

MEMORANDUM

October 20, 1971

To: Members, Academic Affairs Committee
From: V. A. Richley, Chairman
Subject: ATTACHED MATERIALS

Attached you will find:

1. Minutes of our last meeting (October 15, 1971).
2. My proposed Senate report as directed by the committee.
3. The survey data on tenth week tests made by Dr. G. Williamson.

Please review these materials, in particular my proposed Senate Report, and direct your comments to me. Barring substantial disagreement, in which case another meeting will be called, the report will be made to the Senate on November 5, 1971.

VAR:js

cc: A.R. Curran
G.A. Dobbert
E.E. EINHIZER
R. Kreutzer
J. Roderick
F. Rosenberg
M. Siman
E.E. Edgar
J.A. Scriven
President Pugsley
✓ Mrs. Schnuttgen
M. Brunner
G. Williamson

Attachments

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Minutes

October 15, 1971

Present were A. R. Curran, G. A. Dobbert, E. E. Eminhizer, J. Roderick, M. Siman, E. E. Edgar, M. Brunner, and V. A. Richley, Chairman.

Chairman Richley opened the meeting by asking for volunteers for Secretary. After prolonged silence, G. A. Dobbert was shanghaied.

Chairman explained that this first meeting was to be devoted to unfinished business of the preceding committee, namely two items: (1) policy statement regarding giving one-hour exams in the week before finals; (2) a change in graduation requirements for ROTC students.

In regard to the first item, the Chairman distributed a memo addressed to him by the Vice President for Academic Affairs containing an excerpt from the minutes of the Deans Council regarding the Council's reaction to the statement of the Academic Affairs Committee. Chairman Richley explained briefly the problem, namely that the Committee's attention had been drawn to it by one faculty member who had polled his students and found a substantial number being saddled with exams in the week preceding finals. The Committee members are referred to the appendix to the minutes, containing the minutes of the Committee meeting at which these statistics were presented. Vice President Edgar said that he personally felt that some kind of policy statement might be helpful to the students; that, however, the Deans Council felt that their endorsing such a policy would be interfering too much with academic freedom; and, upon questioning from the members, said that the feeling of the Deans Council was rather unanimous on this question. Numerous questions were asked, such as whether perhaps final examinations were not given in the last week; that perhaps this could be blamed for some of the scheduling of the examinations during the last week before finals. Questions were also raised as to how reliable the information was, since the Committee's action seemed to have been based upon the report of one instructor. A. R. Curran wondered whether other instructors had access to this information, and that, as far as he was concerned, he was siding with the deans, insofar as his own policy was to allow

students, if they were overburdened with examinations, to take them at times other than regular class times. Some attention was also given to the fact as to how the Committee could enforce such a policy. Chair replied that it was more in reliance on cooperation from other instructors, rather than enforcing it.

Chair then suggested the following alternatives. One is for the Committee to drop the matter entirely. The second is for the Committee to draw up a statement and present it before the Senate. The third is to collect more reliable data and then to present it with a statement to the Senate. The majority of the Committee felt that the matter should not be dropped, and seemed to favor the gathering of more accurate data. This then brought up the question of tactics, namely that it would be impossible to come before the Senate with a statement still to be adopted for the final period of this fall quarter, since there was general agreement that data should be gathered during the week before finals. After some further discussion as to tactics it was generally agreed by the Committee that the Chairman shall express the Committee's thinking on this matter in a preliminary report to be given to the Senate. This report would contain statistics which prompted the action of the preceding committee and the announcement that the Committee, after gathering more substantial data, would make a followup report to the Senate. Chair said that he would draw up such a statement and circulate it for comments to all the members.

Chairman also reported that Item Two, regarding graduation requirements for ROTC students, was in the hands of the Curriculum Committee and, depending upon the Curriculum Committee's action, this Committee might or might not be involved in that question again.

Chair adjourned the meeting with the announcement that the next meeting shall be called at his discretion, which met with the approval of the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

C. A. Dobbart, Secretary

Report To The Senate
of
Youngstown State University
by
The Academic Affairs Committee

The Academic Affairs Committee has no formal motion to bring before the Senate today. Its report is intended to acquaint Senate members with a problem the committee is currently studying and to gain their support in its solution.

History on the problem in question begins on April 21, 1971, when Dr. Gilbert Williamson (Civil Engineering) called the committee's attention to the practice of some faculty members who schedule hour-long exams during the tenth week of the quarter. A survey he conducted (Winter 71 quarter) revealed that in a sample of 81 Engineering students approximately 1/2 of them were scheduled for two or more tests during the tenth week of the quarter. Five of these students were scheduled for four tests during that period resulting in the possibility of eight exams scheduled over a time span of two weeks. He pointed out, and the committee agreed, that students faced with a series of such tests in the tenth week must simultaneously study current material, prepare for current tests and prepare for final exams scheduled for the following week. A student's academic performance over this highly intensified two weeks period could determine 50% or more of his letter grade in an eleven weeks course.

The Academic Affairs Committee discussed the problem at some length and decided that while academic freedom preserves for faculty the right to determine their own techniques for teaching, testing and grading it also imposes the responsibility for careful planning of course related activities, tests in particular. The committee was reluctant, however, to recommend that Senate adopt a policy forbidding faculty from scheduling hour-long tests during the tenth week of a quarter. Instead, it has elected to proceed in the following manner.

1. Acquaint Senate members with the problem through this report and ask their cooperation.
2. Gather a larger data base by sampling the number of hour-long exams given during the tenth week of the Fall 71 quarter.
3. Formulate its recommendations based on the larger data base and solicit the support of the Council of Academic Deans.
4. Make its recommendations to Senate.

The Academic Affairs Committee requests that Senate members seek out the faculty they represent and acquaint them with the problem at hand. The committee further requests that they strongly urge their colleagues not to schedule hour-long exams during the tenth week of the quarter.

Respectfully Submitted
Victor A. Richley, Chairman
November 5, 1971

VAR:js

10/20/71

TO: Members, Academic Affairs Committee
 FROM: V. A. Richley, Chairman
 SUBJECT: Survey on Tests Given During the Tenth Week

The following survey was made by Dr. Gilbert Williamson (Civil Engineering) and presented to the Academic Affairs Committee on April 21, 1971.

 SURVEY

Question: How many tests did you have in the tenth week of the winter quarter?

<u>Number of Tests</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	
Class No. 1 (Jr., 17)	3	7	4	2	1	
Class No. 2 (Jr., 20)	3	6	7	4	0	
Class No. 3 (Jr., 22)	7	3	7	2	3	
Class No. 4 (Sr., 22)	11	6	4	0	1	
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TOTALS	81	24	22	22	8	5

 Some observations by the Academic Affairs Committee:

30% of students polled had 0 tenth week tests.

70% of students polled had 1 or more tenth week tests.

43% of students polled had 2 or more tenth week tests.

16% of students polled had 3 or more tenth week tests.

6% of students polled had 4 or more tenth week tests.