

Academic Standards Committee

Year End Report – September 2013 – May 2014

May 22, 2014

To: Dr. DeFilippis, Dr. Lopez

From: Academic Standards Committee

I would like to thank all of the members of the Academic Standards Committee for all of the work that they did during this academic year. Members of the committee were involved in extensive research and report writing.

Summary of the Committee's work:

Reinstitution of the "N" Notation

Dr. Lopez asked the committee to revisit the topic of "N" as a notation to be used in reference to student grades. Cathy Hardy and Joan Arbusto were invited to meet with the committee to discuss how the "N" notation might be implemented. There were lengthy discussions over several meetings regarding the "N" notation. Both C. Hardy and J. Arbusto were in favor of reinstating to notation in order to avoid problems with federal auditing. Most members of the committee agreed with them and indicated that they also were in favor of reinstating the "N" notation. The "N" could not be connected to attendance in any way and should only be used if there is no basis for a letter grade. Dean Lopez submitted a recommendation to reinstate the "N" notation and asked the committee to consider it. C. Hardy and the committee reviewed the recommendation. No one saw any problem with the recommendation, which was subsequently turned into a policy and distributed to members of the college. The "N" notation went into effect for the Spring 2014 semester.

Attendance Requirement on Course Syllabi

At the request of Dean Lopez, the committee started a discussion on adding an attendance requirement on course syllabi. After research and discussion, the committee noted a concern that an attendance requirement would go against the Board of Regents' policy of the community colleges being non-attendance taking institutions. It was noted that there were several agencies that have a vested interest in attendance records. L. Frechette volunteered to research this matter further with the Board of Regents. Her research confirmed the committee's belief that attendance could not be a factor in determining student's grade, but attendance could be taken by instructors. The committee

recommended that the current Absences and Attendance Policy that is required in all course syllabi be maintained with two additions. A third Bullet should be added to the policy stating, "Instructors will maintain attendance records." And the fifth bullet should be amended to read, "When presence counts toward a class participation grade, excessive absence or lateness may, at the discretion of the instructor, lower a student's course grade."

"Safe Assign" Plagiarism Software

Dean Lopez asked the committee to see if NVCC uses the "Safe Assign" plagiarism software and, if so, to what extent. Once again, L. Frechette did extensive research on this topic and discovered that the BOR Technology Department intends to relaunch the Safe Assign component of Blackboard. Guidelines regarding this tool will be provided. Faculty must comply with FERPA regulations and student due process.

Next Semester Goals

A partial list of goals for next semester include:

- Election of a new chair at the September meeting
- Address issues on Blackboard Gradebook record keeping, deletion, etc.
- Review the bylaws of the Academic Standards Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Ward

Chair, Academic Standards Committee