Academic Affairs Committee—March 10, 2020

Present: Steve Saunders, Erin Sheets, Loren McClenachan, Katie Donahue, Thomas LaJoie, Sam Scott, Lindsey Nelson, Russ Johnson, Lukas Alexander

I. Russ welcomed everyone to the brave new world of remote meetings, and mentioned that the Course Proposal Subcommittee is working (remotely) to review many course proposals.

II. Dates and Deadlines for the Spring semester.
Russ informed the committee that the provost’s office and the registrar’s office, in consultation with department chairs and program directors, have made the following changes to spring dates and deadlines for this semester.

Drop Deadline: Friday March 20
Change: Extended to April 10
Rationale: This gives students two full weeks of online instruction.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Declaration: February 14
Change: Extended to April 10

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Revocation: March 20
Change: Extended to May 1

Add credit in variable credit course: March 20
Change: Extended to April 10

Fall Course Registration: April 15-22
Change: Extended to April 15-29
Rationale: Allow faculty and students additional time to meet virtually
Change: Allow students planning to study abroad FA20 to register for fall courses. This gives the students the ability to select fall courses in the event that abroad programs are cancelled. This also allows the ability to review faculty needs for additional sections. This would require the balancing process to be pushed back into June.

III. Policies and practices related to spring 2020 courses (online courses).
Colby’s current policy does not allow the transfer of any online courses for credit. The provost’s office and the registrar have recommended that (for Spring 2020 only) we relax that rule and allow transfer credit for online pre-approved courses for spring study abroad students and evaluate any others on a case-by-case basis. The normal transfer course requirements/approvals would be required. The committee agreed with this recommendation.

III. Policies and practices related to spring 2020 courses (S/U designation).
Colby’s current policy does not allow courses taken with S/U designation to be counted for Distribution requirements. Many departments and programs do not allow courses taken with S/U designation to be counted for major requirements. The committee has been asked to consider whether we should allow courses taken with S/U designation in the Spring 2020 semester to be counted for Distribution requirements and for major requirements. This would be part of a strategy to more freely allow the use of S/U this spring, for which the deadlines have already been extended (see above). The committee recommended that we should make such an allowance.

IV. Policies and practices related to spring 2020 courses (S/U vs. CR/NC). The committee has also been asked to consider whether we should make a blanket switch to CR/NC for the Spring 2020 Semester. This would go even further than the expanded opportunities for S/U described above. Some in our community have argued that we should recognize the challenges involved for both faculty and students in making the sudden switch to remote teaching and learning, and change all courses from letter grading to being graded on a CR/NC basis. After a substantive discussion, the majority view of the committee was that we should indeed make