a grade of "F" is assigned as a penalty for academic dishonesty. However, in such cases, the original grade of "F" will not be replaced but instead be included in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA along with the subsequent grade received.

Commentary: This language is proposed to be inserted at the end of the section entitled "Academic Dishonesty Procedures for Students Enrolled in a Course." The

final sentence in the existing language is being deleted simply because the issue it discusses is addressed subsequently in the language of the amendment.

In order to protect the integrity of the educational process, it is important to respond effectively to cases of academic dishonesty. Anecdotal evidence suggests both that the incidence of academic dishonesty—in particular, plagiarism—has risen at UALR as it has nationwide and that our existing policy for addressing the problem has begun to lose some of its effectiveness.

Our policy's effectiveness appears to have eroded for two interrelated reasons. First, it has become common for students to avoid a possible grade penalty for committing academic dishonesty by withdrawing from the course once an Allegation of Academic Dishonesty has been filed. Though a grade penalty is not the only sanction that may be imposed in response to a finding of academic dishonesty, it is a very important one. It serves to highlight the seriousness of the offense to the offender, and it serves as a deterrent to others who may be tempted. Other sanctions—e.g., suspension or expulsion—are rarely imposed except for repeated offenses, and although an offense may be recorded in the student's file in the Office of the Dean of Students, this produces no significant ramifications for the student in many cases. If a grade penalty is avoided by an offender, the offense leaves no record on the student's transcript.

The second reason our policy has lost some of its effectiveness has been triggered by the first. Faculty members have become increasingly aware of the student practice of withdrawing from courses once an Allegation of Academic Dishonesty has been filed. In light of this, some have decided that it is no longer worth their effort to document cases of academic dishonesty and file an allegation since they regard it as likely that the student will escape any meaningful consequence. As a result, they have decided to either ignore cases of academic dishonesty or attempt to address them in their own way outside the bounds of UALR policy.

This motion will close the loophole by means of which some students are evading a grade penalty for their academic dishonesty while preserving the due process rightly guaranteed them by our policy.

Finally, it is important to allow students to re-take course in which they have committed academic dishonesty and suffered a grade penalty, for sometimes, these courses will be required for completion of a student's degree requirements. This motion permits this, but treats the "F" received for academic dishonesty differently than an "F" received for other reasons. Currently whenever a student re-takes a course in which an "F" was received, the original failing grade is excluded from calculation of the student's cumulative GPA in favor of the subsequent grade received. According to this motion, an "F" received for academic dishonesty will be included in GPA calculation along with the subsequent grade if the course is re-taken. This reflects our sense that it is important to mark the difference between the reasons for receiving a failing grade—that since academic dishonesty undermines educational goals in a fundamental way, it should not be possible to replace the "F" received for committing it simply by retaking the course.

Eshleman summarized the commentary for the Senate.

Q from Watts: This would make it so they can't withdraw from the course. Can they withdraw from the university and avoid a possible grade penalty? *A:* Yes. Eshleman noted there were some implementation issues even in making workable the present policy proposal to block withdrawal from the course, and

there were even larger ones inherent in addressing the problem of withdrawal from the university. Watts asked if there in any language we can put in here that would at least let us know if a student who has withdrawn to avoid a charge of academic dishonesty reapplies for admission to this university.

Q from Anson: Doesn't the record still exist that an allegation of academic dishonesty has been made? *A from Eshleman:* If the student withdraws and doesn't appeal the allegation, the student is found guilty of the offense, and the record does remain in the office of the Dean of Students. Tschumi pointed out that those records are confidential and will not be released.

Comment from Jovanovic: We currently have no admission standard he's aware of that speaks to previous academic offenses. So even if we knew, it wouldn't be taken into account in a decision about readmitting.

Comment from Faust: This is emblematic of the difficulty of working out the problem of students who duck penalties for academic offenses by withdrawing from school. Taking the step of making it impossible for students to withdraw from a course when an allegation of academic dishonesty is pending seems to her a reasonable step.

Tschumi spoke in support of the motion, for the same reason: the action it proposes is needed, even though it doesn't deal with the problem of withdrawal from the university.

Considerable discussion ensued about the precise meaning of "withdrawing from the university" and "withdrawing from all one's courses." It became rapidly apparent that several knowledgeable people had different understandings from one another about whether there is a clear distinction and if so, what it is.

McMillan suggested that this policy might prevent students from withdrawing from the university, if "withdrawing from the university" is equivalent to "withdrawing from all one's courses," since this policy would block withdrawal from any course in which an allegation of academic dishonesty is pending.

The Senate agreed finally that while there may remain other loopholes, this policy would close one important one.

Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.

VIII. Open Forum

Ford invited comments from the Senate.

Tramel wonders why he's having to resubmit all his information about direct deposits. Ford noted that when this was discussed in another official group earlier, he had suggested current information be printed out and given to people to review and confirm, but his suggestion obviously wasn't taken. Driskill said that when he called to get some questions answered about filling out the forms, he was told that some external authority had said the university needed to have more current authorizations than many that have been on the books for years.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Appendix

Revisiting Step 3 of the Grade Appeal Process

As was mentioned a few meetings ago, several recent cases have suggested the need to revisit aspects of UALR's policies regarding academic integrity and grade appeals. The motion on today's agenda concerns an aspect of the academic dishonesty policy. This handout, on the other hand, concerns an issue about the grade appeal process that we would like to discuss further at our April meeting. Three alternatives are proposed, but you may have others to suggest as well.

As described in the *Faculty Handbook*, section 9, "Grievances and Appeals," the first step of the grade appeal process involves a meeting between the student and faculty member in question in an attempt to resolve the disagreement over the grade assigned. If the appeal is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at this meeting, the student next meets, in step #2, with the faculty member again along with the departmental chairperson (or dean if the faculty member is the chairperson) to determine whether the disagreement can be resolved. If resolution is not reached at either of these levels, the appeal proceeds, at the student's initiation, to step #3.

Here is the current wording concerning this step of the process:

As a last resort and only after Steps 1 and 2 have been carried out, the student may file a formal complaint in writing within three class days to the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. If the student decides to file a formal appeal, he or she must meet with the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and bring to the meeting the written appeal which must include a written statement which clearly explains the basis of the appeal and the Grade Appeal Complaint Form. Following the conference, the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will immediately consult with the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee chairperson. The associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will notify the student in writing that the grade appeal will be referred to the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee for a hearing or to the vice chancellor/provost if the case does not fall within the purview of the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee.

Once an appeal makes its way to the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee, the appeal is formalized and records of the appeal and the hearings of the committee are kept. Generally, of course, it is best if an appeal can be resolved before reaching this committee. In light of this, the current issue concerns whether the associate vice chancellor should—in his/her meeting with the student at this step—be trying to negotiate a solution to the problem before it goes to the committee. This is being done, but some think that this practice is inconsistent with the spirit if not also the letter of the current policy—that the intent of the policy is to restrict the role of the office (since power over academic appointments resides in the office of the provost/vice-chancellor of academic affairs) of the associate vice-chancellor to guarantee that the faculty member never feels real or imagined pressure by that office to concede to an appeal in order to "make a problem go away."

- 1) To address this concern, one option is to rewrite the current policy so that the intent to restrict the scope of the associate vice-chancellor's role is clear, perhaps in something like this fashion (changes highlighted):

As a last resort and only after Steps 1 and 2 have been carried out, the student may file a formal complaint in writing within three class days to the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. If the student decides to file a formal appeal, he or she must meet with the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and bring to the meeting the written appeal which must include a written statement which clearly explains the basis of the appeal and the Grade Appeal Complaint Form. The purpose of this meeting is to confirm that prior steps in the process have been followed properly (if not, the appeal will be re-directed back to the appropriate lower level) and that the student understands the next step in the appeal process. Following the conference, the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will immediately consult with the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee chairperson. The associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will notify the student in writing that the grade appeal will be referred to the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee for a hearing or to the vice chancellor/provost if the case does not fall within the purview of the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee.

Some are concerned, however, about the possible pragmatic difficulty of implementing the policy understood in this way. That is, currently, only 1/3-1/2 of appeals filed to the associate vice-chancellor reach the committee, the others having been resolved by him. If all appeals went directly to the committee, some worry that the committee would be overwhelmed, especially at the conclusion of the spring semester, given the nine-month contract of many faculty members.

- 2) A second option would be to rewrite the policy to endorse recent practice in something like the following fashion:

If unable to resolve the difference with the chair and faculty member, the student shall take the grievance within five class days of this discussion to the associate vice-chancellor. The associate vice-chancellor shall attempt to resolve the dispute within 10 class days between the student and the faculty member. The student's grade will be changed at step 3 of this procedure by the written consent of the faculty member.

As a last resort and only after Steps 1, 2 and 3 have been carried out, the student may file a formal complaint in writing within three class days to the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. If the student decides to file a formal appeal, he or she must meet again with the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and bring to the meeting the written appeal which must include a written statement which clearly explains the basis of the appeal and the Grade Appeal Complaint Form. The purpose of this meeting is to confirm that the student understands the next step in the appeal process. Following the conference, the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will immediately consult with the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee chairperson. The associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will notify the student in writing that the grade appeal will be referred to the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee for a hearing or to the vice chancellor/provost if the case does not fall within the purview of the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee.

Of course, the worry here is again that faculty members may sometimes feel pressure to resolve grade appeals in the student's favor, despite regarding the appeal as having no merit otherwise.

- 3) A third option would be to investigate the possibility of creating a "stand-alone" position of university ombudsperson, a faculty-member position dedicated to hearing student appeals (and perhaps other complaints) and seeking means of mediation

with the relevant parties prior to the appeals (and other complaints) being formalized. In other words, this person would seek to perform the mediating role recently practiced by the associate vice-chancellor but would not be associated with that office, thereby counteracting concerns by faculty members about the possibility of undue influence. __

The rewrite of policy in this case would parallel that of #2, but with “ombudsperson” substituted for “associate vice-chancellor” in the first paragraph.

If unable to resolve the difference with the chair and faculty member, the student shall take the grievance within five class days of this discussion to the university ombudsperson. The ombudsperson shall attempt to resolve the dispute within 10 class days between the student and the faculty member. The student's grade will be changed at step 3 of this procedure by the written consent of the faculty member.

As a last resort and only after Steps 1, 2 and 3 have been carried out, the student may file a formal complaint in writing within three class days to the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. If the student decides to file a formal appeal, he or she must meet again with the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and bring to the meeting the written appeal which must include a written statement which clearly explains the basis of the appeal and the Grade Appeal Complaint Form. The purpose of this meeting is to confirm that the student understands the next step in the appeal process. Following the conference, the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will immediately consult with the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee chairperson. The associate vice chancellor for academic affairs will notify the student in writing that the grade appeal will be referred to the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee for a hearing or to the vice chancellor/provost if the case does not fall within the purview of the Academic Integrity and Grievance Committee.

Questions, Comments? Please let me know: Andrew Eshleman, Senate Resources Manager, (<mailto:aseshleman@ualr.edu>)