

Educational Policies Committee Year-End Report AY2015-2016

I. Committee Members

Joe Shapiro, Chair (English)
Michael Brown (History)
Johnathan Flowers (GPSC-Philosophy)
Cinzia Padovani (Radio, Television and Digital Media)
Andrew Pardieck (Law)
Kenneth Stickers (Philosophy)

II. Proposals/Resolutions

The Educational Policies Committee ultimately proposed two resolutions that were approved by the Graduate Council in AY2015-2016.

The first, “Resolution on Graduate Student Academic Grievance Procedure,” sought to revise the procedure on academic grievance procedures in Chapter 1 of the 2015-2016 Graduate Catalog. The language pertaining to academic grievance procedures in the 2015-2016 Catalog is the following:

A graduate student seeking redress through grievance must first attempt to resolve the matter informally by contacting the party against whom redress is sought (respondent). If the dispute is not resolved at this stage, the student should contact the respondent’s departmental chair or another appropriate mediator, such as the university ombudsman, who will attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that the dispute is not resolved informally, a graduate student may ask for and receive a hearing before a departmental academic grievance committee. [Such a grievance will be governed by the procedures established by the academic unit in which the complaint arose. In the event an academic unit has not established such procedures, the procedures outlined below shall govern the grievance.]

The Educational Policies Committee ultimately proposed that the language in the Graduate Catalog pertaining to academic grievance procedures be changed to the following:

A graduate student seeking redress through grievance must first attempt to resolve the matter informally by contacting the party against whom redress is sought (respondent). Both the graduate student and the respondent may request the presence of an additional party to be present during an initial informal meeting. The respondent can request the presence of his or her chair or the department’s ombudsman at an initial informal meeting; the student can request the presence of the department chair, the department’s ombudsman, a GPSC representative or a student leader in his or her department’s RSO. If the dispute is not resolved at an initial informal meeting, the student should contact the respondent’s departmental chair or another appropriate mediator, such as the university ombudsman, who will attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that the dispute is not resolved at this point, a graduate student may ask for and receive a hearing before a departmental academic grievance committee. [Such a grievance will be governed by the procedures established by the academic unit in which the complaint arose. In the event an academic unit has not established such procedures, the procedures outlined below shall govern the grievance.]

The first reading of a version of this resolution took place on March 3, 2016; the final version of the resolution was voted on and approved by the Council on April 7, 2016.

The second resolution proposed by the Educational Policies and approved by the Graduate Council, “Resolution to Recommend Approval of a Policy and Definition to Grant Emeritus Status to Retired SIUC Faculty and Administrators,” recommends that the University adopt the procedure and definition for granting emeritus/emerita status to retired SIUC faculty and administrators as laid out in a corresponding resolution from the

Faculty Senate. The first reading of this resolution took place on March 3, 2016; the resolution was voted on and approved by the Council on April 7, 2016.

III. Other Matters

In addition to putting together the above resolutions, the AY2015-2016 Educational Policies Committee spent substantial time wrestling with two major issues.

The first is the Graduate School's policy on transfer credit. Here, the AY2015-2016 Educational Policies Committee inherited some unfinished business from past Committees. In the summer of 2014, Gary Kistner—the director of the program in Fire Service Management in CASA—reached out to the Educational Policies Committee to inquire about the possibility of the Committee proposing a policy change that would allow departments to accept credit from non-regionally accredited institutions for graduate programs. In the fall of 2015, members of the Educational Policies Committee met with Mr. Kistner to learn more about how FSM in particular—and perhaps other programs at SIU—would benefit from a policy that would enable departments to grant transfer credit from non-regionally accredited institutions. Coming away from that meeting, members of the Educational Policies Committee found that FSM made a compelling case. Yet, after consulting with Dr. Jim Allen, Dean Lee and the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council, the members of the Educational Policies Committee became concerned that a policy allowing graduate programs to accept transfer credit from non-regionally accredited universities might jeopardize SIU's HLC accreditation. As a result, the Educational Policies Committee opted not to put forward a resolution on transfer credit, instead inviting discussion on the matter from all members of the Council at the March 3, 2016 meeting. Gary Kistner was present at this meeting of the Council, and he participated in the Council's conversation. In the end, the Council agreed with the Educational Policies Committee's decision not to propose revision of the Graduate School's transfer credit policies, and Mr. Kistner was advised to consider alternative routes other than a policy change—for example, internships—to enable graduate students in FSM to receive credit for training at non-regionally accredited institutions.

The Educational Policies Committee also worked on proposals concerning policies about admissions decisions deadlines for graduate programs. The Committee was motivated to think about such proposals after Dean Lee expressed concern to the Committee about the possibility that delayed—and non-existent—decisions on graduate applications might be affecting the Graduate School adversely on a number of levels. After a meeting with Dean Lee and his staff in February to talk about the Graduate School's admissions decisions policies, the Educational Policies Committee decided first to propose a policy change regarding admission decisions for international applicants. This proposal boiled down to a May 1 admissions decision deadline from departments/units for international applicants planning to enroll in the fall; the logic here was that such a deadline would give accepted international applicants time to obtain visas, and thus that this deadline would perhaps increase graduate enrollment. Yet, there was substantial pushback from members of the Council to this resolution following its first reading at the March 3, 2016 meeting. The Educational Policies Committee thus retracted this proposal. Yet, the Committee (with Dean Lee) believes that future Educational Policies Committees—and thus also the Graduate Council—should revisit the issue of admissions decisions policy. One idea that emerged from the Committee's

discussions in March is that a future Committee might propose policy that sets a limit on the time departments have to make decisions on graduate applications after receiving applications.