

**Committee on Academic Affairs**  
Minutes of the October 9, 2008 Meeting

**Members Present:**

Jim Reburn, Chair (Business)  
Paul Aucoin (Ex-Officio)  
Mark Bateman (Ex-Officio)  
Nancy Biggio (Ex-Officio)  
Don Rankin (Arts)  
Bernie Ankney (A&S)  
Janie Kennedy (A&S)  
Tom Fuller (Divinity)  
Charles Ford (Education)  
Alyssa A. DiRusso (Law)  
Mary Karlet (Nursing)  
Mary Worthington (Pharmacy)

**Members Absent:**

John Mayfield (A&S)  
Jaro Szurek (Library)

Also present: Mary Sue Baldwin

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:15pm.
2. Dr. Bateman and Dr. Baldwin discussed the need to have the Academic Affairs Committee review new academic program proposals. It was argued that thorough intentional vetting of proposed new academic programs is not currently being done. The program review would include such items as: a documented program need, consistency with the university mission, facility resource needs, personnel needs, impact on the school/college strategic plan, impact on the University strategic plan, budgetary considerations, faculty credentials, conflicts with other unit's accreditation, and ability to meet SACS requirements. This review process would entail a preliminary analysis of the program viability before the program and related coursework may be brought **to** the University Curriculum Committee. A resolution to support this addition to the Committee's charge will be drafted by Dr. Bateman and the Chair to be acted upon by the Committee at a future meeting.
3. The Committee unanimously endorsed a proposal from the Provost to suspend the "W" course graduation requirement. The proposal as presented to the Committee called for suspension of the policy at the end of the 2008-09 academic year. After discussing the matter, the Committee recommended that the graduation requirement be suspended effective immediately. This recommendation was based on various considerations such as student's Spring registration plans,

problems with remedying the “W” course deficiencies given that “W” courses are being eliminated, and that students could simply wait to graduate in August to avoid the “W” requirement.

This proposal was brought to the Academic Affairs Committee as information. The Committee unanimously passed a resolution in support of the recommendation from the Provost’s Office with the change that the “W” requirement be eliminated immediately. Those affected should expect to receive official word from the Provost soon as to how this change in policy will be implemented.

4. Dr. Reburn reported that the University Council has requested that the Academic Affairs Committee look into removing barriers for transfer students coming to Samford. These barriers may include such policies as the current Core and General Education Courses required by transfer students. We are also being asked to look into policy of not awarding credit for dual enrollment courses for entering freshman. The goal being to eliminate policies that affect our ability to recruit transfer students that do not have sound academic underpinnings. Dr. Westmoreland wants the Committee to know that none of this is an edict from Samford Hall. He is entirely happy with the watchdog function of our academic affairs committee and has no intention of pushing changes that are not in keeping with our standards and expectations. To facilitate this process, the Chair has asked that committee members seek information from their respective units regarding transfer policies that should be reviewed and possibly reconsidered. The Committee will discuss the issues brought forward by committee members no later than the February meeting.
5. Dr. Reburn reported that he had received a request from Dr. Creed for the Committee to study changing the summer calendar from 10 weeks to either 11 or 12 weeks. This issue has emerged through conversations with Dean Sanders and the needs of the School of Nursing. Dr. Creed has indicated that he is not in favor of two different schedules for summer – 10 week and 12 week – but one schedule for all. The Chair has asked committee members to seek input from their respective units as to the merits of moving to either an 11 or 12 week summer calendar. Dean Aucoin will explore the feasibility of fitting a longer summer calendar into the academic calendar. We will also seek advice from Lane Smith regarding financial aid issues and Sara Latham regarding facilities issues. Dean Aucoin also informed the Committee that there are some discussions about making the summer term the end of the academic year rather than the beginning of the academic year. We will await the advice from financial aid as to making a recommendation regarding this issue.
6. Faculty Development Grants. The Provost’s Office has made \$32,000 available for funding grants this year. Grant proposals are due by 4:30pm on Monday, November 3, 2008. The chair expects to distribute packets to committee members shortly thereafter.

Nancy Biggio reported that the Deans have recommended that preference should be given to Faculty Development Grants that emphasized PBL or active learning strategies. Given that the call for proposals has already been made this year and notice was not given to faculty regarding this preference, it was decided that no particular preference will be given to grants having either PBL or active learning focus this year. Designating a preference for particular types of Faculty Development Grants will be considered when the Committee develops next year's call for Faculty Development Grant proposals.

7. The next meeting is scheduled for November 18<sup>th</sup> 2:15pm – 4:15pm in DBH 327. The meeting will be devoted to ranking faculty development grant proposals. The meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.