**Academic Standards Committee**

2013-14 Year-End Report

**OVERVIEW**

The primary purpose of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC ) is to consider policy proposals brought forward from the university community. Proposals must include justification as demonstrated with a thorough comparison of policy at other institutions and any NAU data that supports the proposal. The ASC also considers student requests for exceptions to policy that are not adjudicated through other channels.

The ASCcontinued to implement the policy vetting process created last year. Once a policy was approved for vetting, the committee members were provided with a template they could use to share information with their constituents. After the vetting process was completed, the ASC members were asked to summarize the feedback they received and share it with the committee to inform discussion before a vote. This process is in its second year and there is still minimal feedback from faculty in this process. However, there are indicators that the culture of participation is beginning to take root; some groups such as the Associate Deans, Academic Advisors, CEFNS, FCB and Extended Campuses demonstrate that people are taking advantage of the opportunity to provide feedback.

**SUMMARY OF POLICIES**

UNDERGRADUATE LATIN HONORS UPON GRADUATION

There were four different changes proposed for the undergraduate Latin Honors policy.  Each change was treated as an independent proposal in the voting process.

1. **Change the minimum units of NAU enrollment required for Latin Honors from 45 to 30**.

*Reason:*  At the time the current policy was created, NAU required all transfer students to obtain a minimum of 45 units at NAU in order graduate with a Bachelor’s degree.   Over the past 10 years, NAU has been developing unique transfer agreements with Arizona community colleges that allow undergraduate students to graduate with less than 45 units at NAU.  There are currently 24 such programs with a total enrollment of 2,883 students who are not eligible for Latin Honors under the current policy. The committee voted to approve the proposal because the changing nature of transfer programs requires a new perspective and all NAU students deserve the opportunity to graduate with honors. A single, consistent credit hour threshold is clear and fair.

1. **Increase transparency by clarifying how college level GPA thresholds are established for new colleges**.

*Reason:* College thresholds for Latin Honors are calculated based on the GPA’s of previous years’ graduates in the colleges; a college must have a minimum of 300 graduates in an academic year to apply the calculation. Last year the ASC advised the Registrar’s Office to calculate thresholds for new colleges using a weighted average of the other colleges until such time that the new colleges have 300 graduates in an academic year. This practice was not formally included in the policy and the Registrar’s Office requested that it be included in the policy revision.

1. **Establish standard college-level GPA thresholds based on graduate data from the past five years.**

*Reason:* The original policy used data from the previous calendar year to establish threshold GPA’s for the next academic year. The changing thresholds were confusing to students and created a “moving target” that did not allow them to aim for a specific GPA and resulted in disappointment if a minimal increase in GPA from the previous year prohibited them from receiving Latin Honors. This change will create a stable threshold while also allowing for changes over time if needed.

1. **No longer exclude students from Latin Honors if they have earned any ‘F’ grades at NAU**.

*Reason:* If transfer students are allowed to fail courses at the community college and not have those influence their NAU GPA and, in certain programs, they can earn Latin Honors with only 30 units earned at NAU, then it is not appropriate to tell students that have completed their entire academic career at NAU and achieved the required GPA that they are not eligible for honors because of an F earned at NAU.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (aka ACADEMIC INTEGRITY)

1. **Replace the existing Academic Dishonesty policy with the new Academic Integrity policy**.

*Reason:* The new Academic Integrity Policy proposal replaces the current policy in its entirety in order to better serve the needs of students and faculty.  The policy was created using the core values and ideals of practice in the Academy at Northern Arizona University and provides a clearer set of rules and guidelines for students regarding academic behavior.

1. **Institute a Student Honor Code to be signed by all students**.

The ASC agreed that a signed Honor Code would ensure students are familiar with the policy and would help establish an institutional culture of academic integrity. While the committee approved the concept of an Honor Code, they asked that the language be crafted with student input and that several options be brought before the ASC for a vote.

Submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Council on April 17, 2014 by Eileen Mahoney on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee