

September 1, 2003

TO: Members of the Faculty

FROM: Helen Scott, Chair Committee on Academic Standing

RE: Academic Year 2002-03 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 slightly higher this past year. This year there were three dismissals and ten suspensions. During the January docket, two students were dismissed and four students were suspended; in June, one student was dismissed and six were suspended. Last year a total of two students were dismissed and eight were suspended. Twenty-two students were placed on probation in the fall of '02 and nineteen the spring of '03 resulting in a total of forty-one compared to thirty-four last year.

The Subcommittee on Academic Honesty considered nine cases involving a total of thirteen students; last year the committee heard seventeen cases involving a total of twenty-seven students, nineteen of whom were found guilty. This year six of the thirteen students were found guilty. Of the six cases resulting in a guilty decision, 4 cases involved plagiarism, and 2 cases involved unauthorized collaboration. 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 one or two semesters of academic dishonesty probation.

The committee approved the following revision for the Catalog and Student Handbook regarding the distribution of course work for students applying for accelerated graduation.

The major adviser and the Committee on Academic Standing must approve the student's plan for accelerated graduation. **In completing the application students should consult the "Elements of a Liberal Education" in Section 1 of the college catalog. 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.** Students may graduate after six or seven semesters if they have satisfied all requirements for the degree, including the requirements for the major, residence, and total credits, and if they have demonstrated a commitment to a strong program of liberal education, **normally including three 4-credit courses in each of the three major divisions of the College.** The last full semester of work before graduation must be completed at Grinnell, except for students participating in cooperative programs leading to professional degrees (see Cooperative Programs).

In addition, the committee approved the following wording and procedure regarding transcript notation when a student is suspended or dismissed for conduct, substandard academic performance, or academic dishonesty. This wording will replace the current wording on page

71 of the Student Handbook under the section entitled "Recording of suspensions and dismissals - The following policies govern the recording of suspensions and dismissals:"

- If a student is suspended from Grinnell for disciplinary or social infractions, the student's transcript will indicate "Conduct Suspension: date." When a student is readmitted from suspension the "Conduct Suspension: date" is removed from the transcript.
- If a student is suspended from Grinnell because of substandard academic performance, the student's transcript will indicate "Academic Suspension: date." When a student is readmitted from suspension the "Academic Suspension: date" is removed from the transcript.
- If a student is suspended from Grinnell because of academic dishonesty, the student's transcript will indicate "Academic Dishonesty Suspension: date." When a student is readmitted from suspension the "Academic Dishonesty Suspension: date" is removed from the transcript.
- If a student is dismissed for a conduct infraction, substandard academic performance, or academic dishonesty, the student's transcript will indicate "Conduct Dismissal: date," "Academic Dismissal: date" or "Academic Dishonesty Dismissal: date."

The committee felt that the transcript notation for any type of suspension should remain on the transcript if a student never returns to Grinnell College. It is a part of a student's academic record and it does reflect the academic history of the student at the point when he or she was required to take time off. The transcript notations and action for substandard academic performance or academic dishonesty are now in parallel with conduct infractions. The committee reaffirmed that a student returning from suspension must have completed the terms for suspension. The notation, therefore, should be removed at the point of return to the college. The committee also reaffirmed that students who return from suspension need to be automatically placed on strict probation and tracked through the docket process.

In late spring, the committee sent a letter to all department chairs requesting that each academic department provide a written statement of the criteria used in selecting students for honors. The committee has made this request in order to avoid misunderstandings that can occur in communicating to students departmental standards for honors. The committee also asked for comments on whether or not the department believes a student who has been found guilty of academic dishonesty or a student conduct violation should be eligible for honors in the department. CAS will review the responses in the fall term and publish a list of criteria for each department.

The committee considered a proposal from the Curriculum Committee to shorten the add period to seven class days at the beginning of the semester. The committee felt that it is advantageous to have the same deadline for adds and drops; in addition, faculty members can always decline to admit a student asking to add, especially if the request comes towards the end of the three-week add/drop period. Since the committee was provided with no evidence that the current system is not functioning satisfactorily, the proposal to shorten the add period was unanimously defeated.

At the request of the Executive Council of the College, the committee discussed grade inflation issues and whether or not more information about grade distribution (beyond the college-wide

