

University of Puget Sound PSC Committee: Joint Meeting with Committee on Diversity

Minutes for Monday, March 5, 2018

PSC Members Present: David Andresen, Denise Despres, Fred Hamel, Suzanne Holland, Amanda Mifflin, Andreas Madlung, Kristine Bartanen.

Diversity Committee Members Present: Stuart Smithers (chair), Sam Liao, Jennifer Utrata, Michael Benitez

Aim of joint meeting: to discuss recognition of the significance of issues around bias in student evaluations of teaching (SETs), what best practices are, and what actions steps might be taken: e.g., whether to jettison SETs, or adjust them?

Most Diversity Committee members believe forms can't be fixed with re-wording, and that the key issues are how evaluations get *used*, and the design of the instrument itself. Can we educate faculty about how to use the SETs?

PSC members expressed general consensus about not just how we use SETs, but what it means for the person who has to read them and use them (with no protections for the faculty member); it isn't just a question of how the university uses SETs. PSC members thought that the SETs have a deep ethical bias and that they undercut every other initiative we are trying to take at Puget Sound in terms of diversity affirmation and diversity faculty hires. Some members expressed concerns about loss of enfranchisement of students if SETs are eliminated.

There was a general agreement that the university needed to do more to provide institutional support to junior faculty and especially women and people of color, as well as to educate all faculty on the difficulties faced by these faculty regarding inherent biases in SETs.

Michael Benitez offered to find out from other universities how they are trying to remedy the problem, and to report back.

Discussion of using Faculty Meeting/common period for faculty discussion/education about the findings and pervasiveness of the problem.

The meeting concluded at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Holland