

CAS Annual Report, 2010-2011

Members of CAS, 2010-2011

Kate Graney, Government, Chair
Iona Park, Studio Art (September-January)
Andrew Skinner, Physics (September-January)
Judy Halstead, Chemistry (February –June)
Cathy Gibson, ES (February-June)
Elizabeth Karp '11, SGA Student Representative
Corey Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Advising¹
Ann Henderson, Registrar and Director of Institutional Research (September-December)
Dave DeConno, Associate Registrar and Registrar (after October)

Regular Visitors (non-voting)

Jennifer Wood, Academic Advising Office
Beth McPhee, Academic Advising Office (January-June)
Tina Breakell, Associate Director, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchange

Summary of Activities

The Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) met weekly during the academic year, and held two Academic Review sessions, one on January 11, 2011 and a second on June 7, 2011. In addition the committee held a separate end-of-the-year Academic Review session for graduating seniors on May 17, 2011. The Chair of the CAS also participated with the ADOFFAA and the Registrar in re-admission application meetings on December 20, 2010 and May 5, 2011, and in an appeal hearing meeting in June 2011.

During its weekly meetings, the CAS heard petitions and requests from the offices of the Office of Academic Advising (OAA), the Registrar, and Off-Campus Study and Exchange (OCSE). In each case, the petitions brought before CAS involved deviations from the college's established academic standards, and it was the committee's obligation to determine whether or not the petitions could be accommodated without compromising Skidmore's commitment to academic excellence.

In addition to the above responsibilities, this year's CAS addressed a number of important policy issues, including the following: the internal procedures for handling requests for credit upon return from personal leave to study in a country with a Department of State Warning; clarification of the College Catalog language regarding Advanced Standing and Transfer of Credit, particularly as regards "early college" programs; clarification of the fact that academic work completed during a summer or

¹ The name of the Dean of Studies Office and the title of the Dean of Studies were changed to the Office of Academic Advising and the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Advising, respectively, in Fall 2009.

January session at Skidmore or elsewhere does not alter a waiver or probation student's academic standing or eligibility for extra or co curricular activities the following semester (CAS OP CODE); clarification of the timetable according to which students seeking a course substitution based on a learning disability must submit their petitions to the CAS (CAS OP CODE); clarification of the role health and social integrity issues play in the consideration of OSCE study abroad applications and petitions; revision of the CAS OP CODE to reflect the adoption of the College's new Sexual Misconduct Policy; discussion and clarification of the CAS policy on Departmental and Program Honors Standards (particularly the question of GPA); discussion of the impact that new Federal guidelines regarding financial aid and satisfactory academic progress (SAP) might have on the functioning of the CAS; and the revision of the College Catalog language regarding the transfer of maturity-level credit from other institutions to bring it into line with current practice. Each of these issues is described in more detail below.

***Internal procedures for handling requests for credit upon return from personal leave to study in a country with a Department of State Warning**

Clarifies the roles that OSCE, the CAS and the Registrar's office play in this process; appended to the CAS Policy Minutes of September 15, 2010.

***Clarification of the College Catalog language regarding Advanced Standing and Transfer of Credit, particularly as regards "early college" programs**

Prompted by the growing frequency of students applying to Skidmore having earned as many as 60 credits in "early college" programs like Bard's. The CAS clarified that any such credits must count towards the total of 16 that an incoming student is allowed to bring to Skidmore (including AP exams) unless the student's high school registrar can confirm such credits were taken "above and beyond" the credits needed to graduate from high school. Any credits beyond those needed to complete the high school degree that are transcribed from a college or university are subject to the college's regular transfer credit policy.

***Clarification of the fact that academic work completed during a summer or January session at Skidmore or elsewhere does not alter a waiver or probation student's academic standing or eligibility for extra or co curricular activities the following semester (CAS OP CODE)**

This language was added to the CAS Operating Code as a clarification.

***Clarification of the timetable according to which students seeking a course substitution based on a learning disability must submit their petitions to the CAS (CAS OP CODE)**

Language was added to the CAS Operating Code clarifying that students must submit petitions for course substitutions no later than two semesters before the requirement is to be fulfilled.

***Clarification of the role health and social integrity issues play in the consideration of OSCE study abroad applications and petitions**

The CAS Operating Code is clear that students petitioning to study abroad despite a low GPA must have a clear academic and social integrity record. The students' right to privacy (FERPA) must be balanced with this stipulation and with concerns about liability issues and the implications of sending students with health and integrity concerns abroad. Thus, after extended discussion involving CAS, OAA, OCSE, DOSA, the Counseling Center and the DOF, the CAS decided that OCSE will share the list of students applying to study abroad with the ADOFAA, who will call in students who are deemed to be at risk for extra advising around the issue. The goal is not to deny students the opportunity to go abroad, but to offer better advising and make sure students choose programs that are appropriate for their academic and personal needs.

Revision of the CAS OP CODE to reflect the adoption of the College's new Sexual Misconduct Policy

Language was added to the CAS Operating Code concerning the fact that, in accordance with the College's new Sexual Misconduct Policy, changes to a student's course schedule may be offered to help stabilize a difficult and intensely private situation. CAS agreed that the best procedure would be for CAS to entrust the ADOFFAA to help the student, Advocate, and /or Advisor determine what course of action would serve the student's best interests, attending to the problem as early as possible in order to maximize the options available as well as to preserve the student's privacy. Such cases will only be brought to CAS for full, open discussion when they cannot be resolved with a late change in registration (drop or W).

***Discussion and clarification of the CAS policy on Departmental and Program Honors Standards (particularly the question of GPA)**

An inquiry from the Curriculum Committee on behalf of Asian Studies prompted the CAS to clarify its position on the question of GPA standards for Departmental and Program honors. AS wanted to raise its honors GPA standard to 3.8 in AS courses and 3.65 in all courses. The CAS advised the CC that its position is that CEPP and the Faculty as a whole must be consulted if individual departments and programs seek to start an en masse movement towards superseding the current standards as stated in the Catalog, which are 3.5 in the major and 3.0 overall.

***Discussion of the impact that new Federal guidelines regarding financial aid and satisfactory academic progress (SAP) might have on the functioning of the CAS**

Representatives of the Registrar's Office, the ADOFFAA, the in-coming and out-going Chairs of CAS, and committee member Cathy Gibson met on June 23rd to discuss the new Federal financial aid guidelines on satisfactory academic progress. After much discussion, the group decided not to revise the current Skidmore Standards for

Continuation as articulated in the College Catalog (as they are clearly in compliance with the new Federal requirements). The Registrar's Office, the ADOFFAA and the CAS will continue to work with Financial Aid to streamline the communication process among these offices.

***Revision of the College Catalog language regarding the transfer of maturity-level credit from other institutions to bring it into line with current practice**

The CAS developed new language for the College Catalog regarding the transfer of maturity-level credit, removing the stipulation that such credits be limited to 4 per semester (but retaining the overall 8 maturity-credit transfer limit, with the understanding that very occasionally the CAS may authorize the transfer of more than 8 maturity-level credits). The committee's rationale is that in practice, the college, with the agreement of individual department's has allowed students to complete more than 4 maturity credits per semester at other institutions, including at approved study abroad programs. The CAS does not foresee this option being used on an extensive basis, but did want to ensure that Catalog language matched current practice.

AY 2011-2012 Upcoming Agenda Items

The CAS already has a few items for its Fall 2011 agenda. The committee will pursue the issue of the process by which students are granted course substitutions for breadth requirements based on a documented learning disability, particularly regarding foreign language courses. The committee will also urge the CC and CEPP to revisit the issue of breadth requirements, particularly the AR and NS requirements, and the specific issue of whether and when 200 and even 300 level courses might be appropriate for fulfilling the breadth requirement. The committee will also pursue guidelines and procedures regarding situations where faculty members exhibit severe dereliction of duty to the point that students' academic standing and right to unbiased and effective assessment is jeopardized.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Graney
Chair of CAS

Composition of CAS AY 2011-2012

Chair, Katie Hauser, Art History
Daniel Swift, English
Holly Jackson, English
Corey Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Advising
Dave DeConno, Registrar
SGA student representatives: TBA

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