

Idaho State University
Academic Standards Council
Minutes

Wednesday, December 17, 2008
3:00 PM
Faculty Senate Conference Room, REND 301

In Attendance: Denner, Enos, Ford, A. Frantz, Mickelsen, Selvage, Steiner, Stowe,
Excused: B. Frantz, Germino, Johnson, Krumwiede, Swetnam, Wabrek; Jensen
Non-voting: Hertz, McKenzie

1. Announcements

a. Resident Credit meeting – Alan Frantz

Frantz and Ford attended the Resident Credit Committee meeting yesterday. Frantz said several things were discussed that this Council may need to address in the future, but for now they are informational items. Some current policies regarding the granting of credits (such as the experiential learning credit) refer only to Bachelor's degrees, and do not address Associate degrees. The question would be how many credits should be allowed to count toward an Associate degree: some suggested half, which would be 16 credits; some suggested 8 to 12 credits.

Another issue is the current Resident Credit and Credit Transfer policy requires 16 of the last 24 credits be taken at ISU. The problem is that with some programs offered in Twin Falls or Boise, ISU does not offer the required general education or elective courses. So, students take general education and elective courses at the College of Southern Idaho or Boise State University while simultaneously taking the ISU program courses. The problem arises when the students are ready to graduate, they sometimes discover that the sequence in which they took the classes does not meet ISU's transfer requirement. Had they taken the exact same courses but in a different order, they would have met the required 16 ISU credits of their last 24 credits and would qualify for the ISU degree. This is more of a problem at the Associate level than at the Bachelor's level because most students complete their general education credits in their first two years.

The committee asked this Council to consider resolving this technicality either through policy revisions or possible blanket waivers, or Memorandums of Understanding with other institutions in which ISU recognizes specific courses as ISU resident credits. Ford clarified that Resident Credits in this sense are credits certified by ISU faculty as meeting ISU standards for particular program requirements and therefore the credits "reside" at ISU. He emphasized that all such curricular decisions should go through the proper faculty governance channels: Academic Standards Council, Curriculum Council, and/or Faculty Senate. Credits towards minors or double majors earned from multiple institutions would need to be dealt with separately.

It was suggested that perhaps the State Board of Education could consider all Idaho institutions' lower division general education classes to be Resident Credit across the state.

Another issue discussed was that ISU in the past has recognized Independent Study of Idaho (ISI) credits as Resident Credits, but as McKenzie found out, that was not the understanding of the ISI program, and the other institutions in Idaho do not consider ISI credits to be Resident Credits. McKenzie said that each institution,

regardless whether it is in a State system or not, has purview over its own curriculum. Because ISU has not done prerequisite checking before students are ready to graduate, sometimes their graduation is delayed because they find out they have not fulfilled all the general education requirements.

McKenzie has been repeatedly asked to waive the residency requirements and grant ISU degrees with as few as 18 credits taken from ISU. She is not comfortable doing that because ISU faculty have not had adequate input on the curriculum and course material associated with such a degree. Ford agreed, citing a case where a degree in Spanish was proposed, but none of the Spanish curriculum for that degree was taught by ISU faculty. McKenzie also said that the problem with state-wide common numbering of general education courses is that the course content is often not the same so they are not equivalent. A. Frantz said that ISU can specify required percentages of courses for Associate and Bachelor's degrees that must be taken from ISU faculty before a degree is granted.

Frantz had checked the Undergraduate catalog and noticed the policy regarding Associate Degrees does need to be updated. General Studies is not mentioned (on page 33), but his major concern is that the last paragraph under the Second Associate Degree Policy (on page 34) does not accurately reflect what the Council recommended a couple of years ago.

McKenzie said she has scanned the ELA policies if anyone wants them; they have not been updated since 1994.

Denner said it would be worth exploring standardizing the common-numbered courses so they could become Resident Credit for all the institutions in Idaho. Ford said that prerequisites would also have to be made consistent. There is also the problem of "drift" in which over time the course content diverges.

2. Continuing Business

a. Subcommittees' updates

1) **ISU Transcript Credit Policies** subcommittee – Marcella Enos, Chair

The subcommittee has met twice so far. McKenzie has put together a report describing the programs that require special attention regarding credit issues for the committee to consider at their next meeting in January. Enos said the committee has gathered enough data to understand the issues and will next focus on addressing the charge from the Faculty Senate and begin revising the Resident Credit policy (on page 35 of the catalog).

2) **Admissions Requirements** subcommittee – Larry Ford, Chair

The committee will meet again tomorrow morning. McKenzie provided actual enrollment data for the past three years. They are considering a system similar to that used by the University of Montana in screening applicants. Ford devised a model using a minimum high school GPA of 2.5, the minimum ACT/SAT score. With those criteria, only 53% of ISU's applicants in the past three years and 54% of those in the last year would qualify for admission. If the GPA were lowered to 2.25 GPA and assuming the applicants need remediation in at least English or Math, the admissions percentage increase to 88% over the last three years or 92% over the last year, which would be acceptable. The model would be easy to apply and to implement. The committee will do some further work, and anticipates formulating a recommendation soon.

Denner asked how students without ACT or SAT scores would be handled. McKenzie said older students returning to school would have to take placement tests. Denner said having such scores would allow for comparison and creating

other prediction models as well. McKenzie said it is difficult to identify special needs students from their GPAs and class rankings, but those students often struggle in college courses. It would help if there were a way to identify such students so they can be better served from the start instead of waiting until they have already fallen behind.

Currently ACT scores of 18 or above in English and Math are required to waive mandatory remediation. Denner said ACT administrators themselves advise a score of 20-24 or higher is needed for students to do well in Chemistry and Biology courses. Ford said that the subcommittee will have more information for the Council to consider.

- b. Scholastic Appeals Board procedural changes – Nov 6th revisions for Council's review/approval

Selvage said the subcommittee has made some progress by email, but will meet in person on Monday to discuss the suggestions and create a draft for the Council to review.

- c. Revised draft Early College Program questionnaires for ISU Departments/Faculty and High School Teachers – Larry Ford

The members had received a draft of the questionnaire via email to review before the meeting. The details of delivery, administration and collection of the high school teachers questionnaire had not been worked out yet. The members discussed the questions and whether the teachers would have ready access to the answers or would need instruction in how to answer. Ford mentioned one high school teacher who was not renewed because he did not accept ISU departmental oversight of the course he was teaching. There was a second questionnaire for the ISU departments to answer. Ford suggested members send him comments and he will revise the questionnaire accordingly for the next meeting.

3. Petitions

This item was not on the meeting agenda, but A. Frantz brought it up as an old business item that was unfinished. At the General Assembly in November, President Vailas had mentioned there have been reductions in the number of petitions received but did not give any reasons. McKenzie said the culture change is starting to take effect. Faculty set the catalog and policies within it through the Curriculum Council, Academic Standards Council and Faculty Senate. She enforces those policies, turning down petitions that do not meet the criteria. Students are referring more to the catalog for information and fewer petitions are being filed. However, there has been an increase in articulation petitions for course equivalency requests.

There was some discussion about the \$5.00 fee for petitions. McKenzie said there had been a problem with many students paying the wrong amount and causing extra administrative work in reconciling differences, issuing refund checks, resolving problems with wrong or outdated addresses for students, and correcting mistakes. Other Idaho universities were charging \$7.00, but ISU will keep it at \$5.00 for now for simplicity's sake.

Hertz said that the Advising Coordinator Committee had reviewed all the policies in conjunction with their work on the Readmission policy. Their conclusion was that ISU's policies are good, they just need to be enforced. Among other things, they were inclined to keep the initial lay-out periods mandatory and not petitionable. Once finalized, the committee's recommendations will be sent to this Council for consideration.

Another issue Hertz mentioned was how to increase faculty participation in giving out midterm grades. Denner pointed out that midterm grades were only required for grades below satisfactory performance. Stowe said faculty can let their students know how well they are doing during the semester without issuing formal midterm grades. Ford advocated reaching out to the students who blow the first test and then disappear. If professors intervene quickly to reach out to those students, retention can be significantly increased. Denner suggested using an advising model for at-risk students similar to that used with student athletes. Hertz said her plan for the Advising Center is to coordinate more closely with faculty to quickly identify at-risk students so they can be helped before they drop out or fail.

Discussion ensued about how best to go about such a course of action. McKenzie said research has shown the most effective retention method is to establish good relationships between students and faculty members and advisors. Hertz said the earlier the better, ideally in the third or fourth weeks; the eighth week is often too late. She would like to see a pilot program implemented to give some indication how well such a system would work. Increasing retention would alleviate the obligation the university has to return money to the State when enrollments go down.

3. Adjournment: 4:18 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 21, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.** in the Faculty Senate conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Wallace
Administrative Assistant 1
Faculty Senate Office

Approved by Academic Standards Council: August 26, 2009
Accepted by Faculty Senate: September 14, 2009