

Santa Monica College Student Affairs Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday, November 16, 2022
Location: Zoom Session
Chairs: Beatriz Magallon (Chair), Esau Tovar (Vice Chair)
Attendees: Donna Davis-King, Matt Musselman, Press Nicolov, Redelia Shaw, James Thing, Mike Tuitasi, Alicia Villalpando, Alyssa Arreola (Student Representative), Tyrel Deveyra (Student Representative)
Excused/Absent: None

I. Call to Order: 12:03 PM

II. Public Comments: None

III. AR 5075

- a. Alicia says section 55204 does not state withdrawal dates are attached to census reporting and is having difficulty understanding why the committee is always inferring that they are related. Alicia says section 55204 says it is the length of the term, not the length of a short-term class. Esau says this language has funding implications. Students who are not enrolled are not reported. The college is missing out on funding if students are not enrolled. A previous audit revealed that the census dates were important for attendance, withdrawal and apportionment. The revisions on AR 5070 and AR 5075 are substantial. Esau is not sure if these changes will be able to be implemented by Summer 2023. Esau goes on to say this will depend on the committee, VP Teresita Rodriguez and Academic Affairs, as well as MIS for the programming required. Esau mentions that while members of the committee may be interested in phrasing the AR in a manner that is most accessible to students, there may be technical issues to consider, and the AR should address. Matt says the Student Attendance Accounting Manual has a process that is not the 20% or in the 20th percentile, just steps that are followed, so wonders if the language is important. The manual has more details for reporting purposes. Bea asked what the committee preferred regarding language and it was agreed to include Title 5 language which is “percent of a term”.
- b. Students must file a Special Consideration Petition for a Military Withdrawal (MW) through Admissions & Records. Esau explains that the EW notation does not extend beyond the semester. This is to be used while the class is still in progress. Although the petition process may take time, the EW only applies while the student is in attendance.
- c. Esau explains the Chancellor Office is working on forthcoming guidance to be released early next year to discuss how EWs get operationalized. There may be changes to the language down the line. Esau understands there is a concern regarding the processing time of petitions.

- d. Extraordinary circumstances are defined as things such as a pandemic, earthquake or fire, for example. Petitions submitted with extraordinary circumstances as the reason, are reviewed and EW could potentially be awarded after the end of the semester. The update with EW says that documentation is not required, but the Special Consideration Committee encounters petitions from students requesting EW who are simply not satisfied with their final grade, and do not explain the circumstances for the request. Esau mentions there has been discussion among Admissions directors/deans in Region 7/8 over how to interpret the new EW regulations, and it is commonly agreed among those regions that once the semester is over and class has been graded, documentation will be required to request the EW notation.

Alicia asks if a new EW petition will be created. Esau says there will not be a new petition, some of the workflows and documentation requirements on the existing Dynamic Form will be updated, but no new form. While documentation may not be required, an explanation of request will be required.

Extraordinary conditions apply only when the Chancellor's Office has made the declaration.

Donna asks if a student has received a grade and is now requesting an EW, is it useful to have documentation? Esau says although it may not be required, it is to the student's advantage.

Tyrel asks if the process for requesting an EW due to extenuating circumstances is the same as for extraordinary conditions. Esau says ultimately it is up to the student to initiate the petition process and decide if the EW is appropriate. Bea asks if messaging regarding the pandemic related EW was sent to students for each semester that was affected. Esau confirms messaging was sent 3 or 4 times to students to advise them of updates. Tyrel asks if the extraordinary condition is severe enough, is documentation still required (i.e., fire, earthquake, flood, war). Esau responds that it depends on the circumstances.

Esau is working with the Special Considerations Committee to update the guidelines as petitions are reviewed, this process is taking time. The Special Considerations Committee is taking a more student centric approach when reviewing petitions, they may reach out to students to request additional information. Mike says there are a variety of events that can come into account as far as an emergency. Mike cites the happenings in Russia and Ukraine, also uses the Katrina disaster as an example. Alicia has a question regarding documentation, asks how a student who has been impacted by different crimes but has not necessarily reported to police or family, could submit documentation. Wants to know if letters from professionals (clergy, Dr's, counselors, etc) who are familiar with situation are accepted. Esau confirms these types of documents would be accepted, the Special Consideration Committee does not want to be involved in retraumatizing a student, but Admissions does not have the legal authority to change a student's grade just because they want a grade change. It's a difficult position when trying to follow regulatory processes and still be sensitive to student circumstances.

- e. Enrollment fee refunds will be given to students who are approved for EW due to extraordinary conditions. James asks if the student must request the refund or if it is done automatically. Esau responds he has the ability to auto code in a way so the refund will be automatic but the refund will be processed as part of the next scheduled refund run. Press asks if a refund be given for extenuating circumstances? Esau says no, the only refund is for extraordinary conditions.

Alicia questions the timeframe for students to submit. Esau replies the timeframe is moving from 90 days to two years due to recordkeeping and the ability to obtain documentation. Alicia clarifies that she is speaking of students with extenuating circumstances and have documentation that exceeds the two-year timeframe. Esau says the Special Consideration Committee will do their best but cannot guarantee any outcome for petitions submitted after the two year lapse. Students may still submit the Special Consideration petition if they desire. Bea proposes to move to a three-year timeframe, says she remembers Teresita saying faculty had to retain records for three years. Esau says there is no formal policy at SMC stating records be kept for three years. For grade changes it is two years and for grade appeals it is currently 90 days. Bea asks instructional faculty what have they been told? Donna says she thought it was two years. James says maybe once he heard two years, but he is not sure, doesn't feel like he has been told anything. Matt says he has been keeping for two years. Esau says the two-year timeframe for EW does not exist in any other regulation and this committee is delving into an operational matter, but it is ultimately an internal matter and documentation is necessary. Esau says there is nothing in Title 5 that allows students to petition for anything that is special consideration. Esau speaks on the volume of petitions received by the Admissions Office and Alicia asks if the Special Consideration Committee needs more members or do they need to look at other ways to process petitions. Esau says it is just a volume matter. There is additional discussion regarding the two-year time frame for submission of a petition and Esau is not in agreement with including any additional language extending the timeline in the AR but will think about it some more. Bea said she did not know that the practice was different that what is posted. Committee members were proposing being open to the flexibility of exceptions. Further discussion for next meeting.

IV. Announcements: None

V. Adjournment: 2:01 PM

For all documents, visit: <http://www.smc.edu/ACG/AcademicSenate/Committees/Pages/Student-Affairs.aspx>

Next scheduled meeting: November 30, 2022

Respectfully Submitted by Ma'isha Reid