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Enforcing Summer Registration Policy

Submitted by: Richard Flynn
8/18/2015

Motion:

I move that the Senate request that the Registrar and academic advisors develop a mechanism to ensure enforcement of the policy on maximum summer credit hours: "Undergraduate students can take no more than six hours per term and no more than 12 hours total for the summer."

Rationale:

Increasingly students have been registering for 9 or even 12 credit hours in a single summer term. This is detrimental to their ability to be successful in their work. Four 3-hour classes at 100 minutes per class, plus 200 minutes per class for homework equals 20 hours a day, leaving 4 hours for sleep. Why, for instance, does the summer fee schedule allow for 15 or more credit hours in the fee schedule?

2014-2015 Tuition and Fee Rates per Semester

The policy is in place for a good reason and it should be strictly enforced.

Response:

9/9/2015: The motion “Enforcing Summer Registration Policy” passed, with an amendment to match its wording to the current maximum number of hours allowed for undergraduates.

Minutes: Motion: Enforcing Summer Registration Policy – Richard Flynn, CLASS:
Flynn noted that Moderator Humphrey had informed him that day that the policy that he took off of the Registrar’s “Summer FAQ” site is no longer the policy, that actually students can take 7 hours each summer term. Hence, he modified his motion, moving **that the Senate request that the Registrar and academic advisors develop a mechanism to ensure enforcement of the policy on maximum summer credit hours that a student can take in a single term, and in a single summer.** He said he has had students enrolled in 12 hours in a single summer term, and this is not humanly possible. He had asked the Literature and Philosophy Academic Advisor about this and she said she didn't know the policy and that the students can sign up for hours without having to consult with their advisors as long as they don’t exceed the maximum for the summer.

The motion was seconded. Moderator Humphrey clarified that the policy is supposed to be 7 hours for an Undergraduate per short term, but EIP students, because they take GSU 1220 and English Composition and one other class, are allowed to take 8. In corresponding with Registrar Velma Burden, Humphrey learned that BANNER is set up so that it registers or recognizes 12 hours as a max for the summer term, but that’s not allocated to either Term A or Term B, just for the term as a whole, and so BANNER/WINGS does not make any distinction, so it will allow students to sign up for say 12 hours all in Term A.

Lisa Abbott (CLASS) wondered if we need to clarify that it is 6 hours per short term and 12 for the total summer. Humphrey again clarified that it’s 7-8 per short term, except for EIP students, and 12 maximum for the whole summer. Flynn reiterated that this is not what is on the Registrar’s website, and Humphrey said she’d check on that.

Jake Simons (COBA) took it that Humphrey was saying the WINGS system could not distinguish between summer terms, so the Registrar has no automated means of being able to support the policy, and therefore the motion is a request that they manually verify compliance. He also asked if the Registrar has investigated this issue.

Humphrey did not know if the Registrar actually ever investigated. Then she commented, as an old computer programmer, that a fix should take about two “if” statements.

Simons agreed, but wondered about getting permission to do it.

Jayne Perkins Brown said the Registrar reports under her, and with the current BANNER system it would take a modification to a baseline product. She and Registrar Burden were looking at having conversations with our IT folks to determine the feasibility of that.

Flynn said he wanted a serious effort to enforce the policy. And if students can go into the system and register for however many hours, that’s a problem. He thought that it
would be the Registrar’s job to program BANNER in such a manner that it wouldn’t allow students to do that.

Perkins Brown noted that BANNER has the semester with the overriding guidelines. And then within that there are multiple terms. The BANNER baseline product does not accommodate that situation, and one of the ITS commitments for the University is to follow the baseline product and minimize customizations. She thought this problem warranted review in determining the feasibility of customization.

Jim Harris (CEIT) said he had taught software engineering for 30 years and you should never make policies based on what software can and cannot do. It is the Registrar’s problem to implement the policy.

Perkins Brown said she was well aware of the challenges of software and to not let technology drive what we do, so they would continue to review the feasibility of whether this can be programmed.

Flynn said he wanted the Senate to direct the Registrar to make this policy work.

Marc Cyr (CLASS) said we have rules in place, but they are not being enforced: “If it has to be done by hand, written on napkins by people in the Registrar’s Office, the rule needs to be in place because we’ve got students melting down.” How the Registrar would go about adhering to the policy was not the issue before the Senate.

Mujibur Khan (CEIT) noted that there was also a problem with students getting registered in courses without the needed prerequisites.

Moderator Humphrey added that the system will allow students to register for a course if they are enrolled in a prerequisite, but if they don’t pass the prerequisite, she was not sure what happens.

Ming Fang He (COE) noted that graduate students can get advisor permission to take four classes, and that this has been very workable.

Humphrey noted this motion was strictly about the undergraduate limits. She then asked Flynn if he would like to make an amendment to the motion to have the Registrar and the VP for IT Services report back on feasibility by the following month.

Flynn said he was concerned only with enforcement of the policy. They had to make it work, and that was all.

Someone called the question. This motion was approved. Flynn’s motion was then voted on and passed unanimously.