

Faculty Meeting, April 19, 2011

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

There were 36 members of the faculty present.

M/S/P approval of the minutes of Feb. 7 with no corrections.

Announcements: Kriszta Kotsis encourage everyone to visit the Senior Show at Kittredge Gallery [added by secretary: show is open through May 14, 2011]

President's Report:

- Admitted student deposits tracking well (ahead of last year); strong pool; over 7,000 applicants
- Third and final Admitted Student Day this Friday (April 22, 2011)
- Board of Trustees meeting coming up (May 12-14, 2011):
 - Plan to formally vote on campaign and identify campaign objective (campaign will be announced publically in October 2011)
 - Residential facility planning
 - Many other things plus regular business
- President Thomas has travelled extensively this spring in support of the campaign
- President Thomas has been working with the state government on funding, especially work study (will lose funding in next budget)
- Puget Sound in top 10% nationally of baccalaureate colleges producing Ph.D.s

Academic Vice President's Report:

- Fall 2011 course schedule—thanks for work to trim total number of faculty; still have work to do—need seats for incoming first year students and transfers
 - Increase enrollments in some courses (modestly)
 - Thanks for cooperation with Lisa Ferrari (good work by Lisa – working out the schedule is quite a challenge)
 - We do have funds in budget for adjunct replacement for UEC release units and FAC release units (please replace those courses)
- Key searches underway for important staff roles:
 - Director of International Programs (finalists last of April, first of May); coordinated by Lisa Ferrari
 - Academic Advising Director (April 26, May 3, May 4 interviews); coordinated by Sarah Moore
 - Director of Institutional Research; strong candidate pool; report on top candidates next Monday, then phone interviews; interviews mid- to late May; coordinated by Kris Bartanen
 - Study Abroad Advisor; reviewing applications now; coordinated by Mark Harpring
 - Disability Services Coordinator; finalizing job description; coordinated by Alyce DeMarais

President Thomas thanked the faculty for its role in recruitment of students—very effective.

Faculty Senate Chair's Report:

Steven Neshyba noted the following:

- Concluded elections: Leslie Saucedo, Sue Hannaford, Alisa Kessel, Kriszta Kotsis have been elected to the senate; 12 FAC nominees—Kris Bartanen will select FAC members from elected slate; Mott Greene to FSC; appreciates the responses from the faculty
- Acknowledge Rob Hutchinson, Kristen Johnson, Lisa Johnson who are ending their senate terms (round of applause)
- Two year-end reports have been received by the senate (FAC and Diversity); the senate will be receiving committee reports at the meetings scheduled for May 2 and May 9 [May 9 meeting at 2:30 p.m.]
- Other business reviewed by the senate:
 - Revised language about upper division requirement
 - Retirement plan advisory committee report
 - Socially responsible investing
 - Bylaws change (today)
 - Lowrie sustained service award recipient selected (tough decision)
 - Considered instructor evaluation forms (today)
 - Diversity officer report on cohort model for underrepresented students
 - ASC report on feasibility for common hour—not feasible at this time

New Business:1. Instructor Evaluation Forms

An *ad hoc* committee, working over the past two years, drafted alternative instructor evaluation forms (A, B, and C). The Senate preferred option A but proposed three versions with a preference for option A3 (not a unanimous decision by the Senate):

- A1 is the original version from the *ad hoc* committee
- A2 redistributes the content of numbered items 7 and 8 of A1 so as to better distinguish between course evaluation and instructor evaluation
- A3 eliminates language having the student specify the grade she received or earned in the course.

M/S/P (unanimous) to adopt version A3 as the new instructor and course evaluation form (amended as described below).

Discussion:

Carolyn Weisz noted there were no labels on the numerical scale for question 6; Rob Hutchinson replied that this was due to an error in Word – labels should, and will, be there.

There was some discussion regarding the student self-evaluation (grade) item (Option A1, items 7.b. and 7.c.). Although some research suggests there is a correlation between lower anticipated grades and lower scores on evaluations, the evaluations do not address the source of the grade. Some appreciated the intent of protecting against capricious evaluations and providing a potential mechanism for contextualizing the evaluation, but others were not sure how to use the information or were concerned that students may not have a good idea of what their grade would be when the evaluation was administered.

A similar discussion ensued regarding the student self-evaluation of the degree of effort put toward the course (Option A1, item 7.d.; Options A2 and A3, item 7.b.).

This item provides the opportunity for the student to contextualize their remarks on the form; faculty members still need to read into that and figure out what it means. Some thought item 2.a. (“The instructor was intellectually challenging.”) provided this context. Others argued that the instructor can be intellectually challenging but this does not address *student* effort.

Some faculty members were concerned that some of the items in the answers would not apply to all classes and/or a “N/A” selection should be added. For example, item 5.b. should address papers as well as tests and quizzes as not all classes rely on quizzes or exams.

The faculty discussed the use of the numerical system on the evaluations. Some noted that there is inconsistency in how the numbers are used—some faculty members prepare numerical averages from their evaluations while others do not. For the numbers to be meaningful, we need comparison among others in institution in the same courses, thus providing a bigger picture to open conversations about pedagogy. Others liked the flexibility the forms provide: one can “crunch” the numbers if they desire but it is not required. Some thought the issue of a more structured use of the numerical scale as separate from the form itself.

The discussion also addressed evaluating both the instructor and the course. Some wondered about the utility of having both on the same form. In team taught courses, the distinction is more important as students have a more difficult time in separating courses and instructors. Some suggested that a reorganization of the items would provide a clearer separation of instructor and course evaluation. Both instructor and course are included in the form title. A title change to “Student Impression of Teaching Effectiveness” was suggested. The current, revised title (“Instructor and Course Evaluation Form”) was produced as a minor change to the current form.

After some discussion on various ways to change the wording of the items, Bill Haltom noted that the discussion had diverged from the motion and that rewrites on the floor usually do not work well. He reminded us that committees have been working on the wording of the form for some time. Ron Thomas asked if we should return the form to the Senate for further revision. Judith Kay noted that she was not sure what Senate would rewrite. Kris Bartanen offered a point of information—we need to order 7,000 evaluation forms soon. Therefore, we must either change the form now or postpone the change to next year. Steven Neshyba then suggested and took a straw poll regarding whether the faculty liked version A3 or not. Most in the room preferred version A3 over versions A1 and A2.

M/S/F Amendment to replace wording for items 5.a. and 5.b. with “...tests, quizzes, papers, and other coursework...;” add degree labels to the numerical scale on item 6, and change the language of item 7.b. to read “As compared to your other courses, please rate the degree of effort this course requires.”

Those who spoke in favor of the amendment noted that the changes to items 5 and 6 were not controversial and that the language change in 7.b. distinguished this item as regarding the course rather than the instructor. Some liked that 7.b. contextualizes item 7.c. and provides more information to the instructor and others reading the evaluations. Those who spoke against the amendment were not in favor of the wording for 7.b. They noted that this still would not provide much information—there may be many valid reasons why one course is more challenging than another and these questions are better addressed at the start of a course

rather than near the end. Others were concerned that this wording may lead away from course evaluation and to course comparison.

M/S/P (12 yes; 11 no) Amendment to modify form A3 as follows:

- replace wording for items 5.a. and 5.b. with "...tests, quizzes, papers, and other coursework..."
- Item 6 becomes "Overall Instructor and Course Evaluation"
- Item 6.a. remains "After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of your instructor."
- Add labels of "poor" and "excellent" to the numerical scale on item 6.a.
- Current item 7.a. becomes item 6.b.: "After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of this course."
- Provide space for comments after items 6.a. and 6.b. (overall instructor and course feedback).
- Current item 6.b. becomes item 7.a.: "Please describe what you think your instructor does best and what you think should be improved."
- Current 7.b. removed.
- Current 7.c. becomes 7.b.: "Please provide any feedback you have about the course that would be helpful for the instructor to know in preparing to teach this course again."

M/S/P to close discussion on the amendment.

Called the question on original motion: accept amended version of A3. Voted to close discussion and voted on the motion.

New Business continued:

2. Mathematical Approaches Core Rubric Change

Alyce DeMarais provided a brief background for the proposed rubric language changes: stem from regular review of the core area by the Curriculum Committee; language developed by the faculty teaching in this core area.

M/S/P (unanimous) to modify the guidelines of the Mathematical Approaches rubric to read as follows (changes underlined):

Guidelines

1. These goals are met by courses that treat formal reasoning in one or more of the following areas.
 - a. Mathematical reasoning: The ability to use such techniques as abstraction, definition, symbolic computation, calculation, and proof.
 - b. Data-based reasoning: The ability to work with numeric data, to reason from those data, and to understand what can and cannot be inferred from those data;
 - c. Logical reasoning: The study of formal logic, at least to the extent that is required to understand mathematical proof.
 - d. Algorithmic reasoning: The ability to analyze a problem, to design a systematic way of addressing that problem using an algorithm, and to implement that algorithm in a formal language such as a computer programming language.

2. Where these skills or methods are taught within the context of a discipline other than mathematics or computer science, they must receive greater attention than the disciplinary material.

New Business Continued

3. First Reading: Faculty Bylaws change to Article V, Section 6.C.a.

Steven Neshyba read revised language (insertion of underlined passage below):

“a. Membership. The Committee shall consist of the Dean of the University (ex-officio) and five tenure-line Faculty members. The Dean convenes the Committee when evaluation files are ready for review. The Faculty Advancement Committee members serve as equal participants in faculty reviews, thus there is no designated chair. The Committee designates a faculty member to deliver the annual report to the Faculty Senate.”

Steven Neshyba explained that this revision brings the Bylaws into compliance with the practice of the Faculty Advancement Committee.

Bill Haltom asked for a side-by-side comparison with the original/current Bylaw language.

Steven Neshyba explained that the new language is an insertion; therefore, none of the current language has been revised.

Adjourned 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Alyce DeMarais, secretary.