

Michael J. Grant Campus

# Academic Assembly

**November 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

1. Alexander Kasiukov called the meeting to order at 3:35pm
2. The minutes of October 2, 2019 meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Chair's Report given by Alexander Kasiukov – see [http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/index.html#Grant-Campus-Academic-Assembly](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/index.html" \l "Grant-Campus-Academic-Assembly)
   1. Alex – The task force on Adjunct Participation in Governance has been established by the Executive Committee. The co-chairs are Danielle DiMauro-Brooks and Joshua Wolfson.
   2. Marc Fellenz – The Chair of Presidential Search Committee responded to the Assembly’s resolution for more faculty representation on the Presidential Search Committee. The response was disappointing in the refusal to accept the resolution. However, the faculty can still participate by attending the forums that have been scheduled and voicing your opinion.
4. Social Media [Policy](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/bot-2018-08-16-employee-social-media-policy.pdf) and Guidelines Q&A (Drew Biondo)
   1. The College is trying to present its image uniformly. People make judgments on what they see about the College. Another concern is to avoid abandoned accounts. Drew’s role is making sure that the sites have accurate information, and if something needs to be changed Drew will usually contact the administrator. Drew is asking for administrator passwords for the official college accounts. The goal is to monitor the sites and make sure everything is current, not offensive and not in violation of our policies. Please contact Drew with any questions.
   2. To set up a new social media site for your department, please fill out the social media form and the process will be started.
   3. Kathleen Ayers-Lanzillotta: Do student clubs fall under this policy? No student-run accounts are not governed by the policy. However, official Suffolk logos/trademarked property cannot be used and SCCC will request the social media site to remove it.
5. Resolutions from the [College-wide Curriculum Committee](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/index.jsp):
   1. [Resolution 2019-09-[09]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B09%5D-aas-photography-program-curriculum-revision.docx) Approving the AAS *Photography* [Program Curriculum Revision Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2019-2020/aas-photography-curriculum-revision-proposal.docx) (Janet Simpson) Passed [44-2-1]
   2. [Resolution 2019-09-[10]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B10%5D-as-nursing-program-curriculum-revision.docx) Approving the AS *Nursing* [Program Curriculum Revision Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2019-2020/as-nursing-curriculum-revision-proposal.docx) (Janet Simpson) Passed [45-2-0]
   3. [Resolution 2019-09-[11]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B11%5D-asl-101-course-adoption.docx) Approving the ASL101 *American Sign Language I* [Course Adoption Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2019-2020/asl101-course-adoption-proposal.doc) (Janet Simpson) Passed [42-4-0]
   4. [Resolution 2019-09-[12]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B12%5D-asl-105-course-adoption.docx) Approving the ASL105 *American Sign Language II* [Course Adoption Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2019-2020/asl105-course-adoption-proposal.doc) (Janet Simpson) Passed [43-2-1]
   5. [Resolution 2019-09-[13]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B13%5D-com-131-course-adoption.docx) Approving the COM131 *Theories of Persuasion* [Course Adoption Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2019-2020/com131-course-adoption-proposal.doc) (Janet Simpson) Passed [42-3-1]
   6. [Resolution 2019-09-[14]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B14%5D-com-202-course-adoption.docx) Approving the COM202 *Intercultural Communications* [Course Adoption Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2019-2020/com202-course-adoption-proposal.doc) (Janet Simpson) Passed [41-5-0]
6. Resolutions from the [Grant Campus Curriculum Committee](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/grant-assembly/curriculum/index.jsp):
   1. [Resolution 2019-09-[15]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B15%5D-che-105-course-adoption.docx) Approving the CHE105 *Chemistry and Our Environment* [Course Adoption Proposal](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/grant-assembly/curriculum/documents/2019-2020/new-course-che105-chemistry-and-our-environment-2019-10-10.pdf) (Richa Rawat Prakash and Janet Haff) Passed [43-1-3]
7. W Policy Subcommittee Update (Jill Malik)
   1. [Rationale for Changing the Current Policy](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-10-01/w-policy-subcommittee-rationale-for-change.pdf)
   2. [Statistical Data on "W" Assignment at SCCC](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-10-01/w-policy-subcommittee-sccc-w-data.pdf)
   3. [Withdrawal Policies at Some Other Community Colleges](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-10-01/w-policy-subcommittee-other-colleges.pdf)
   4. Proposed Changes (resolutions passed by the [College-wide Academic Standards Committee](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/academic-standards/index.jsp) on November 8, 2019):
      1. [Proposal to Remove W from Final Grade Drop Down Menu](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/academic-standards/documents/2019-2020/w-policy-removal-resolution-2.docx)
      2. [Proposal to Extend the Withdrawal Period to Two-Thirds of the Term](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/academic-standards/documents/2019-2020/w-policy-two-thirds-resolution-1.docx)
      3. [Post-Withdrawal Deadline Appeal Policy](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/academic-standards/documents/2019-2020/post-withdrawal-policy-resolution-3.docx)
      4. Jill Malik - Across the 3 campuses, there is not much debate or disagreement with the first 2 proposals. The debate arises with the proposal for the Post-Withdrawal Deadline Appeal Policy. Many faculty members would like to retain the right to allow a student to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline. The late withdrawal would need to go through a formal process and for extenuating circumstances. It does not impact medical withdrawals.
      5. Don Ferruzzi supported the resolutions. His policy in his classes has been allowing students to withdraw by the 10th week or after the second exam, whichever was later, to make an informed decision about their progress in the class.
      6. Lynn Liebert-Marx – After discussions with Alex, I learned about the problems (seldom encountered in social sciences) faced by faculty in disciplines where courses are more sequential, such as mathematics. In those disciplines the INC does not do student any good and a W may be useful as a way to encourage a student to stay in class. Maybe we need to look at the College policy on stripping the students from courses for an INC. The INC grade should be a tentative pass, not a tentative fail.
      7. Donna Ciampa – About the INC grade, it turns into an F 4 weeks into the next semester because the students has not completed the work. The larger issue is when the faculty member just assigns the INC without having the conversation with the student about how it works, with can impact their financial aid.
      8. Lynn Liebert-Marx – There should be documentation about when the W is assigned.
      9. Alyssa Kaufman – Can you talk about what happens to financial aid when the W is assign instead of the F?
      10. Jill Malik – If a student completes the semester and the faulty member assigns a W as grade instead of an F without paperwork, there is no documented date of withdrawal. The financial aid office must use the College’s official mid-semester withdrawal date which results in students having to pay back financial aid. When the student tried to register for the next semester, they now have a bill that they didn’t know about. Another hurdle for students to get over.
      11. Alexander Kasiukov – First, I commend the committee for breaking the proposal into several parts. This approach can help us compromise and adopt the changes which we all can accept. I believe most of us can agree that the W should be student-initiated, and this leads us to possible compromise on removing W from the drop down menu.

I am against the provision for VPAA approval of W assignment during the last third of semester. Some students come to me near the end of semester saying that they know they are failing and asking for a W. I use W as a way of encouraging them to stay in the class. Knowing that they can always get a W if their efforts don’t bear fruit removes students’ anxiety and helps them succeed in their studies. In my experience, out of those asking for W, about one third to one half end up with a W, but the other one-half to two-thirds end up with passing grades. Thus, I would extend the possibility of student-initiated faculty-approved W until the end of the semester. (As for the INC, it’s no better than an F, but that’s a different discussion.)

We should be careful with the consistency argument, used in supporting Vice President’s review and approval for W assigned in the last third of semester. Would the same argument apply to other grades? It could lead us to some interesting conversations.

The fact that students are sometimes misinformed about the effect of W on their financial aid is not in itself a reason to abandon our current policy – it is rather a reason to inform our students better. We should give our students the responsibility for making decisions for themselves, with all the information they need to make the best decisions.

The issue of integrity of W grade assignment can addressed by clarity and public availability of W policy, and by strict enforcement of the requirement to specify the last date of attendance for each assigned W.

* + 1. Jill Malik – As to consistency grades, my syllabus clearly spells out what an A is what a B is. To me, a W isn’t a grade, it’s an action that should be student initiated. A W means something different on a transcript than a grade does. We have different pedagogical approaches to the issues. There is compelling research about what happens when a student fails course and retakes it. Our students are very resilient. In some cases allowing a student to withdraw until the last day, may encourage a student to retake the class. But in my classes I don’t allow withdrawal until the last day, instead I encourage the student to give their best effort and many of them rise the occasion. It’s just a different in approach. Yes our students are adults and they should know the consequences but there are legal and ethical issues to be addressed, especially with regard to veteran students. Also the W means some to the transfer institutions. And if our W meaning anything different than a student-initiated action by the 8 or 10 week of the semester then it’s problematic.
    2. Alexander Kasiukov – The situation for a veteran student is usually clear: W jeopardizes VA benefits and thus should never be used for veterans receiving those benefits.
    3. Scott Votke – Being in the same department, I am interested in how you handle this issue. For my classes, I tell them if they want to withdraw, that’s their right and I’ll sign the form. But I encourage them to keep coming to class because you getting a better chance of getting the material twice. I give them up to the week before the final to withdraw. Don’t you think the students get something out of it by sticking with the class until that point?
    4. Alexander Kasiukov – Yes but by sticking all the way through they can get more out of it, and a chance to get a passing grade.
    5. Scott Votke – So you believe that by giving the W at 2/3 into the semester, the student just stop showing up?
    6. Alexander Kasiukov – Yes, more likely so.
    7. Kathleen Ayers-Lanzillotta – How does our school compare to the other SUNY schools?
    8. Jill Malik – Of the 30 community colleges, 5 allow the instructor to withdraw up until the last day. About 77% allow a student initiated withdrawal up until week 10 or later. Of the 5 that allow faculty withdrawal, 3 require additional documentation more than just signing a form. There are additional requirements, i.e. meeting with an advisor, dean, etc. It’s my understanding that the 4 year schools view the W as a student-initiated event. 40% of the Ws given are given through the use of the grade drop down menu. That doesn’t mean that they were all faculty initiated Ws, but it’s likely that some are. And that alone is problematic. Our own policy says it should be student-initiated and not for failure to attend.
    9. Virginia Horan – We need to shift the perspective to what is best for our students. So based on your research, what is best for our students?
    10. Jill Malik – Making the policy more consistent is in their benefit. A student representative informally surveyed her peers, none of them knew what the W policy was in their classes.
    11. Joshua Wolfson – Can the pros and cons of withdrawing be put on the withdrawal form?
    12. Jill Malik – We are looking at that. Possibly creating a checklist for students to make sure they are aware of the ramifications of a W.
    13. Alexander Kasiukov – We will continue the discussion at the next meeting when the resolutions will be put forth. It would be great if the committee breaks the W policy change into smaller more granular proposals.
  1. Blackboard Discussions
     1. [General discussion](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/w-discussion-1-general.pdf)
     2. [Student-initiated withdrawal during the first two-thirds of the term](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/w-discussion-2-first-two-thirds-student-initiated-w.pdf)
     3. [VP for Academic Affairs-approved withdrawal during the last third of the term](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/w-discussion-3-last-third-vpaa-approved-w.pdf)
     4. [Addition of XF option to the drop down menu](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/w-discussion-4-xf-grade.pdf)
     5. [Removal of W option from the drop down menu](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/w-discussion-5-dropdown.pdf)
* Resolutions from the [Working Group on Shared Governance at the College](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-05-07/assembly-resolution-2019-02-%5B07%5D-working-group-on-college-governance.docx):
  1. [Resolution 2019-09-[16]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B16%5D-faculty-board-of-trustees-communication.docx) Calling for Direct Avenues of Communication between the College Faculty and the College Board of Trustees (Hope Sasway) Passed [37-5-3]
  2. [Resolution 2019-09-[17]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-resolution-2019-09-%5B17%5D-curriculum-development-revision.docx) Calling for Revisions to the College’s Curriculum Development Process (Tat Sang So) Passed [40-6-0]

1. Campus Update (James Keane)
2. [Proclamation](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2019-11-12/assembly-proclamation-dean-keane.docx) Acknowledging the Service of Departing Executive Dean Dr. James Keane
3. For the Good of the Assembly
4. Motion to Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:16pm