

Minutes of the ARFAC Meeting of April 1, 1998

Present: Kathy Chadwick (chair), Wendy Allen, Bob Entenmann, Michelle Gierke, Bill Green, Tim Mahr, Kathy Ruby, and Anna Trefz.

Guests: Charles Wilson, Sally Gonzalez.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA. The meeting was called to order by Kathy Chadwick, Chair, at 3:20 p.m. The agenda was announced as follows:

- Review of minutes of February 26 and March 11 meetings
- Discussion of AP credit and other related issues with Charles Wilson and Sally Gonzalez
- Report from Kathy Ruby on international student receivables

2. MINUTES. The minutes of February 26 were approved as distributed; those of March 11 were approved with the addition of one sentence at the end of Item 3: "ARFAC appreciates the significant effort being exerted by the Admissions Staff in order to recruit an incoming class of 750 students."

3. ADVANCED PLACEMENT CREDIT AND CREDIT FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS (PSEOS). Charles Wilson had requested to meet with ARFAC to discuss the issue of Advanced Placement (AP) and other pre-St. Olaf credit.

a) Prior to the meeting, he had circulated a lengthy memo providing committee members with history and background regarding this issue and explaining why he believed a review of the current policy was in order (copy of memo attached to archival copy of minutes). The memo identified the following issues:

- Issue #1. According to current policy, incoming first-year students may receive advanced placement or credit for high scores (3 - 5) on the CEEB AP exams. Different departments judge scores differently. There does not appear to be an issue in counting AP scores as such, although the question of whether or not AP courses satisfy General Education requirements is a bit more sticky since it is not departments that make such judgments.
- Issue #2. Judgments regarding whether or not a particular AP course satisfies a General Education requirement do not rest with departments and programs, yet AP cut-offs are determined by department chairs. Who should decide what counts for what?
- Issue #3. St. Olaf has a five course limit on AP and other pre-St. Olaf credit. Some of our more outstanding students may bring as many as 8 or 9 top scores; they and their parents are resentful of our 5-course rule. We have placated these

students (when they were not eligible for extra course credits) by giving them credit for requirements. Do we wish to maintain the 5-course rule? Some of our competitors (Carleton, Gustavus) will allow sophomore standing (7 plus courses) for the rare incoming student who has earned lots of top AP and other pre-St. Olaf scores.

- Issues #4 and #5. Since the writing of the policy governing advanced placement at St. Olaf, the Post-Secondary Options (PSEO) legislation has come into effect. Although we do not offer PSEOs, an increasing number of applicants are bringing PSEO credits to St. Olaf. They are taking college courses to complete their high school diplomas; these courses are reported to us on a college transcript. This practice raises two issues: (i) how to evaluate the quality of these courses; (ii) whether we should allow such "double-counting" (the same course counting as part of the high school diploma and, potentially, the college diploma)?

- Issue #6. Our current 5-course limit lumps together AP, International Baccalaureate, PSEO, and other pre-St. Olaf academic work. These items are of very different quality. We need to reconsider our current policy: is lumping items so different in nature together under a single rubric wise?

b) ARFAC members agreed that the time is right for a thorough review of policies governing pre-St. Olaf credit. We asked Charles to gather and share with us statistics from the current first-year class (AP and IB credits [including scores received], PSEO credits [including institutions], number of "other" types of pre-St. Olaf credit [including institutions]).

c) Pending review of these statistics, ARFAC members discussed the following tentative changes in the current policy governing AP and IB credit. No formal action was taken; we will revisit these issues at our next meeting.

- tentative recommendation: that Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate work be separated from PSEOs;

- tentative recommendation: that the 5-course rule apply only to AP and IB work;

- tentative recommendation: that AP credit be given only for scores of 5 (this would require faculty approval);

The intent of ARFAC is to leave the door open for outstanding first-year applicants, while not frightening away middle-level applicants. We were unclear as to whether to standardize policy across the College or to leave credit decisions up to individual departments and programs. (Since our General Education component is not departmentally based, why would we leave such decisions up to departments?) Regarding PSEOs, our intent is to more closely monitor/evaluate the quality of these options.

d) Pending review and analysis of statistics regarding PSEOs, ARFAC members discussed the following tentative changes in policy. None was subjected to a formal vote.

- "double-dipping" should not be allowed. Generally speaking, we favor the model embodied by the Northfield High School Honor's Program whereby academically-strong seniors are identified by school officials; these students have the possibility of enrolling in one St. Olaf course per semester of their senior year.
- An upper limit should be established as to the number of such courses that may be counted;
- A limit of two PSEOs may be accepted from incoming first-year students with no questions asked (this would be in addition to the 5-course rule for AP/B work).
- We recommend that the Registrar explore the possibility of evaluating the quality of PSEOs (and hence the possibility of giving credit for such) by looking to existing categorizations of institutions (e.g., Carnegie, etc.).

4. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECEIVABLES. Kathy Ruby, Director of Financial Aid, reported on a situation of concern to her; namely, St. Olaf's lack of guidelines for developing financial aid packages for international students. Three or four years ago, according to Kathy, St. Olaf began awarding loans to international students. The College had (and still has) no clout when it comes to getting international students to repay these loans. It is time to determine financial aid awards for currently-enrolled international students for next year. Examination of financial records reveals that some of these students owe considerable amounts in loans. What should be done?

a) Kathy informed the committee that there will be a fixed policy for entering international students: the College will fund half-tuition (\$8570) plus a \$2000 work award. It is not clear what consequences this change in policy will have on retention. The new policy favors students from developed countries. We need to begin looking at possibilities for attracting students from developing countries and finding ways to make it financially possible for them to attend St. Olaf.

b) ARFAC members suggested that ARFAC meet with members of IDOCS to begin looking at a series of issues relative to international students. These include (but are not limited to): need for a statement delineating the importance of international students to the College's global perspective; consideration of the regions or countries we would ideally like to see represented by our international students; development of policy guidelines regarding financial aid packages for international students; stricter enforcement of tuition payment and loan payment schedules.

5. FUTURE MEETING DATES. Kathy C. announced the following meeting dates and agenda items:

April 15 temporary policy re AP/IB credit

temporary policy re PSEO credit

policy re transfer credit

April 28 international students

report from '97-98 Buntrock Scholarship Evaluation Subcommittee

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy W. Allen, secretary