

Academic Policies Committee Final Report
Academic Year 2022-2023

The members of the Academic Policies (AP) Committee for AY 23-24 were Alexandra Masterson, Cristiana Stan, Kerri LaCharite, Zach Schrag, and Dominique Banville (Chair)

The committee met via Zoom as needed. The topics that were discussed and/or acted upon were as follows (in no particular order):

- The procedures currently in place regarding graduate policies (AP. 6) (only reviewed and voted on by the Graduate Council (GC)) are not in accordance with the Faculty Handbook. Discussions were held about the need to parallel the process for Academic Policies under AP 6 to match that of Academic Policies related to AP 1-5 (reviewed by AP and then voted on by the Senate). There is a concern that if all graduate-related policies were to come through the AP Committee and the Senate, it would slow down the effectiveness of the current system. The concerns held by some members of the AP Committee are linked to the lack of communication between the two bodies (GC and APC). To that effect, it was proposed to have the Faculty Senate Rep that sits on the GC also sit on the AP Committee. A suggestion was also made to create a flow chart of sorts to clearly delineate the approval process for graduate policies. More discussion will be held once the new process has been experienced for the Fall semester and possible changes to the by-laws will be discussed with O & O if the new process is successful.
- AP1.5 (Withdrawal) was amended as a result of a change in a graduate policy. The proposal was approved by the Senate.
- The rules for the Academic Calendar (start date in the Fall) were modified to account for a 2-week break between the Fall and Spring semesters for staff and 12-month faculty. The proposal was approved by the Senate. The proposed changes will impact the start of the Fall 2023 semester which will start one week earlier than originally publicized (August 21, 2023).
- A resolution passed by the student senate was submitted to the AP Committee for our review. The resolution advocated for the inclusion of Jewish High Holidays on the Mason Academic Calendar. Since “AP.1.6.1 Absence for Religious Observances or Participation in University Activities” already addressed the purpose of their resolution, it was agreed to circulate a calendar of religious observances to increase faculty awareness.
- Additionally, we were asked by faculty to ensure that Juneteenth is included in the appropriate summer sessions. We communicated with the Registrar who confirmed that this holiday is included in the calendar and will make sure that the calendar on the website reflects it.
- The committee was asked to provide input as to how to best track class attendance, especially in large in-person classes, to be able to report with as much accuracy as possible when students stop attending classes. This information is critical to the financial aid office. While we recognize the importance of this information, we agreed that unless better technological support is provided to track who is in class (or not), it might be difficult to track attendance.

- The Mason Core Committee alerted us to their proposal to merge the capstone and synthesis requirements into the new apex category prior to bringing that proposal to the full Senate. This was consistent with our charge to concern ourselves with "Standards and policies concerning admissions, retention and suspension, graduation requirements, examinations and grading system, student academic records, and University courses". Since there was no change to AP 5.3, we did not have to formally discuss this proposal, and members of the AP Committee were encouraged to provide their feedback at the Senate meeting when the proposal was introduced.
- Finally, discussions were held related to the AP 1.2 (Academic Load) at the request of the GC which would like to eliminate the need to complete an overload form when the overload is required by their program. The AP committee discussed the situation with members of the GC and further edited the proposed changes to include similar language at the undergraduate level. The proposed changes will be presented to the Senate for approval at the first meeting of AY 23-24.