

August 23, 2001

TO: Members of the Faculty

FROM: Helen Scott, Chair Committee on Academic Standing

RE: Academic Year 2000-01 Annual Report

The duties of the Committee on Academic Standing are listed on pp. 18-20 of the Faculty Handbook.

The Committee met regularly to review petitions, waivers, and other requests concerning academic regulations. During January and June the Committee also reviewed the academic status of all students on the academic docket.

The number of dismissals, suspensions, and probations was significantly lower this past year. This year there were three dismissals and seven suspensions. During the January docket, three students were dismissed and five students were suspended; in June, no student was dismissed and only two were suspended. Last year a total of three students were dismissed and ten were suspended. Sixteen students were placed on probation in the fall of '00 and ten in the spring of '01 resulting in a total of twenty-six compared to thirty-one last year. In the fall, seven students were removed from probation while 12 students were removed from probation in the spring.

The Subcommittee on Academic Honesty considered thirteen cases involving a total of twenty-six students; last year the committee heard four cases involving a total of six students, five of whom were found guilty. This year ten of the twenty-six students were found guilty. Of the twelve cases resulting in a guilty decision, three cases involved plagiarism, eight cases involved dishonest collaboration and one case involved cheating on an exam. Penalties were consistently imposed for those found guilty of a first instance of dishonesty: zero on the assignment, calculation of the zero into the final grade, lowering of the resulting grade one full letter, and two semesters of academic dishonesty probation.

This year the Committee on Academic Standing dealt with an unusually large number of dishonesty cases involving student collaboration. Increasing numbers of faculty members encourage collaboration, which has been shown to have positive learning outcomes; however, CAS believes that students would benefit from clear instructions about the level and type of collaboration that instructors consider appropriate for each course assignment. Students are better served by clear instructions since individual responsibilities may be ambiguous as students work together, and because faculty members differ among themselves about the boundaries between individual and group responsibilities in collaborative learning.

The Committee had several general discussions about establishing a standard four-week winter break. Since there was no formal proposal the Committee decided to take no further action at this time.

The Committee noted that since we are not holding students to the deadline for submitting an application for early graduation we should revise the language regarding the application deadline to reflect that CAS will accept petitions after the deadline. The Committee approved the following statement: **The major adviser and the Committee on Academic Standing must approve the student's plan for accelerated**

**graduation. The completed application normally is submitted to the Committee on Academic Standing no later than the time of registration two semesters prior to the expected date of graduation.**

In addition, the Committee approved the following revision for the procedure to be used when a student fails to complete the tutorial with a grade of C or higher. This deals with the problem of having a student not pass the tutorial with a grade of C or higher and, therefore, never completing this requirement if the low grade is due to something other than writing. **A student earning a grade of “D” or “F” in the tutorial will be required to complete an appropriate course determined by the Associate Dean of the College and the Director of Academic Advising in order to fulfill the tutorial requirement. This course must be completed with a grade of “C” or higher during his or her next semester at Grinnell. After the successful completion of this course and removal from academic probation the student will be eligible for a “Plus-2” or independent study project (297, 387, 397, 399).**

The Committee considered the following proposal from the Curriculum Committee:

Under our current calendar system between now and 2016, MLK Day will coincide with the first day of classes in 2002, 03, 08, 09, 13, 14 and 15. The College would have a special 11:00 AM convocation on the first Monday of classes (MLK Day), canceling classes at that time. Those Monday classes would be made up by holding classes in the unused 11 AM Thursday convocation slot of the same week.

The Committee felt that this solution to opening school on MLK day would create more problems than it would solve. The committee was not in support of this proposal.

Currently, a Grinnell student who receives a minimum score of 4 or better on an International Baccalaureate higher level examination will receive four semester credits toward his/her degree. The minimum score on the IB higher level examinations currently required by most of our peer institutions for credit consideration is 5. The only exceptions within our peer group are Beloit and Colorado College. With the support of the Admission Office the Committee approved raising the minimum score on IB higher level exams to 5. This policy will go into effect in the fall of 2002.

The Committee brought two proposals to the full faculty for discussion. In the first proposal the Committee recommended the following changes in college regulations for first year entering students:

- (1) **A limit of 24 pre-and post-matriculation transfer credits accepted toward graduation.** Under the proposed change, a student who matriculates as a first-year student must complete at least 6 semesters in residence and is limited to a maximum of 24 pre-and post-matriculation transfer credits. This would prevent a student from taking a large number of “short” semesters and would bring our requirements in line with peer institutions.
- (2) **One semester of approved off-campus study may count toward the 6-semester residence requirement.** Currently, only the Grinnell-in-London and Grinnell-in-Washington programs count toward the 6 semesters of residency. The Center for International Studies, the Off-Campus Study Board, and CAS all agree that this exclusion sends a contradictory message concerning the important role of international study. Credits from approved one-semester off-campus study are excluded from the 24-credit limit of transfer credits. For approved year-long off-campus programs, only one semester would count towards the residency requirement, although the credits from both semesters would be accepted. The Faculty adopted this proposal and it will go into effect in the fall of 2002.

The second proposal concerned a written policy for withdrawing from courses for reasons beyond a student's control. The faculty adopted the following policy to be published in the *Student Handbook*: “From Monday of the fourth week through Friday of the thirteenth week in which classes are in session a student may be allowed, with the approval of the Director of Academic Advising, to withdraw without transcript entry from one or more courses in exceptional and extreme circumstances that are both beyond the student's control and impossible to foresee.”

Joyce Stern reported to the committee on learning disability accommodation requests from students. The Office of Academic Advising currently has documentation on thirty students who can request special accommodations for completion of academic work. The number of students with disabilities we are accommodating has remained fairly constant over the past several years. Last year we had documentation on thirty-three students. This year we have documentation on three students with psychological disabilities as compared to six documented cases last year.