

GRCC
GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE



ACADEMIC GOVERNING COUNCIL

YEAR-END REPORT
2024-25



Academic Governing Council (AGC) YEAR-END REPORT 2024-25

Presented by the 2024-25 Academic Governing Council Executive Committee (AGCExec): Nick Antonakis, Chair, Ann Alexander, Jennifer Batten, Greg Forbes, Ann Isackson, Lynnell Talbert and Sheila Jones.

Grand Rapids Community College's (GRCC) Academic Governing Council (AGC) had a successful 2024-25 academic year. Ten policies were taken through the review process, there was one Standing Team report delivered and one issue paper approved. The AGC body was generally pleased with the work (see survey results later in this document) with 96% saying that AGC fulfilled its purpose.

Purpose

According to the Preamble of the AGC Bylaws, "Grand Rapids Community College's Academic Governing Council (AGC) is a collaborative initiative between the faculty and academic administration to strengthen communication and increase involvement in academic issues and policies. By fostering and encouraging a broader input and a sense of accountability, AGC leadership effectively mediates issues that impact students, staff, and faculty. AGC recommendations are, upon approval by the Provost, implemented on a college-wide basis. The Provost, in conjunction with other college entities, will conduct implementation of these decisions as needed."

Academic Governing Council — Executive Committee

The responsibilities of the Executive Committee (AGCExec) include organizing monthly AGC meetings during the academic year, serving as meeting facilitators, keeping all records, including minutes, presentation slides, committee reports and dissent forms, and for sharing copies of approved minutes, reports, and forms to any interested party upon request. AGCExec added additional supports for presenters this year by providing [presentation templates](#) and adding [Guidelines for AGC Policy Review Committee Co-Chairs and Members](#) to the website. In addition, AGCExec provides support by reviewing and providing feedback on first presentations of each policy.

A Year of AGC

The AGC met eight times over the 2024 -25 academic year starting off with a message from AGCExec that reviewed the 2023-24 work, the upcoming policy reviews and the year-end survey feedback. In addition to the many policy presentations, the AGC body learned more, in a very entertaining presentation, about the Democratic Rules of Order, which are the rules that govern AGC proceedings.

AGC was informed about Title IX changes, new developments for the Learning Environments and Grade Appeal Teams, and discussed a potential College-wide ethics policy. Open Forums were held and feedback collected and reported out. The ad-hoc policy teams held round table discussions and collected input that guided their next steps and GRCC's Provost provided updates on policy decisions and next steps. One Issue Paper on [Corequisite Courses](#) was approved and will be reviewed in the 2025-26 academic year. All in all, the agendas were full, the presenters informative and the discussions robust.

Equity Lens

New to AGC in 2023-24 was to ask presenters to use an equity focus and lens when reviewing policies. In 2024 -25, Dr. Nygil B. Likely, Vice President for People, Culture and Equity, presented to the AGC body (September 10, 2024) and shared that the equity lens is a process designed to reduce, and potentially eliminate, disparity in educational outcomes for students from underserved and underrepresented populations. Further, the process has four primary outcomes that include an assessment of the policy's purpose and inclusiveness, a review of assumptions made by the policy, an intention to make equity an integral part of the process and encouragement of reflection on the relationship between policy and the progression toward equity. Dr. Likely shared a series of questions that presenters could apply as they worked through policy revisions and many did so quite effectively, but other teams have asked for more guidance.

Special Thanks

AGCExec would like to acknowledge and thank all of the support provided by the follow staff:

- Kaitlyn Verhulst, Support Professional, Visual Arts — Kaitlyn transcribed and maintained the AGC meeting minutes for the 2024-25 academic year.
- Diane Smith, Executive Assistant to the Provost — Diane collected and managed numerous presentations, decision papers and agenda. She supported communications with the AGC body and maintained the membership list, meeting appointments and schedule. Diane also maintains the voting record.
- Amy Brandstatter, Support Professional for the Dean of STEM — Amy managed the completed policy documents and ordered snacks and beverages for the meetings.
- Conor Bardallis, Media Technologies — Conor provided all of the media support for the ACG meetings during the past academic year. His knowledge and skill ensured that the meetings ran smoothly and that there is a record of voting.

Presentations

ExecAGC would like to sincerely thank this year's policy presenters, co-chairs and team members. Without their dedication, knowledge, insight and teamwork, AGC could not function. The team's efforts are critical to keeping GRCC's policies current and ensuring that the College is responsive in an ever-changing environment. Policy work is the backbone of AGC and the work of the following teams is greatly appreciated.



POLICY WORK FOR THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

The following policies were reviewed during the 2024-25 academic year.

Policy 7.3 Instructional Materials

Policy 7.3 is intended to provide clear direction for the use and ordering of instructional materials and supplies that support the curricular outcomes of a course, while ensuring these materials meet the college's commitment to controlling costs that promote access to higher education, and providing equal access for all students as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA, Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973).

Decision Paper: [Instructional Materials Policy: 7.3](#)

Team Membership

Sean Mackey, Assistant Professor, English

Lauren Woolsey, Associate Professor, Physical Sciences

- Jesse Crandall, Assistant Professor, Physical Sciences
- Samantha Minnis, Information Literacy and Outreach Librarian, LRC
- Brent Spitler, Professor, Business

Policy 7.13 Course Format and Credit Hour

The GRCC Course Format and Credit Hour Policy: 7.13 establishes guidelines and standards for GRCC courses. The number of course formats were created specifically to address the diversity of student learning and the dynamic learning environments of our courses. Our course types also offer a diversity of options for student needs including the successful transfer of courses for program, general education and elective credit while offering students additional learning opportunities through our developmental course type.

Decision Paper: [Course Format and Credit Hour: Policy 7.13](#)

Team Membership

Vikki Cooper, Professor, English

Michael Miller, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Instructional Support and Institutional Planning (ISIP)

- Deb DeWent, Director of Curriculum Management, ISIP
- Lakisha Beck, Registrar, Student Records
- Lisa Radak, Dean, School of Health Sciences
- Brandon Berg, Assistant Professor, Physical Sciences
- Julie Lackshiede, Program Director, Radiologic Technology
- Ben Allen-Smith, Assistant Professor, Automotive
- Keri Hadfield, Assistant Professor, Education
- John Doneth, Dept. Head, Manufacturing



Policy 7.14 Seminar Courses

Policy 7.14 is designed to ensure the quality of the College curricula and the means to offer special topics courses. The policy provides faculty the opportunity to offer content based on students' interests, and industry or transfer needs. The Seminar Courses policy provides opportunities for all participants, ensures new and diverse perspectives are valued, and offers equitable access and responsive exploration for all students.

Decision Paper: [Seminar Courses: Policy 7.14](#)

Team Membership

Lynnae Selberg, Department Head, Academic Advising and Transfer Center

Deb DeWent, Director of Curriculum Management, ISIP

- Susan Williams, Professor, Social Sciences
- Kimberly Olushola, Associate Professor, English
- Amy Kudrna, Associate Professor, Physical Sciences
- Leigh Kleinert, Professor, Biological Sciences
- Rachel Jungblut, Associate Dean in the School of Business & Industry
- Lakisha Beck, Registrar, Student Records
- Brent Spitler, Professor, Business

Policy 7.19: Course Substitutions and Course Waivers

The purpose of Policy 7.19 is to ensure fairness for all students who need a course substitution or waiver to complete a degree/certificate, while maintaining the integrity of the degree/certificate that they receive. The policy seeks to reduce barriers for students as they complete their degree/certificate.

Decision Paper: [Course Substitutions and Course Waivers: Policy 7.19](#)

Team Membership

Christopher Remley, Associate Registrar, Student Records

Lakisha Beck, Registrar, Student Records

- Sulari White, Assistant Professor, Academic Advisor
- Meredith Harleton, Adjunct Faculty, Biological Sciences
- Judith Graham, Assistant Professor, Computer Information Systems

Policy 7.20 Graduation Requirements

Policy 7.20 is designed to provide clarity on the requirements to earn an associate's degree or certificate at GRCC. It is intended to ensure that all students who receive a certificate or degree from GRCC acquire job skills and/or knowledge needed for their intended credential, have life skills to excel in their career and further their educational goals, and that they have been exposed to content that broadens their perspectives.

Decision Paper: [Graduation Requirements: Policy 7.20](#)

Team Membership

Chris Remley, Associate Registrar – Graduation, Student Records

Jennifer Batten, Associate Provost, Instructional Support and Institutional Planning (ISIP)

- Deb DeWent, Director of Curriculum Management, ISIP
- Patrick Kamau, Professor, AATC
- Renae Boss Potts, Assistant Professor, Nursing

Policy 8.24: Generated Graduation

Policy 8.24 is designed to prevent delayed/missed awarding of credentials. It is intended to support student populations (i.e., first gen students) that do not have support or prior knowledge of specific College processes. This policy can help students bypass internal processes that can be confusing. Policy 8.24 aligns with GRCC's commitment to completion and supports economic mobility for students.

Decision Paper: [Generated Graduation: Policy 8.24](#)

Team Membership

Chris Remley, Associate Registrar – Graduation, Student Records

Ari Schmid, Academic Advisor/Assistant Professor, Academic Advising & Transfer Center

- Amanda Kruzona, Director of Institutional Research and College Data Officer
- Chiquital Clay, Associate Director of Financial Aid, Student Engagement and Eligibility



Policy 8.28: Mandatory New Student Orientation

The reason for this policy is external benchmarking and CCSSE and SENSE data show students who attend a mandatory orientation have increased student success, retention and graduation rates.

Decision Paper: [Mandatory New Student Orientation: Policy 8.28](#)

Team Membership

Lori Cook, Executive Director of Enrollment Services

Jose Mora, New Student Orientation Coordinator

- Alexander Bush, Orientation Intern, New Student Orientation
- Erin Burd, Financial Aid
- Kaelee Steffens, Assistant Professor, Academic Advising;
- Leticia VanAssen, Success Coach, College Success Center
- Marisol Blanco, Director, College Success Center
- Meredith Harleton, Adjunct Faculty, Biological Sciences

Policy 8.29 Transfer Course Credit

The College recognizes that students may have earned credit for academic courses at other institutions of higher education. Policy 8.29 is designed to assist students in saving time and money by recognizing completed coursework and allowing students to apply academic credit completed at other institutions toward degree and certificate requirements at GRCC. This policy identifies the guidelines for and circumstances under which GRCC may award transfer course credit.

Decision Paper: [Transfer Course Credit: Policy 8.29](#)

Team Membership

Valerie Campbell, Associate Registrar, Student Records

Isabel Vargas, Associate Registrar – Curriculum, Student Records

- Kristie Kozub, Academic Advisor, Academic Advising and Transfer Center
- Matt Novakoski, Director of Transfer & Articulation Services, ISIP
- Matthew Schenk, Associate Professor of Digital Art & 2D Design, Visual Arts



Policy 8.30: Student Code of Conduct

Policy 8.30 is intended to foster a secure learning environment by protecting people, property and processes. The Student Code of Conduct sets forth expectations for individuals who choose to become part of the College community.

Decision Paper: [Student Code of Conduct: Policy 8.30](#)

Team Membership

Valerie Hargraves, Director of the Center for Student Life & Leadership

Brett Meyer, General Counsel

- Robin Graves, Clery Compliance Specialist, GRCC Police
- Lisa Thomas, Director of Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX Coordinator
- Alyssa Gamez, Associate Director, Woodrick Center for Inclusion and Multicultural Affairs
- Tari Mattox, Department Head and Associate Professor, Geology
- Mike Light, Professor, Social Sciences
- Daisy Henderson, Assistant Professor, Social Sciences
- Mary Lucas, Department Head and Professor, Language and Thought

Policy 8.32 Introduction to Distance Learning

Policy 8.32 is designed to ensure that all GRCC students have access to training and materials to support their success in distance learning and in the use of the Learning Management System (LMS). In addition, this policy is written to promote equitable and inclusive access to distance learning.

Decision Paper: [Introduction to Distance Learning: Policy 8.32](#)

Team Membership

Tim Periard, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences

Amy E. Lyn, Executive Director of TLDE

- Judith Graham, Assistant Professor, CIS
- Drew Rozema, Department Head, CIS
- Brandon Berg, Assistant Professor, Physical Sciences
- Garry Brand, Professor, Business
- Justin Vogelar, Educational Technologist, TLDE



Policy 8.33 Industry Recognized Credentials

This policy identifies the guidelines for and circumstances under which GRCC may award course credit to students who have taken and passed external tests, exams, or industry credentials.

Decision Paper: [Industry Recognized Credentials/Test Credit: Policy 8.33](#) (approved by AGC 2023-24)

Team Membership

John VanElst, Dean of the School of Workforce Training

Jacob Pollak, Assistant Professor, Computer Information Systems

- Lisa Radak, Dean of the School of Health Sciences
- Don VanOeveren, Associate Director of Academic Support & Tutoring Services
- Matthew Schenk, Associate Professor, Digital Art and 2D Design

Policies/Practices for Consideration for 2025-26

NEW Course Corequisites
7.16 Syllabus Template
8.2 Admission and Placement Policy
7.18 Curriculum
8.8 Attendance Policy
8.17 Academic Standing
8.34 Academic Forgiveness
7.1 Instruction
General Education

AGC 2024-25 Evaluation

Every year the Executive Committee of AGC conducts an evaluation and uses the results to improve AGC's processes for the following year. The evaluation for 2024- 25 took place on April 8, 2025, and included both a survey and open-ended small group discussions.

Survey Questions Question	Agree (number of votes)	Disagree (number of votes)	Abstain (number of votes)
1. AGC fulfilled its purpose.	49	0	2
2. AGC accomplished an appropriate amount of work.	49	0	2
3. The scheduling of AGC meetings was adequate to complete the work.	49	0	2
4. Communication from AGC Exec helped me prepare for meetings.	50	1	1
5. If you used the AGC website, the information was useful.	30	2	17
6. The topics and issues addressed at AGC were relevant.	48	0	4
7. The information presented at AGC meetings was useful.	49	1	2
8. The quality of discussion in AGC meetings advanced the work.	43	5	4
9. AGC made effective decisions this year.	47	1	4
10. The decisions made by AGC had a positive impact on the college as a whole.	46	0	6

Summary of Year-end Open Comments

AGC members discussed the following open-ended questions on April 8, 2025. AGCExec received seven sets of responses and those responses are summarized here.

What worked well at AGC this year? Why was this effective?

Effective Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● New member orientation to the Democratic Rules of Order● Variety of snacks and beverages● Meeting with AGCExec prior to the first presentation● Materials sent out for early review, which encouraged members come prepared to discuss and vote● Effective table discussions● Meetings are well organized, implemented, and kept to the agenda● Formalization of Student Affairs at Large Representative● In person meetings encouraged interaction● AGCExec was responsive to Bylaws question● Extending the number of presentation for complex/controversial policies

What suggestions do you have for improvement for next year? How will this make AGC more effective?

Suggested Improvement	Feedback from AGCExec
Orientation for new members should include items such as the purpose of AGC, procedures, issue papers (how they emerge), policy review, dissent forms	AGCExec provided and will continue to provide an orientation during the September meetings. While some disagree with this practice AGC Exec feels that this is important for AGC operations. Emphasis will be placed on Issue Papers.
Go back to passing the microphone	This is a good idea and will return to this practice.
Need more information on the implementation teams and how to join these teams	The Provost outlines in the Decision Paper who will work on implementation – policy owner, review team, etc.
Encourage discussion to be focused on the policy issue at hand to avoid getting off track and mired in the implementation aspects of policies	We agree, but we also find that this is a delicate balancing act. Insights to pass along to the implementation team are important.
Encourage teams to share all feedback and responses in presentations	AGCExec will emphasize to presenters that they need to cover all feedback they receive from the table discussions to facilitate a more complete understanding of the issues.
Less wait time between policy reviews as 3 years is a long time	A three-year interval between reviews is our general standard. However, some policies do come before us earlier depending on the need for timely adjustments. Members can request earlier reviews; however, as this happens the yearly schedule becomes full and can't accommodate more policy reviews.
Give some of the policy teams more lead time before they present; give them more time to benchmark/research/develop rationale before their first presentation; provide feedback to teams in a timely manner.	This is reasonable and AGC Exec will encourage timely feedback.
Highlight key points in presentation slides and encourage presentations to follow a set of guidelines for concise presentation of information.	Good suggestions. We have a presentation template that is shared with Review Teams. Exec reviews the first presentation of each policy.
Make slides accessible to color blind people by using high contrast colors and never using red	The reminder is appreciated and AGC Exec will continue to emphasize accessibility.
Use data whenever possible to encourage data informed decision making.	AGCExec expects the policy review teams to gather appropriate data. Benchmarking of other institutions and institutional data from GRCC are options.
A virtual option would be nice for those on other campuses	We have found that the in-person format works better for the way AGC works and for robust conversation.
More snacks, don't mix peanuts with cheese, and change the creamer.	Noted.

What issues should we address next year? Why is this important for AGC to address?

It is good to see that AGC will address co-requisite courses next year.	AGCExec is looking forward to the discussion this will generate.
Attendance Policy	The Attendance Policy is on the review schedule for the 2025-26 academic year.
Prerequisite issues	Prerequisite issues are addressed by the Prerequisite and Placement Team (PaPT). Please contact Jennifer Batten with concerns.
Awareness of student conduct issues	This is a good topic for Open Forum discussion. For resources on classroom management, contact TLDE. The Student Code of Conduct addresses how issues are managed.
Presidential search update	Please look for regular communications from the search team.
Need to find a way to have more robust discussions across all of the AGC body as the use of the microphone upfront is not effective	We will try the suggestion of passing microphones around will revive our ability to have broader discussion.
Updates from implementation teams	The Provost provides an update on Decision Papers. Decision Papers provide information on next steps and implementation.
Issue paper process	The issue paper process will be addressed during the AGC orientation.

Are there any AGC policies that are a barrier to student success? What is the barrier?

Suggestions for change?

While we are not aware of policy barriers, there may be procedural barriers.	Procedures can be updated without a vote. Please bring suggestions to the owner of policy or Exec AGC.
The Attendance Policy needs some clarification	The Attendance Policy will be reviewed in 2025-26.
Need to develop a better understanding of writing and generative AI as it relates to academic honesty.	This is a good topic for Open Forum discussion, also for TLDE professional development. AI use is part of the Student Code of Conduct.
Accelerated courses and enrollment by students who have previously struggled academically	This concern could be an Open Forum topic or possibly an Issue Paper.
Online orientation for anyone taking an online class for the first time.	New student facing sources have been developed. The Introduction to Distance Learning: Policy 8.32 was approved in 2024-25.

Are we meeting our Equity and Inclusion goals through our review of policies at AGC?

The equity goals are unclear and we have no information or data to make that determination. It is still unclear as to how this is happening at AGC.	The goal is to reduce barriers for students. AGC Exec agrees and noted that this is a work in progress. Policy Review Teams are encouraged to present how the policy has been viewed through an equity lens. This should generate discussion on how the policy meets our goals of equity and inclusion. We will ask Nygil to distill three questions teams can use as a guide in their review processes.
Data is needed to evaluate.	Yes, ultimately, we need data. As we work on the framework, we can explore the type of data needed to guide us. The policy teams should be using data to explore related issues such as enrollment, retention, completion, and advancement rates.
Guidelines for presenters/presentations should be clearer. Develop clear guidelines.	Noted.
We feel that we are but may need some outside perspective for a better understanding	AGC Exec will reach out to the GRCC Achieving the Dream (AtD) team for advice.
The goals are appreciated, but more guidance is needed.	Agreed. Please see the comments above.
Academic dishonesty, AI use	These are good topics for an Open Forum discussion and are part of the Student Code of Conduct. TLDE is an excellent source of support.
We are on the path to improvement, but it seems performative at this point. Student input may be helpful. Could there be a team of diverse stakeholders (including students) to evaluate the policy work.	These are good suggestions. The student voice is important here. We will work to invite students to serve on policy teams.

Are we always sitting with the same people at our round tables at AGC? Would you recommend that we mix the seating for more variety in our exchanges? Pick what you would recommend for our meetings in 2025-26.

Keep the same approach (we sit wherever we choose).	Assign Seats	Other
6 votes	1 vote	0 votes

AGC Voting Records

AGC is a representative body and the [2024-25 voting records](#) are available for viewing by the GRCC community.