

University Academic Affairs Committee
Draft Minutes

November 12th, 2018
2:30 pm, HCC 210

Committee: Davis Oldham (chair), Karen Anewalt (secretary), Rachel Graefe-Anderson, Gonzalo Campos Dintrans, Jane Huffman

Ex officio: Rita Dunston, Tim O'Donnell, John Morello, Wes Hillyard

Student representatives: Alex Lee

1. Approval of previous minutes.
 - a. The minutes from October were approved.
2. Old business
 - a. Does the attendance policy in the Undergraduate Academic Policy need revision?
 - i. The committee reviewed the draft of the new policy designed to address issues that often surface in student disputes related to attendance. The new wording attempts to emphasize that faculty have some discretion about make up work but not complete discretion for certain categories of absences.
 - ii. The new policy does not obligate the Office of Academic Services to verify the documentation for the absence. The student should communicate directly with the faculty when possible.
 - iii. The committee agreed to send the policy to Academic Services and the Office of Disability Resources for comments. At our next meeting, we will review their comments.
 - iv. The draft of the new wording is:

DRAFT – modified class attendance and make up policy

~~Strikethrough~~ indicates deletions; new language is in red.

Attendance and Class Absences

A primary responsibility of students is class attendance. Learning is an experience which requires active participation, and the University expects participation of students in all their scheduled classes be they lectures, online collaborations, laboratories, seminars, studios, field trips or other types of activities. It is understood that occasional absences are unavoidable, but the student is responsible for his or her decision to miss a particular class meeting. In deciding to miss a class, a student must be aware that he or she is accountable, nonetheless, for any test or quiz and all assignments, material covered, and announcements made in that class.

Because of the wide variety of courses and teaching methods employed, requirements for attendance in class and laboratory/studio sessions is not prescribed on a university-wide basis. ~~Furthermore,~~ **Class participation itself** is an appropriate criterion for grading and a student's failure to participate can be expected to affect his or her grade in the course. **Furthermore, the requirements for class participation, the manner in which it is to be evaluated, and the impact of student absences on a class participation score must be clearly stated on the course syllabus.**

~~While faculty are entirely at their~~ **have** discretion about whether or not to allow a student to make up missed assignments, **the following guidelines should be taken into consideration regarding student absences in a course.** ~~Failure to drop or withdraw from a course that the student is not attending may result in a final grade of F.~~

Religious observances. Requests by students whose religious observance precludes class participation on specific days to reschedule graded work will be honored. Graded work includes final examinations, scheduled tests, graded written assignments, graded laboratory projects, and graded oral assignments. Alternative dates will be set by consulting with the instructor or instructors and, if necessary, through consultation with the Office of Academic Services. It is the student's responsibility to make alternative arrangements as early as possible.

Jury duty. UMW students may be summoned to serve as trial jurors. Jury duty is a legal obligation and those who fail to respond to a summons are subject to criminal prosecution. The University supports jury service as an important civic duty and community responsibility. Students who will need to miss class in order to fulfill their jury service obligation should promptly notify all instructors, provide a copy of the summons as documentation of the absence (if requested by the instructor), and make arrangements to complete any missed work. Absences from class because of jury duty service will not be penalized. Students should contact the office of Academic Services if they have any questions or if they need assistance in making arrangements for missed class time due to jury duty service.

Military Service. UMW recognizes and appreciates the important contributions made in service to our country by Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard members. Requests to reschedule graded work due to short term military absence will be honored. Short term military absence will be recognized either as a result of regularly scheduled drill/training, unexpected training/drill or short term activation/deployment (e.g., National Guard activation in response to a natural disaster or civil unrest). Details on the procedure for Military Service absence can be found in the *Directory of Academic Procedures*. (Note: military obligation requiring withdrawal from the University for the remainder of a term is covered elsewhere.)

Scheduled Absences. Certain absences are usually considered legitimate and should not negatively affect a student's class participation score in a course nor should they prevent the student from being allowed to reschedule or make-up missed assignments (such as a test, paper, presentation, etc.). Work conflicts, scheduled medical procedures, participation in intercollegiate athletic competitions, and participation in any academically-related performance activity (such as an academic conference, musical recital, theatre performance, debate team competition, art exhibition, etc.) are examples of scheduled absences for which students should be given consideration and their work should not be disadvantaged because of such absences. Students must notify the faculty by no later than the end of the first week of the course of potential scheduled absences. Once notification is made, the student and faculty member will determine if mutually acceptable alternatives exist for completing any classroom, lab, clinical/field or other required activities or assignments that would be missed due to the scheduled absences. If it is determined that missed academic activities cannot be rescheduled in a reasonable fashion, or that the absences would prevent adequate mastery of required course material, the student is advised to either drop the course or alter planned scheduled absences. Students must submit written verification of scheduled absences to the faculty by no later than the first class period of the second week of the semester.

Unscheduled Absences. Events or activities initially scheduled for one time, then changed (with limited notice) or unforeseeable unscheduled absences (compelling, verifiable circumstances beyond the student's control) may sometimes interfere with the student's ability to attend class or submit required work on schedule. In these cases, faculty should work with students to reschedule missed assignments or to develop alternative procedures for completing course requirements. Examples of such absences include student injury or illness, the extending of an athletic or academic team season due to qualification for post-season tournament competition, death of an immediate family member, last-minute work conflict that cannot be rescheduled, or any other similarly unforeseen, compelling, and verifiable absence. Students must notify instructors of each unexpected absence within one week of becoming aware of the projected absence. If required by the faculty member, students must submit written verification of any unscheduled absence. If possible, verification should be provided prior to the absence or immediately upon return to class if not

possible prior to the absence. Faculty may consider the absence as unexcused if the student fails to comply with published notification and verification timeframes or procedures.

Students who face an emergency and/or who expect to be absent for more than a full week of classes ~~may~~ **should** contact **the Office of Academic Services** to report the absence **and request assistance (if necessary) in working with faculty members to reschedule work or to develop acceptable alternatives for completing course requirements.** If contacted by a student, **the Office of Academic Services** will contact ~~the course instructors as a courtesy.~~ **While the University does not excuse absences, it does seek to assist students and faculty members in developing mutually acceptable alternative methods for completing or demonstrating mastery of missed learning activities.** ~~There are no excused absences at the University of Mary Washington.~~ **Decisions about** make up work ~~are is entirely at the discretion of~~ **made by** each instructor and ~~may~~ require documentation **when deemed necessary.**

- b. Change in requirements to walk at graduation (motion from UFC)
 - i. The committee continued its discussion of modifying the policy in the catalog related to commencement participation. At the last meeting we discussed reviewing student enrollment at the beginning of the spring semester to determine eligibility for participation.
 - ii. Rita clarified the proposed role for the Registrar's office in reviewing students to certify students as eligible for commencement. The Registrar could begin reviewing students in January after the add/drop period. A final review would need to be completed in April to allow students to register for coursework in the last 8-week session and to register for transfer courses. After the April review, the Registrar's office would remove students who have not registered for the required coursework from the list of students eligible to participate in commencement. Challenges with the

proposed timeline were discussed including how to determine if students are “eligible.” For example, would a student be eligible if he/she registers for the remaining coursework in January but withdraws from all of the courses mid-semester thus not being “eligible” during the April review. After much discussion, the committee decided that maintaining the current policy (students can walk if they are just 1 course short) would be the most appropriate moving forward because it allows some flexibility for students without adding a lot of complexity to the process. The committee discussed adding language to limit the number of credits for the final course.

- iii. The committee discussed whether an appeals process will be needed. When the committee was considering modifying the policy significantly, the need for appeals was unclear. However, if the committee decides to keep the current policy with a minor modification, an appeals process would be needed. The committee’s current idea is that the Registrar’s office will be the first stop since the messaging about commencement comes from the Registrar’s office. Students who wish to appeal will be referred to an appeals committee, which may be the members of the Academic Affairs committee. Options for referring the appeals to the Committee on Academic Standing or the Campus Life Advisory Committee are also being considered.

- iv. The discussion will continue at the next meeting.
- c. UMW policy on open textbooks – Tabled until January meeting
 - i. Steve Greenlaw will be attending the next meeting to talk about open textbooks.
- d. Students selling course materials online (potential honor violation, author attribution)
 - i. The committee reviewed the language in the current UMW policy on recordings along with the policies of several other universities. Adding additional language to the UMW policy to say that the “public distribution of such materials may violate copyright infringement and university policy” was recommended. After the meeting, John Morello provided a revision to the policy in consultation with the OAG. This revision was approved electronically.
- e. Revision of the credit hour policy
 - i. The Department of Education dictates federal requirements about credit hours. UMW follows these requirements.
 - ii. Guidelines for credit hours for distance & blended learning courses that have been taught in a traditional in-person format are already covered in the existing Board doc. The Board doc could be edited to explicitly cover courses without a traditional in-person counterpart.

- iii. We should request that the policy state that it was reviewed by UAA on a specific date.

3. Meeting dates for spring semester

a. Proposed meeting dates for the spring semester were discussed

- i. January UFC meeting: Wed, Jan 30th. Ideal meeting date range: Jan 14th or 16th – 18th (Jan
- ii. February UFC meeting: Wed, Feb 27th. Ideal meeting date range: Feb 11th – 15th
- iii. March UFC meeting: Wed, Mar 27th: Ideal meeting date range: Mar 11th – 15th
- iv. April UFC meeting: Mon, Apr 15th: Ideal meeting date range: Apr 1st – 5th

Meeting adjourned 4:10pm