**Senate Rules and Elections Committee**

**Oct. 21, 2013**

**Davy Jones (Chair), Gail Brion, Robert Grossman, David Pienkowski, Connie Wood**

**1. *In Memoriam Posthumous Degree***

The SREC continued its previous discussion of practices at other institutions for memorial conferral of degrees upon students who died prior to having academically earned a regular degree.  This conferral is distinct from ‘Posthumous Award of an Earned Degree,’ which is already enabled by the Senate Rules for students who had academically earned their ‘regular’ degree but died before the earned degree could be conferred.

The SREC discussed a draft proposal to establish a new category of honorary degree for this purpose.  Pursuant to KRS 164.240, the proposal would have the University Senate recommend to the UK Board of Trustees that the latter establish a new category of Honorary Degree, titled the *In Memoriam Posthumous Degree.*  Enrolled undergraduate, graduate or professional students in academic good standing at the time they died would be automatically eligible for this honorary degree, regardless of how far the student is from having earned a regular degree.  The SREC edited a draft proposal, which Jones will circulate for further polishing.  Under Senate Rules, an official function of the Graduate Council is to advise about Honorary Degrees, so a next step in vetting the proposal may be to send it to the Graduate Council for input, prior to forwarding to the Senate Council.

**2. Courses Counting for Both Home Department Degree and UK Core**

The SREC rendered the interpretation that (1) if  the faculty of a degree program wants to count a UK Core course towards their degree requirements, this request is to be processed as a normal program change, and (2) if the faculty wants a course that is required for their degree program to count towards UK Core, then such a request is submitted through established channels to the UK Core Committee.  The Senate Rules do not prohibit counting a course toward both UK Core and a degree program's requirements.

**3. Late (Hardship) Addition to Degree List**

The SREC has been trying to draft a uniform policy on adding students to the degree lists when those students have missed the application deadline.  The SREC was charged with developing a policy that would clearly delineate the (rare) conditions under which a student who missed the deadline to apply to graduate because of extraordinary circumstances or errors that were no fault of their own, would be allowed to have their name added on the list.

The SREC learned from the University Registrar that all colleges except the College of Agriculture require that a student wishing to graduate must go him/herself to the online site prior to the published University Senate deadline and submit the application to graduate (e.g., in November for May graduation for undergraduates).  The practice in the College of Agriculture is that it is an advisor who goes to the online application site rather than the student.  Because advisors have ‘behind the scenes’ access to use the site after the close of the window in November for students to use the site, they often ignore the deadline, and the deadline often passes without “the student” having filed the application on time. Because this practice is so common, the Registrar is placed in the uncomfortable position of either telling a very large number of students that they cannot graduate on time because their advisors did not file their graduation application on time, or 'looking the other way' when the advisors submit the applications after the November deadline but before the Registrar's April 'run' of the degree list.  Furthermore, if the advisor does not file the application at the site before the Registrar electronically ‘runs’ the degree list in April, then the student is not included on the degree list, and time-consuming, ad hoc actions need to be taken to add the student. When the student is not on the degree list because the advisor has not submitted the application even before the Registrar's April 'run', it is the administrative advisor, not the student, who has failed to submit the application in timely fashion.  The practice leading to these situations make it difficult to develop and apply an equitable policy for late addition to the degree list of students who have truly exceptional ‘hardship’ situations.

In its action to draft an operable policy on late (‘hardship’) addition to the degree list, the SREC determined that such a policy cannot be made effective unless all colleges comply with the officially controlling graduation application deadline.  The SREC recommends that the Senate Council discuss with the Office of the Provost the following two possible application deadline policies for undergraduate degrees:

(1) That for a given graduation date (December, May, or August) there be a single deadline for application to graduate, and that the Provost require all colleges to comply with that deadline

(the colleges may be consulted in advance about a single deadline agreeable to all)

Or

(2) The Senate delegate to each College Faculty the authority to establish its own application deadline (for each of December, May, and August graduations), and the University Registrar enforce the different deadlines of each degree-granting college.

**4. Policies Relating to Application to Graduate for Graduate Degrees**

The SREC discussed a draft proposal that has been submitted to the Senate Council to change the date of application for August graduate degrees.  Concerns about certain provisions and whether the recommended changes solved the core issues were discussed.  From a ‘rules’ standpoint, the SREC desires that the proposal recommendation be recrafted as a proposed Senate Rule so that the SREC would not have to rewrite the proposal into a form suitable as a provision in the Senate Rules.

**5. FERPA Requirements for Student “Access” to Graded Material**

The current Senate Rule SR 7.2.2 has a clause under which an Instructor can ‘discuss’ graded material without actually providing the student “access” to the graded material; this rule is not compliant with current FERPA guidelines.  In addition, current Senate  Distance Learning policies, e.g, the cover form for DL courses, do not expressly address how DL courses will enable student “access” to graded material.

Jones reviewed current activities to obtain input from the SAASC, Legal Counsel Office, and Senate Distance Learning Committee re: the best revision language to update the Senate Rules for compliance with FERPA requirements for student access to graded material.