Faculty Committee on Academic Standards, Admissions, & Financial Aid
2016-17 Annual Report

Committee Members:
Von Bakanic, Deborah Boyle, Quinn Burke (chair), Ted Carrigan Broda (student representative), LaTasha Chaffin, Bob Mignone, Scott Peeples, Ricard Vinas-de-Puig, Michelle Futrell (ex-officio), Shannon McKenzie (ex-officio)

Management:
The committee continued to disseminate student petitions via OAKS as a centralized, secure, and efficient system that eliminates the use of email (or printed copies) for handling confidential student information. Shannon McKenzie and Michelle Futrell of the office of Undergraduate Academic Services continue to be indefatigable with their helpful organization and management of content at OAKS. The 2016-17 FCAS Committee truly appreciates their diligence as the academic “front line” working with students regarding their petitions. As Chair, I likewise want to appreciatively note the ongoing commitment of the 2016-17 committee members. Meeting bi-monthly for 1-2 hours at a time, plus weekly review of online petitions, FCAS requires a significant commitment from its members, and I have been consistently impressed by this past year’s 6 faculty members and 1 student representative.

2016-17 Highlights:
In addition to the review of student petitions for late withdrawal, FCAS undertook five other responsibilities this year at the request of Academic Affairs:

- Review of alternative and additional admissions criteria/credentialing (i.e., One Earth and i-TEP) for applicants from abroad and/or whose first language is not English
- Review and reformulation of the College-wide Major Grade Point Average (GPA) policy
- Review of College course-syllabus minimum requirements
- Review and repeal of the College’s Time Conflict Registration Form
- Review and reformulation of CofC Student Government Association’s petition to allow for undergraduate grade redemption

Further details of each of these 5 items are noted in the highlights below; for full information, please see compiled notes

Total Petition Statistics: (up to 6/30/17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Late Withdrawal Petitions</th>
<th>Senior Coursework Elsewhere Petitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>55 total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved - <strong>44</strong></td>
<td>Approved - <strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denied - <strong>11</strong></td>
<td>Denied - <strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forwarded to 2016-2017 committee - <strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Forwarded to 2015-2016 committee - <strong>1</strong></td>
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Key Items from Minutes (see compiled 2016-17 minutes for full details):

31.Aug.2016:
FCAS met for the first time over the 2106-17 year and Chair Burke reviewed the “Rules of the Road” document drawn up over the end of the 2014-15 year. There was a review of using OAKS to review undergraduate petitions, standards/ protocol for accepting and denying student late withdrawal petitions, and standards/ protocol for accepting and denying senior coursework elsewhere petitions. Through a review of a sample petition, it was pointed out that the Committee seldom grants selective withdrawal from courses unless a strong case is made for that one course. The committee seldom accepts financial arguments for senior coursework elsewhere beyond the limit of hours allowed. The committee is reluctant to grant late withdrawal petitions for two successive semesters. The committee is reluctant to grant late withdrawal petitions based on work/school conflicts. Finally, the Committee is reluctant to grant late withdrawal petitions based on medical attention/ treatment after the term has already ended. The definition of a “super-majority” is a total of 6 votes (with an undergraduate’s representation in FCAS this year), but is 5 if no undergraduate will be present over the academic year.

Associate Provost Lynn Cherry joined FCAS at their initial meeting. She noted that if one was to return to FCAS’ original charge, the Committee was not simply tasked with academic matters but with admissions and financial aid as well, and this is a consideration going forward. Associate Provost Cherry noted that upcoming considerations for FCAS’s review include graduate admissions and the College-wide major GPA policy.

The Committee reviewed a total of 6 Late Withdrawal petitions, plus 3 Senior Coursework Elsewhere petitions.

14.Sep.2016:
Su Frost and Penny Aber-Kahn of the Admissions Office presented at the FCAS meeting around the One Earth and i-TEP (English-language proficiency exam) initiatives, respectively. FCAS briefly touched upon the College-wide Major GPA Policy, and the discrepancies in the ways the current policy is being applied across academic departments. FCAS Member Mignone suggested the creation of a cross-campus forum to discuss the possibilities regarding the major GPA policy and that the role of FCAS should be to make a recommendation on the major GPA policy to the Faculty Senate. Burke added that the Office of the Registrar should have a say on the implementation of the major GPA policy.

The Committee reviewed a total of 5 Late Withdrawal petitions, plus 1 Senior Coursework Elsewhere petitions.

28.Sep.2016:
Major GPA was discussed, and Chair Burke explained that Provost McGee has indicated that FCAS should take the lead this year and make a recommendation to the Senate. Burke stated that FCAS ought to present two or three options to the Senate in November. The committee reviewed the three current options. FCAS voted to support OneEarth as an external evaluator; Member Viñas-de-Puig (of Foreign Languages) agreed to bring the i-TEST proposal to his department for two external reviews (from faculty members specializing in assessment). Chair Burke explained the need to form a 3-person panel to hear a student academic grievance and shared a memo from the Provost requesting the panel. Three committee members’ names were randomly drawn from a hat.
12.Oct.2016:
Burke reported the results of the first academic (not personal) grievance panel and informed FCAS that a second student academic grievance had come in. Three names were again randomly chosen, and the new grievance panel would review the case independently. Burke reported that Honors College Committee Chair Phyllis Jestice has sent a proposal from that committee to add two items to the definition of “good standing” for first-, second-, and third-year students in the Honors College: (1) No Class I or Class II Honor Code violations, and (2) No conduct violation that has resulted in the sanction of suspension or expulsion. *A motion to recommend approving the new language for “good standing” in the Honors College was unanimously approved.* Burke will present FCAS’ decision and the additional language to the Senate at their November 2016 meeting. Chair Burke then explained the second proposed change: the Faculty Curriculum Committee is reviewing a proposal for an Internship in Biology (BIOL 381) that would be Pass/Fail and repeatable up to 6 credit hours. However, Burke pointed out, Pass/Fail courses are typically not allowed for the major (or minor). Discussion ensued. Burke suggested that the committee should deny the BIOL 381 proposal now, because the current catalog wording (“taken in the major”) is too ambiguous to allow Biology students to take BIOL 381 as Pass/Fail. Burke reported that the committee’s two options for the major GPA were presented to the Faculty Senate at the October 11 meeting and that there was some pushback regarding the language of Option #1. He asked the committee to vote on whether we preferred Option #2 (to have no major GPA), or preferred the intent of Option #1 (to keep the major GPA based on courses that are “applicable” to the major), with exact wording for Option #1 to be worked out in consultation with Senators. *A motion to recommend keeping the major GPAs, and to offer the Senate alternative language for Option #1, was unanimously approved.*

7.Dec.2016:
SGA President Michael Faikes came to FCAS’ December meeting to speak about his proposal for an academic forgiveness policy. Michael had already visited FCAS to speak about the proposal in Spring 2016. Faikes described the current course repeat policy at the College of Charleston, which allows for repetition of up to 12 cr. hr. of classes, but without replacing the prior grade in the course. Faikes then described his new policy, which permits students to exclude up to 7 cr. hr. of grades of D+ or below from the calculation of their cumulative GPA. FCAS discussed and asked questions, and they ultimately requested a list of comparable institutions that had such forgiveness/redemption policies in place.

Chair Burke reported on the presentations at the November Senate meeting, and the charge from the Senate for FCAS to vote on the preferred Major GPA option. *FCAS voted unanimously for Option 3 as the preferred option, followed by Option 2 as the alternative option (Viñas-de-Puig dissented on the alternative option and instead voted for Option 1 as the alternative option). For all three options, please see compiled notes.*

11.Jan.2017:
The FCAS Committee met and Burke said that more information about the Student Government Association’s proposal for an Academic Forgiveness policy would be on the agenda at the next meeting (January 25). Broda briefly listed the main features of the policy and answered some of the committee members’ questions, such as whether students on academic probation could take advantage of the policy (answer: they couldn’t) and how this policy would affect LIFE Scholarships (answer: it seems that those scholarships are compatible with this policy).
The Committee reviewed a total of 8 Late Withdrawal petitions, plus 1 Senior Coursework
25.Jan.2017:
The FCAS Committee met Provost Brian McGee and Dean Godfrey Gibbison of the School of Professional Studies presented at the meeting, discussing a proposed new professional studies program for paralegals. Dean Gibbison explained the professional studies program itself. Provost McGee described the station of associate’s degrees in South Carolina. Applied sciences degrees, requiring 60–70 cr. hr. of coursework to complete, are becoming prevalent. Some degrees incorporate general-education coursework of collegiate standards, whereas other degrees incorporate technical courses unsuitable for transfer to a 4-year institution (welding, etc.) McGee continued that Trident is developing coursework that 4-year institutions find acceptable for transfer (such as English courses). Transfer of credits is arbitrated by the appropriate dean at the College of Charleston, but some disciplines are not represented by a school at the College. Help is needed to evaluate the rigor and relevancy of Trident law courses. FCAS may be asked to help support the review of these transfer credits going forward, though a formal process has yet been established.

SGA President Michael Faikes came by the second half of the meeting to review the Academic Forgiveness policy. There was some concern over the 45 hr rule (students can only exclude a grade in the first 45), as well as students’ capacity to exclude upper-level, required coursework in one’s major.

As an addendum to the meeting (2/8/17), Chair Burke learned through FCAS member Mignone noted that that Forgiveness policies at other institutions (e.g., those of Winthrop & USC) are, in fact, ones of “repetition” (you must take the course again) versus “exclusion” (the CofC SGA Proposal). Accordingly, Burke asked FCAS to continue the discussion at the 2/8/17 meeting; no members dissented.

8.Feb.2017:
The FCAS Committee met and returned to the Grade Forgiveness policy and this question of grade exclusion versus repetition. Burke reviewed some details of the proposal, emphasizing the difference between repetition (a policy by which, if a student takes the same course a second time, only the higher grade is calculated into GPA) and exclusion (by which a student can opt to exclude one or more grades from the GPA without retaking the courses). The SGA-approved proposal is an exclusion policy. Burke suggested putting the SGA’s proposal before the senate at the next meeting without a motion, to make senators aware of the proposal without putting it to an immediate vote. He added that Registrar Mary Bergstrom has said that if approved, the new policy would take at least 12 months to implement, and that Financial Aid and Athletics had received copies of the proposal only within the past few days.

Associate Provost Lynn Cherry asserted that Academic Affairs supports the forgiveness concept in principle, but she and her colleagues in AA believe that the proposal needs some revision. She reiterated that it could not be implemented until Fall 2018 at the earliest.

The Committee reviewed a total of 7 Late Withdrawal petitions and 4 Senior Coursework Elsewhere petitions

22.Feb.2017:
At the start of the 2-22-17 FCAS Committee Meeting, Burke noted that FCAS, as a matter of policy, does not review late withdrawal petitions. As Chair, Burke works with UAS regarding late withdrawal requests after the two years. Unless there is a clear and convincing reason why a student was not able to submit within the two years, the FCAS Chair will not bring them to review
by the whole committee. The Committee returned to the Grade Forgiveness policy with some wording changes suggested by the Registrar’s Office. *The policy has shifted from one of Grade Exclusion to one of Grade Redemption.* The Committee unanimously agreed the new policy is clearer and more consistent.

The Committee reviewed a total of 5 Late Withdrawal petitions and 2 Senior Coursework Elsewhere petitions.

**22.Mar.2017:**
The FCAS Committee met, and Burke reported on the proceedings of the March Senate Meeting in which the revised Academic Forgiveness policy (now as a “Grade Redemption” policy) was presented. The Senate was largely enthusiastic about the proposal, though some wonder if there ought to be an 8 credit limit on the number of credits than can be redeemed and whether there ought to be any restrictions on the grades that are eligible for redemption (i.e., C and below only?). To the latter, Associate Provost Cherry who was a guest of the FCAS Meeting noted that allowing all grades to be eligible would likely meet with pushback from financial aid.

The Committee reviewed a total of 4 Late Withdrawal petitions.

**5.Apr.2017:**
Burke distributed a handout with Version #7 of the grade redemption policy. He reported that the grade redemption policy proposal would not go to the Faculty Senate until Fall 2017, because the deadline for the Senate to consider the policy this semester had already passed (on March 30). Burke also pointed out that while the committee had proposed that students be allowed to take up to 12 credit hours under the course redemption policy (in order to be consistent with the current course-repeat policy), the Registrar had suggested that the policy allow 4 courses. The committee members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using courses rather than credit hours in the grade redemption policy. FCAS unanimously voted to approve the four course (rather than credit) wording in the policy. FCAS also discussed a 2 semester limit for petitioning for forgiveness; FCAS voted on the two-semester requirement. 6 members voted for the requirement, and 1 against it.

The Committee reviewed a total of 3 Late Withdrawal petitions.

**19.Apr.2017:**
The Committee reviewed a total of 4 Late Withdrawal petitions and 2 Senior Coursework Elsewhere petitions.

**Acknowledgments:**
The committee thanks the office of Undergraduate Academic Services for their assistance during this year.

On behalf of the committee,
Quinn Burke