

CEPC Green Sheet 06/07-13

Re: Emergency Academic Authority

At the May faculty meeting CEPC will move the approval of a policy for implementing emergency academic authority.

Proposal:

In the event the President of the College declares a catastrophic emergency, the faculty of the College give an Emergency Academic Committee (EAC) – consisting of the Provost, the Registrar, and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, or their designees – authority to temporarily modify or change the curriculum and degree requirements. This authority may involve adjustments to

- the academic calendar;
- the delivery of instruction;
- graduation requirements;
- grading procedures;
- policies concerning credits.

The Provost will convene the EAC as soon as possible after an emergency is declared. Every effort will be made to inform the entire college community of any changes made to the academic program because of an emergency.

The President has authority to declare the end of emergency operations at the College, at which time the faculty will resume oversight of the curriculum and degree requirements. Emergency academic authority given to the EAC is initially granted for no more than 6 months, but may be renewed if a catastrophic emergency is ongoing.

Rationale:

Currently, all significant changes to the academic program must be brought to the faculty for a vote. Such a procedure will not work in the event of a catastrophic emergency such as a severe weather event (e.g., a tornado) or a pandemic flu outbreak. The College will need to react to an emergency quickly in order to keep the academic program in operation as much as possible. The small EAC consists of three people generally responsible for the oversight of the academic program who will be able to respond flexibly in case of an emergency.

While the proposed motion is expressed in general terms to cover any possible emergency, the reason it is being brought forward at this time is due to the pressing need for emergency planning associated with a possible world-wide outbreak of pandemic flu. The risk of a pandemic flu outbreak is considered “serious” by the World Health Organization (WHO). Since it is not possible to predict when a pandemic may emerge, both WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommend that academic institutions make preparations in a timely manner. This motion is an outgrowth of that planning. The Academics Subgroup of St. Olaf’s Pandemic Taskforce is beginning to develop ideas that can be used by the EAC during an emergency. Faculty will have the opportunity to both contribute to and learn about the emergency planning process, especially as it pertains to the academic program.