

**Meeting of the Villanova University  
Academic Policy Committee**

Tuesday, September 6, 2017  
2:30 PM – 3:50 PM  
The Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Present

Sherry Bowen, Christopher Kilby (chair), Adele Lindenmeyr, Peggy Lyons, Wen Mao, Christine Palus, Rees Rankin, Joseph Schick, Andrea Welker, Craig Wheeland, Dennis Wykoff, Tina Yang.

Absent

Danai Chasaki (on leave), Sepideh Cheheltani (NIA), Gordon Coonfield (NIA), Jennifer Dixon (on leave), Marylu Hill (NIA), Shelly Howton (NIA), Brian King (NIA), Eric Lomazoff (NIA), Kimberly Marucci, Lesley Perry (NIA), Elizabeth Petit de Mange (NIA), Michael Posner (NIA).  
[NIA=Notified in Advance]

Administrative Items

- 1) Tina Yang volunteered to take notes.  
[APC previously approved minutes for its April 20, 2017 meeting via email vote.]

Old Business

- 2) Honors/Interdisciplinary Programs  
APC discussed whether policies similar to what was recommended for the Honors Program be extended to other programs that also draw on faculty from various departments. Christopher Kilby raised this issue, pointing out similarities in staffing issues (the need to secure approval from chairs in advance) and reported hearing about cases when chairs were not consulted. Dean Lindenmeyr reported that there were few problems in CLAS and that many of the interdisciplinary programs use cross-listed courses rather than running their own courses, an approach that eliminates staffing issues. Peggy Lyons indicated that her interdisciplinary program in Nursing has not experience problems. APC concluded not to recommend extending the policy to these other interdisciplinary programs.

APC also discussed the implementation of the notification policy by Honors. An annual email to department chairs providing a link to a web page stating the policy was deemed sufficient.

- 3) Academic Integrity Violations (AIV) Report and Follow-up  
APC unanimously voted *FOR* all five proposed changes in the AIV Committee report. (See appendix to APC minutes from April 20, 2017 for these proposals.) Christopher Kilby forwarded faculty concerns voiced by Faculty Congress Chair Jerusha Conner that serious problems remain in the actual implementation of AIV policy. This appeared to be based on faculty experience but also the AIV survey evidence. Core issues are lack of faculty faith in the efficacy of the system, the many faculty who choose not to follow policy, and some (historical) evidence of administrators not following policy. The AIV Committee is thus charged to continue meeting to consider what additional changes might improve the functioning of the AIV system.

#### 4) Diversity & Inclusion Questions for CATS

APC was joined by Terry Nance (Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer), James Trainer (Associate Vice President and Executive Director of the Office of Planning and Institutional Research), and Randy Weinstein (Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning) to discuss proposed questions on diversity and inclusion topics for the CATS. These questions were developed in response to a request from University President Fr. Peter. Questions 1 to 3 are on a Likert scale (1 to 5 ratings); other questions are open-ended, some of which would be optional (included at faculty or administrator request). A wide-ranging discussion touched on several topics:

- Questions 1-3 align with University learning goals and so are broadly relevant even if they are not closely tied to the topics covered in a specific class.
- CATS questions are one element of a broad University diversity initiative.
- Increasing the number of CATS questions is a concern. Will it lead to fewer completed surveys, fewer/shorter comments, or less reliable data? Given that only 5 questions are used for R&T decisions (and are typically the main focus of other evaluations), could other questions be dropped or—based on factor analysis—combined? Alternatively, could faculty who are concerned about the increasing number of questions opt out of some?
- Comments on proposed Question 2: It was suggested to bold the word NOT<sup>1</sup> or rewriting this and other questions to avoid confusion. Does the question cover too much (“engage in” and “tolerate” and “discrimination” and “harassment”)?

Several APC members expressed serious concerns about how students would answer Likert scale questions if they perceived the topic of the question as unrelated to the topic of the course. Would they rate a thermodynamics course where the material does not deal with race, class, gender, gender identity, or discrimination differently than a CPJ course that focuses on these topics? One suggestion was to include a “Not Applicable” option but this also presents technical problems and could focus too heavily on the content of the syllabus rather than conduct in the classroom.

The proposed questions have not yet been tested on a representative set of students. Given this, the issues raised above, and the logistics of rolling out a modified CATS university-wide, the majority opinion appeared to be that the questions first be tested on a select group of classes drawn from faculty volunteers, ideally this semester (Fall 2017). Depending on results and subject to further APC discussion, full rollout might be in Spring 2018.

- 5) Due to time constraints, APC did not discuss other agenda items at any length. Follow up on these items (including new committee assignments) will be by email or at the next APC meeting (Monday October 2, 11:00 AM, SAC 400).

The meeting adjourned at about 4 PM.

Drafted from Tina Yang’s wonderful notes (again!). Thank you!

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<sup>1</sup> “My instructor does not engage in or tolerate discrimination or harassment in this course.”