

**University of Puget Sound Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**Minutes, January 31, 2011**

Present: Fred Hamel, Bill Barry, Kris Bartanen, Dan Burgard, Dan Miller, Savannah Laferrière, Rob Hutchinson, Steven Neshyba, Gareth Barkin, Ross Singleton, Elise Richman, Mike Segawa. Visitors: Sarah Moore, Suzanne Holland

I. Meeting was called to order at approximately 4 pm.

II. Approval of minutes of January 24, 2011:  
Revisions to January 24 minutes were circulated and subsequently approved.

III. Announcements:  
Hutchinson reminded senators of bassist Victor Wooten's visit to campus February 5.

By acclamation, the senate affirmed Gareth Barkin as an incoming senator, replacing Amy Spivey.

Barry Goldstein is the new chair of the Honor Court.

Neshyba announced that the Hearing Board Roster is now complete.

IV. Special Orders:  
Hutchinson noted that some year-end committee reports were not attached to senate minutes from last spring. Bartanen indicated that the Associate Deans' Office would look into this issue; she also noted that year-end reports could probably be found in minutes of a committee's last meeting of the year.

Hamel noted the University's chimes marking the hour and half hour sounded roughly two minutes earlier than actual PST. He pled for accuracy in chiming.

V. Discussion of proposed revision to Instructor Evaluation Forms:  
Hutchinson reintroduced the topic of revision of evaluation forms to the senate, noting that the process began about three years ago with the formation of an ad hoc committee composed of Suzanne Holland, Sarah Moore, Sue Hannaford, Robin Foster, and Hutchinson. Hutchinson summarized the work of the committee (see Attachment A), including faculty survey results and conclusions. The committee developed three revisions of the current form (Options A, B, C) and brought these before the faculty for consideration in Spring 2009. The faculty preferred Option A and voted to "test-run" this version (i.e., to allow faculty to use it in their courses). In Fall 2009, the senate charged PSC to review Option A in light of the committee's experience in dealing with faculty evaluation. In Spring 2010, the committee reported back, praising Option A for its efficiency and clarity. The PSC noted, however, that sections 7 and 8, where students comment on the "course" (as opposed to commenting on the "instructor" in prior

sections), were potentially “confusing” and “fatiguing.” (7a reads: “After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of this course.” 8 reads: “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.”)

After this introduction, there followed a lengthy discussion of Option A, particularly sections 7 and 8, and deliberation on how to proceed. Laferrière and Miller both commented that they liked Option A very much: they appreciated its succinctness, though noted that the method of administration of evaluations was also critical (Laferrière: evaluations should be given at the beginning of class hour rather than at the end) and that Section 8 on “course evaluation” needed some revision to distinguish it from prior questions focusing on instructor evaluation (Miller). Other senators divided over the utility of 8, some valuing the results they had seen in the test-run phase, others expressing concern that it asks students to go over the same ground covered in sections 1-6. Moore noted that the survey results indicated faculty wanted students to have an opportunity to offer feedback on the course itself (as opposed to feedback on just the instructor). Barkin suggested a fix to 8 by inserting “as distinct from instructor.” Singleton noted that the heading for section 7 (“Overall Course Evaluation”) needed revision since 7b, c, and d addressed students’ expectations about their grade in the course; only 7a concerned course evaluation. Burgard concurred, affirming also that 7a (i.e., where students are asked to provide an overall rating of course) was not needed if section 8 remained (i.e., where students are asked to comment on the course).

Hamel then opened up the issue of whether the evaluation should ask students to declare their anticipated grade (7b), the grade they feel they earned (7c), and their level of effort in the course (7d). Hamel opposes asking all three questions for many reasons, including that (a) the questions jeopardize confidentiality of students, (b) students may not be able to anticipate their grade with any degree of accuracy, (c) the questions might be read as an oblique attempt to establish the honesty or fairness of the evaluations (why not simply ask the student directly whether he/she feels the evaluation is fair?), and (d) 7d (regarding student effort) in particular seems inappropriate as it asks students to confess the sin of laziness.

Hamel’s argument elicited much discussion. Moore noted that research showed a correlation of grades to positivity of evaluations. Burgard wondered whether confidentiality wasn’t betrayed elsewhere on the form (e.g., student declaration of major or minor). Laferrière argued it might be revealing of the quality of instruction if an “A” student gave a negative evaluation of the instructor. With regard to anonymity, she also noted that students have autonomy and need not disclose their anticipated grade if they so wish. Miller agreed with Hamel that it is difficult to anticipate one’s grade in a course since the student often doesn’t have enough information. Segawa also opposed asking for the student’s anticipated grade for the course: interpretation of student comments based on an anticipated grade seemed highly problematic. He also wondered why the ad hoc committee rejected the idea of an on-line evaluation. Hutchinson replied that there was widespread faculty concern about the administration of online evaluations (would students do the evaluation, under what conditions, etc.). Holland reminded the senate that

the process of revision had been going on for years. Any proposal will be imperfect and she hoped the process would move forward at this point.

Moore asserted that the old ad hoc committee was dissolved. Hutchinson moved that the senate create a new ad hoc committee. To provide continuity, he would be willing to serve on it. Barkin and Barry opposed the motion on the grounds that such a committee might lead to more tinkering that would, in any case, require senate approval. The motion failed. Burgard moved that the senate send Option A directly to the faculty. Singleton and others opposed this motion on the grounds that Option A had minor problems (such as the heading to Section 7) that might be addressed efficiently by the Senate and so spare the faculty having to edit copy in the middle of a meeting. The senate might also usefully frame issues and options for faculty consideration. Burgard withdrew the motion. Neshyba suggested that senators try some “wordsmithing” on sections 7 and 8 before the next meeting.

#### VI. Discussion of ASC’s report on common hour feasibility:

Barry briefly described the ASC process and findings on common hour feasibility (see Attachment B). He noted that in the ASC’s own survey of departments, many obstacles to creating a common hour surfaced. A number of departments also wondered about the motivation for the creation of a common hour: if it concerned attendance at faculty meetings, that issue might be addressed in other ways. The ASC also suggested that a “semi-protected” common hour seemed a viable alternative. Barry noted that the ASC report required no action on the Senate’s part and so moved that the senate receive the report and thank the ASC for its quick and good work on this issue. The motion passed.

The senate adjourned at approximately 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Barry  
Scribe

Tiffany Aldrich MacBain  
Secretary

# Revising the Instructor and Course Evaluation Form

Faculty Survey Update, Course Evaluation Forms  
Spring, 2008

## A. Response Rate:

Total 141/230 (61%)

Open-ended Comments Received from 77/141 respondents

## B. Demographics of Responding Faculty:

<u>Disciplinary Area</u>	
Business	2.0%
Visual and Performing Arts	7.1%
Humanities	35.5%
Sciences	24.8%
Social Sciences	22.7%
Graduate Programs	7.8%
<u>Use of the Form</u>	
Assess own courses	98.6%
Own courses, non-evaluation years	70.2%
Evaluate colleagues	80.9%
Evaluate new colleagues & adjunct	38.3%
As member of FAC	14.9%
<u>Type of courses instructed</u>	
Lecture/discussion	95.7%
Seminar	71.6%
Laboratory	29.8%
Field/practicum	9.9%
Team-taught	38.3%
Studio	5.0%
Music/ensembles	1.4%
Activity	5.0%

## C. Summary Points

Close Ended Questions (items 4-24 on the survey asked faculty to respond to a stated concern on a scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree")

- 1) *Overall Satisfaction.* Although faculty are more satisfied than dissatisfied with the present form and system, there is still room for improvement.
- 2) *Repetition.* There is widespread agreement that the content of the form is repetitious in places and limits the concepts to which students respond.
  - Qualitative remarks corroborate and clarify this result. Some comments identified organization and enthusiasm as being over-measured on the form.
- 3) *Non-standard courses.* Among those who teach labs and team-taught courses, there is strong agreement that the current form is not well-suited for evaluating these non-standard courses, as well as some graduate courses.
- 4) *Qualitative and quantitative items.* Faculty like the combination of, and the alternating format of, the quantitative and qualitative items. The faculty is reluctant to establish standards for comparison.
- 5) *Purpose of the Evaluation.* There is agreement that the form should be clearer in specifying whether its purpose is a course or an instructor evaluation. Comments in the open-ended questions related to this issue included:
  - We should help students discern between the two, both in the instructions and in the way the items are phrased.
  - If it is to be an instructor evaluation, we should also remind students to keep it professional (i.e., explicit instructions not to make inappropriate or harassing remarks).

One respondent suggested making students more accountable for what they write (by signing the form) so that they can't anonymously trash an instructor.

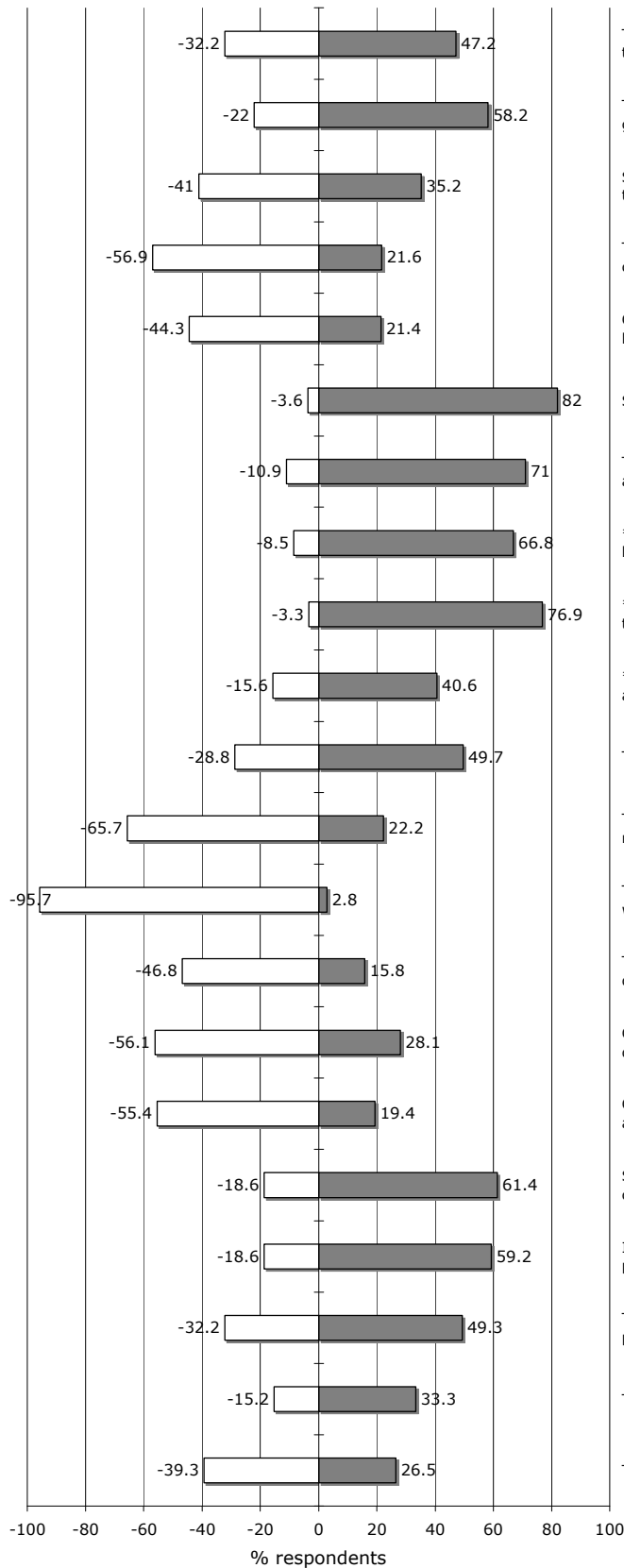
- Others commented that students should receive better instruction, in general, about the purpose and use of the form.
- 6) *Student performance.* A good majority of faculty would like to have the student's anticipated course grade, or some other measure of student performance, included on the form. (Suggestions in the open-ended question include asking students how many classes they missed or asking students how many hours a week they devote to the class).
  - 7) *Cultural biases.* Faculty did not feel that the questions contained gender, ethnic or other biases, and did not support the idea of including a question about the instructor's cultural competency.
  - 8) *Form length.* About half of the faculty who responded thought that the form was too long; the other half were indifferent or thought that the length was good.

Open-Ended Question (item #25 asked faculty to express any additional concerns about the form)

*NOTE: Faculty who responded to item #25 (additional concerns) were significantly less satisfied (one tailed t-test,  $p=.035$ ) with the form, as measured by the response to item #4 (overall satisfaction).*

- 1) Many of the comments address the idea that the form, itself, is not the problem, but rather how the form is used by the department and FAC. Some faculty admitted that they have learned to teach to the form. Comments suggested that dissatisfaction with the form may be connected to broader anxiety/concerns about the tenure and evaluation process. Such comments also seemed indicative of a faculty morale problem.
  - A strong but small group say that the forms play too much a role in the evaluation process, and that UPS is out of step with other institutions in this regard.
  - Others remark that no form is perfect, and that our current form is satisfactory when used as a component of the evaluation process.
  - Some assert that those who evaluate the faculty member can "read" any form, positive or otherwise, in the way they would like to read it. One suggests that we develop and use a set of written principles for interpretation.
- 2) A large number of remarks deal with student misunderstanding or abuse of the form; there are also a number of comments that deal with a student's inability to gauge certain topics. Suggestions include:
  - collecting student info so as to contextualize the remark (e.g., expected grade, the amount of effort they contributed to the course)
  - discourage or prohibit personalized remarks on the form.
  - clarifying the purpose and use in the instructions to students.
- 3) Some observe that the questions on the form create an expectation among students that: they should be motivated and entertained by the professor; that everyone has a valid point of view (even those who are unprepared, and that every point of view is as valid as every other; that learning should be comfortable and fun. Organization and enthusiasm were noted as over-measured on the form, whereas the form omits issues of learning, creativity, and how the course shaped the student's world-view. Some comments also noted that the form does not recognize the value in the kind of teaching that prioritizes having students question their values and given assumptions, and in which making students uncomfortable is part of the learning process.
- 4) A number of people comment on the absurdity of not crunching the numbers (which might reflect the larger problem of not having a basis for which to interpret the evaluations.) Several comments asked for greater clarity about what the numbers mean.
- 5) There is strong sentiment that the faculty does not want to move to electronic administration of the form.

□ disagree/strongly disagree ■ agree/strongly agree



The current evaluation form is an effective assessment tool for evaluating faculty teaching.

The evaluation form should include information about a student's anticipated course grade.

Students should not be asked to assess whether professors are knowledgeable in their subject areas.

The form should allow students to assess whether the professor is culturally competent to teach a diverse range of students.

Questions, as worded on the evaluation form, carry racial/ethnic, gender, or other biases.

Some questions or evaluation themes are repeated in different sections of the form.

The questions on the form lead students only to address particular themes in their answers.

\*The questions on the form do not target issues relevant to the evaluation of laboratory courses.

\*The questions on the form do not target issues relevant to the assessment of team taught courses and instructors.

\*The questions on the form do not target issues relevant to the assessment of applied music courses and ensembles.

The evaluation form is too long.

The evaluation form should collect qualitative (written) information alone (no numerical measures).

The evaluation form should collect quantitative (numerical) information alone (no written responses.)

The form should present all the quantitative questions together and all the qualitative questions together, rather than alternating them.

Quantitative (numerical) information on the form should be used to create department and university norms for comparison.

Qualitative (written) information on the form should be used to create department and university norms for comparison.

Students are unclear about whether they are to evaluate the instructor or the course.

Instructions on the form should be more explicit in discouraging personal/potentially harassing comments against an instructor.

The dual use of the form for both course evaluation and course feedback is problematic.

The evaluation form should not be printed in triplicate.

The evaluation form should be electronic.

NOTE: "Neither agree nor disagree" responses are excluded from the bars.

\* These percentages are based on a subgroup of respondents.

**Instructor and Course Evaluation Form  
Option A**

**To the Student:** The evaluation you are about to write is an important document for your instructor. The information provided will be used by the university in the evaluation of your instructor's teaching. It will also be used by the instructor for improving course structure and teaching. Your evaluation does count. You are encouraged to respond thoughtfully, to take this evaluation seriously, and to provide written remarks; we have allowed time for you to reflect and provide an honest appraisal.

Your instructor will not see these evaluation forms until after he or she has turned in final grades. If you do not want the instructor to see your hand-written form, check this box  and your responses will be typed before it is given to the instructor.

Course# \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Student Background Information**

A. Major \_\_\_\_\_ Minor (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

B. Status:      First year      Sophomore      Junior      Senior      Graduate Student

**2. Instructor's Promotion of Students' Learning**

	Disagree		Agree		
a. The instructor was intellectually challenging	1	2	3	4	5
b. The instructor was skilled in helping students master relevant concepts and skills	1	2	3	4	5
c. The instructor encouraged students to take learning seriously and to think critically	1	2	3	4	5
d. The instructor encouraged students' intellectual self-reliance and self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5
e. Class assignments (e.g., homework, lab reports, papers, readings) were useful learning tools.	1	2	3	4	5
f. The instructor presented material in a clear manner.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain the choices you checked above with comments that help give context to your ratings.

**3. Instructor's Organization and Ability to Establish Clear Expectations**

	Disagree		Agree		
a. Overall, the course was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The instructor was well prepared for each class session.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The instructor established clear expectations of students' responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain the choices you checked above with comments that help give context to your ratings.





**Instructor and Course Evaluation Form  
Option B**

**To the Student:** The evaluation you are about to write is an important document for your instructor. The information provided will be used by the university in the evaluation of your instructor's teaching. It will also be used by the instructor for improving course structure and teaching. Your evaluation does count. You are encouraged to respond thoughtfully, to take this evaluation seriously, and to provide written remarks; we have allowed time for you to reflect and provide an honest appraisal.

Your instructor will not see these evaluation forms until after he or she has turned in final grades. If you do not want the instructor to see your hand-written form, check this box  and your responses will be typed before it is given to the instructor.

Course# \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Background Information**

C. Major \_\_\_\_\_ Minor (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

D. Status:      First year      Sophomore      Junior      Senior      Graduate Student

**9. Rating of Instructor** Please consider and rate each of the following:

	Disagree					Agree				
g. The instructor was intellectually challenging	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
h. The instructor was skilled in helping students master relevant concepts and skills	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
i. The instructor encouraged students to take learning seriously and to think critically	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
j. The instructor encouraged students' intellectual self-reliance and self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
k. Class assignments (e.g., homework, lab reports, papers, readings) were useful learning tools.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
l. The instructor presented material in a clear manner.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
m. The instructor was well prepared for each class session.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
n. The instructor established clear expectations of students' responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
o. The instructor showed concern for the students' understanding of the material.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
p. The instructor was respectful of a variety of viewpoints.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
q. The instructor was available during office hours and/or by appointment.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
r. The instructor led students to engage the course material.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
s. Tests, quizzes, papers, homework, etc., were consistent with the course's contents and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
t. The instructor provided reasonable preparation for papers, tests, and quizzes.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
u. The instructor did a thorough job of evaluating my work.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**10. Overall Instructor Evaluation:**

- a. After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of your instructor. Poor  
1 2 3 4 5  
Excellent
- b. Please describe what you think your instructor does best and what you think should be improved.

**11. Overall Course Evaluation:**

- c. Please provide an overall rating of this course. Poor  
1 2 3 4 5  
Excellent
- d. What grade do you anticipate receiving in this course? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Considering the effort and quality of your work, what grade do you believe you deserve in this course? \_\_\_\_\_
- f. With reference to the subject in this course, please explain how and why your interest and/or curiosity have increased or decreased over the duration of the semester.
- g. Please provide any feedback you have about the course that would be helpful for the instructor to know the next time s/he teaches it.

**Instructor and Course Evaluation Form  
Option C**

**To the Student:** The evaluation you are about to write is an important document for your instructor. The information provided will be used by the university in the evaluation of your instructor's teaching. It will also be used by the instructor for improving course structure and teaching. Your evaluation does count. You are encouraged to respond thoughtfully, to take this evaluation seriously, and to provide written remarks; we have allowed time for you to reflect and provide an honest appraisal.

Your instructor will not see these evaluation forms until after he or she has turned in final grades. If you do not want the instructor to see your hand-written form, check this box  and your responses will be typed before it is given to the instructor.

Course# \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Background Information**

E. Major \_\_\_\_\_ Minor (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

F. Status:     First year     Sophomore     Junior     Senior     Graduate Student

**13. Please rate the following areas as related to your Instructor. Provide comments to clarify and provide context to your rating.**

	Poor				Excellent
a. <b>Instructor's Promotion of Student Learning:</b> (e.g., intellectual challenge, promotion of critical thinking, intellectual self-reliance)	1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

	Poor				Excellent
b. <b>Preparation of Instructor:</b> (e.g., use of class time, organization of course and class sessions)	1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

	Poor				Excellent
c. <b>Instructor's Communication:</b> (e.g., clarity of explanations and presentation of material, clarity of expectations of student work and role)	1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

- |  |  |      |   |   |   |   |           |
|--|--|------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
|  |  | Poor |   |   |   |   | Excellent |
| d. <b>Instructor Interaction with Students:</b> (e.g., rapport and availability of instructor, openness to other points of view, concern for student learning) |  | 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |

Comment:

- |  |  |      |   |   |   |   |           |
|--|--|------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
|  |  | Poor |   |   |   |   | Excellent |
| e. <b>Evaluation of Student Learning:</b> (e.g., methods of evaluation, helpfulness of feedback on work, timeliness of feedback on work) |  | 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |

Comment:

**14. Overall Instructor Evaluation:**

- |   |  |      |   |   |   |   |           |
|---|--|------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
|   |  | Poor |   |   |   |   | Excellent |
| c. After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of your <u>instructor</u> . |  | 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
- d. Please describe what you think your instructor does best and what you think could be improved.

**15. Overall Course Evaluation:**

- |   |  |      |   |   |   |   |           |
|---|--|------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
|   |  | Poor |   |   |   |   | Excellent |
| h. Please provide an overall rating of this <u>course</u> . |  | 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
- i. What grade do you anticipate receiving in this course? \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Considering the effort and quality of your work, what grade do you believe you deserve in this course? \_\_\_\_\_
- k. With reference to the subject in this course, please explain how and why your interest and/or curiosity have increased or decreased over the duration of the semester.

- l. 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.

Faculty Meeting, April 6, 2009

[http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/6338\\_fac0406.pdf](http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/6338_fac0406.pdf)

### **10. Report and Recommendation of Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluation**

Professor Suzanne Holland reported that the Committee surveyed the faculty using Survey Monkey, and had a high response rate. Based on analysis of data, the Committee brainstormed three different revised versions of evaluation forms (attached). The rationale came from concerns raised in the survey: to streamline the form to decrease the workload for all those who participate in the evaluation process, and still allow for good feedback from students. Option A is closest to the current version, while B and C venture further afield. Holland reported having used Option A last semester in her classes, which helped with the design of B and C. B emphasizes quantifiable answers, with evaluative comments allowed on the back; A and C are less number-crunchy. These revised forms attempt to correct a problem with the current forms in use, which is that they mix feedback and evaluation; the revisions also begin to differentiate between course and instructor evaluation.

Faculty discussed the various versions: how will the numbers be crunched? Which version is likely to help students fully understand and reflect on the questions, provoking the most thoughtful responses? Does B ask for too many numerical answers in a row, leading to mechanical number-circling? Is C not specific enough to help students give useful answers? Do questions on C combine too many different issues in one question (e.g., 2E)? Would it be possible to create a Version D, incorporating A's reminders to think critically about pedagogy, but with more examples and fewer numbers? Are students really able to think critically about pedagogy? Would it be possible for a professor to design his/her own quantitative questions specific to the course?

A faculty member inquired about the purpose of asking students what grade they anticipate receiving and what grade they feel they deserve. Holland and Associate Dean Sarah Moore replied that the answers to these questions may help contextualize a student's comments about a class: if a student expects not to receive the good grade he/she feels entitled to, this may color their evaluation of the course. Professor Steve Rodgers suggested changing "deserve" to "earned" to avoid implying that a grade is a moral issue.

This discussion will be continued at the May 5 faculty meeting.

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Faculty Meeting, May 5, 2009

[http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/6338\\_fac0505.pdf](http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/6338_fac0505.pdf)

### **7. Changes to Evaluation Forms (continuing business)**

Professor Suzanne Holland noted that at the last faculty meeting we agreed to continue our discussion of the forms. Recall that the ad hoc committee proposed three options for a revised course evaluation form (attached). Professors Holland, Steven Neshyba, and Greta Austin are trying them in their classes. Associate Dean Sarah Moore had suggested some questions to ask the students who use the forms to get their feedback (evaluation evaluations!), so the department secretary attached questionnaires. Holland used version C, and the students liked it, finding it compact, clear, and not daunting.

Holland asked for thoughts, comments, or suggestions. Neshyba said that the informal feedback he had received on Option C was that students were glad it was shorter. Holland said Lorraine Toler, who administered Option B to the students in one class, said that the students universally appreciated the form.

Professor David Tinsley said that there is a persistent problem, that there is a lack of clarity whether the course or the instructor is being evaluated. He uses his own forms when he's not officially up for evaluation, because they are more useful to him in shaping a course. Moore said that the revision did try to address this problem with questions on the back, but it doesn't provide the type of feedback that some people are seeking. There was some further discussion about whether there could be two distinct forms, one on course evaluation and one on instructor evaluation, with the former perhaps being a boilerplate that could be adapted by the instructor. Holland said that it would not be desirable to add to the amount of time we're asking of students, and that giving them two forms to fill out would be onerous. Another suggestion was that the form begin with course evaluation and then move explicitly to a section calling for instructor evaluation.

The issue of the question, "What grade do you believe you deserve in this course?" came up. It was suggested that "deserve" should be changed to "earned," or that effort and grade should not be together in the same sentence. It was noted that the forms currently in use include a question about why a student is taking a course, which is helpful for assessing a student's attitude; Moore said that this had been removed in an effort to shorten the forms as much as possible. Professor Carolyn Weisz said that it would be more useful to know how much effort a student put into this course relative to the others he/she was taking. Professor Eric Orlin suggested asking how many hours per week the student devoted to the class. Neshyba suggested asking them to indicate whether they spend more time, less, or the same amount of time on this class as their others.

Professor David Sousa said Option C asks students to shoehorn too many different items into single numerical ratings. Professor Keith Ward said he was in favor of Option A, which speaks to Sousa's concern, takes the issues raised in Option C and breaks them down into something we are more familiar with. It gives students a better sense of what we mean in each category, which would also help the FAC understand students' comments better than the more bunched-together approach of Option C.

Professor Alexa Tullis said she supports Option A, but would like it to include the final question that is on the other options: "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." This combines instructor and course. Tullis also said she knows of at least one university locally whose evaluation forms are titled more accurately to reflect that these are students' *perceptions* of teaching and course quality.

Ward said that many students use the last section of the evaluation as a summary, to pull together their thoughts. When they're asked to provide an overall numerical rating, they use that to reflect on their whole experience, and it leads to a sense of what was the most valuable and important.

Professor Judith Kay said she likes Option A, but that question 6a on the 2nd page invites confusion between instructor and course, because it asks students to consider their comments about both, then to provide an overall rating for the course. Weisz said she doesn't think it makes sense to scrupulously separate the two, since the course reflects the qualities of the instructor. What we want is to avoid having students evaluate instructors *personally*, and so it would be preferable to put more emphasis on rating the course. A faculty member noted that in team taught courses, there is a particularly strong distinction to be made between course and instruction.

Tinsley clarified that the distinction he was making regarded the purpose of the document: whether it was being used as a way of improving a course, or as a way of evaluating an instructor.

Professor Karim Ochosi raised concerns about evaluation forms in general. First, he said he would like to see some psychometric research providing evidence that the questions assess what they claim to. Second, he is concerned about how the evaluations are used and interpreted. Third, the forms can be used by

students for retaliation against a minority faculty member put in a position of authority, and then the faculty member finds him- or herself dependent on the goodwill of those who read the evaluations. If Puget Sound stands by its claim to want diversity, it needs to reflect on the impact of diversity on evaluations. He urged that those with expertise in such matters, such Professor Grace Livingston, be invited to give their input.

Ochosi also expressed concern about the tendency of students to use evaluations to give an instructor a “bad grade” in retaliation for a low test score. He expressed support for Options A and B because they call for students to “agree” or “disagree,” rather than to assign grades to their instructors.

There was a straw poll about the different versions; Option A received a clear majority, while B received no votes and C only a few. After some discussion, it was agreed that the subcommittee would continue tinkering with Option A over the summer, then bring it back for a vote at the first faculty meeting in the fall. The Professional Standards Committee may be invited to vet it. Holland invited all interested parties to participate in the tinkering over the summer. The original committee was just Sue Hannaford, Rob Hutchinson, Sarah Moore, Suzanne Holland, and Robin Foster.

Holland noted that this has already been a lengthy process, the survey having been done last spring. Moore said that the survey reflected that there are two separate issues to work out, one having to do with the forms themselves, the other with how the forms are interpreted and used, including considerations of how race and gender factor in. We are currently at work on the first issue, but need to get back to the second, more difficult one.

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## Professional Standards Committee, End-of-Academic-Year Report, 5 May 2010

**Charge Seven – The PSC should consider whether student evaluations of faculty should be conducted electronically.** The PSC indicated its preference that an ad hoc committee composed of faculty interested in electronic evaluations formulate a proposal that the PSC would then review. [PSC Minutes, 23 October 2009] If the Faculty Senate decides not to name such an ad hoc committee, the PSC recommends that this charge be carried over to Academic Year 2010-11.

**Charge Eleven – The PSC should review Option A of the proposed revision of the evaluation forms to identify potential problems and report findings, if any, to the Faculty Senate.** The PSC expeditiously reviewed “Instructor and Course Evaluation Form: Option A.” Multiple members of the PSC praised the form because a) students select from five rather than six points along a scale; b) items seem more sensibly worded; and c) Option A repeats few or no items. However, the PSC was concerned that sections 7 and 8 of Option A, which deal with overall evaluation of and feedback about the **course** rather than the **instructor**, may confuse or fatigue student-respondents.

## **ASC Report on Common Hour Feasibility**

**Senate charge to the ASC:** Consider the feasibility of a class schedule that would both implement a common hour for teaching first-year seminars and allow for a “common hour” for faculty governance and/or campus-wide events.

**Summary of ASC deliberations:** The full committee deliberated on the charge during portions of the 10/26/10, 11/9/10 and 12/7/10 meetings. Several members expressed difficulty in implementing a common hour or hours into their dept course schedules. We agreed that the feasibility of common hours for seminars required a much more in depth analysis, likely by the Registrar, in terms of the availability and scheduling of classroom spaces. Given the perceived difficulties in scheduling even a single common hour for campus-wide events/faculty governance, the ASC proceeded with addressing the issue of having only a common hour for events/governance. Each faculty member was asked to consult with his/her department members and report back on the feasibility within their department. The specific instructions were to identify: 1) the issues/problems of scheduling for a common hour, and 2) what it would require to overcome these problems. Although not a directive of the Senate charge to ASC, input pertaining to the desirability of a common inevitably surfaced as well.

**Departments represented by ASC members:** Exercise Science, Business, Comparative Sociology, Biology, Communication Studies, Music, Classics, Math and Computer Science, Chemistry, Occupational Therapy, and Psychology.

**Summary of department feedback:** Generally, several departments expressed some ability to adjust course scheduling to accommodate a common hour, somewhat dependant upon when that hour would be designated. All represented departments expressed, to varying degrees, that significant challenges exist in order to set aside a common hour within the confines of current scheduling guidelines and/or existing campus facilities. There was a general consensus that such significant hurdles exist in implementing a common hour under our current scheduling guidelines that the university would need to undertake a comprehensive analysis to consider alternative scheduling models that allow for a common hour while meeting the needs of every department’s academic and co-curricular programs. In addressing the issue of feasibility, feedback from departments also included views on the desirability of a common, particularly with concern to whether or not the current campus ethos reflects a value for participation in governance and campus-wide interactions. Inasmuch, some ideas below are aimed to foster a culture of greater faculty interaction, participation in governance, and attendance of events should the campus implement scheduling guidelines that allow for a common hour.



### **1. Issues with scheduling a common hour among departments included:**

- coordination and dependency of scheduling with consideration for when *other* departments' courses were scheduled if/when these courses presented potential conflicts with course scheduling *within* the home department of a student's major
  - similar issues exists for avoiding conflicts in scheduling courses/labs even *within* a major, esp. for science department labs
- courses are already scheduled essentially from 8 am- 5 pm; inasmuch there is no available time for a common hour
- limited or no staff support for classes and labs offered after 5 pm
- only time(s) available under current schedules are considered undesirable, e.g. 8 am on Fridays
- a need to prioritize scheduling of events and/or meetings for common hour to eliminate conflicts, e.g. between competing committees and/or events
- an apparent lack of value and/or motivation for attending university-level meetings and events in light of other demands
- graduate clinical programs in OT/PT may have additional constraints, such as the already fulltime use of clinical labs and patients facilities, that would preclude the ability to block off time(s) in which these courses and clinics could not be scheduled

### **2. What it would require to overcome perceived problems a make a common hour feasible?**

- offering more courses and other scheduled events after 5 pm, with even more labs lasting as late as 10 pm
- even better coordination of equipment already shared between labs and among courses
- eliminating the number of sections offered for a course
- increasing class/lab enrollment limits, which may require additional lab (and even building) space and/or lab equipment, such as more computers or other hardware
- more fully-electronic equipped classrooms
- changing the schedules for other non-course specific activities, such as community music, athletics, music ensembles
- adopting a new fundamental schedule structure, e.g. a student proposal was made for a block course schedule. Another idea was to have more two day/wk teaching options, e.g. MW and TTh courses- leaving F open works on other campuses. But, could we deliver our entire curriculum in fours days?
- creating a culture that encourages attendance and participation in university business/governance, perhaps by increasing the role and type of participation expected of faculty at university-level meetings.
- more compelling content at university-wide gatherings or committee meetings; the common hour has to be "worth it."
- allow for a "semi-protected" common hour in which courses taught by visiting faculty could still be scheduled

- allow faculty to teach during a scheduled common hour only once per academic year to promote the implementation of a common hour while balancing with some unavoidable scheduling constraints in specific departments

**Summary of desirability of common hour:** While its clear that many faculty and departments support the idea of a common hour, it seems that many other constraints on time and/or facilities put a strain on the enthusiasm for overcoming these obstacles, and hence the judgment as to the feasibility is diminished. Inasmuch, it would be insightful to further explore whether some departments and/or faculty members place less value on participating in faculty governance and/or attending campus-wide events and why. Some ASC members feel that such faculty would need to be convinced of the value of a common hour and there would need to be a corresponding shift in the institutional culture to overcome the perceived barriers to implementing a common hour.

In short, there are major obstacles to instituting a common hour and efforts to do so seem unrealistic at this time. Establishing a “voluntary/semi-protected” common hour may be more practical and make more sense as a first step. Further, if the desirability of a common hour is to facilitate participation in faculty governance, particularly attendance at faculty meetings, then, based on departmental feedback, the value of such participation needs to be more clearly articulated and promoted among faculty.

Submitted on 12/10/10  
Gary McCall  
ASC Chair 2010-11