

TEACHING AND ADVISING COMMITTEE

Minutes

2006-2007 Meeting #2

September 21, 2006

Present: Gordon Thomas (chair), Matthew Brehm, Wes Chun, Kathy Dean, Kathe Gabel, Kristine Roby, Linda Morris, Molly Steiner, and Kerri Vierling. Jeanne Christianson and Lisa Jennings (guests).

Absent: Chris Berven and Nick Sanyal

Call to Order: Gordon Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Faculty Lounge of the Brink Hall.

Business and Activities:

- 1) After some initial introductions, the minutes of Meeting #1 were approved with corrections.
- 2) The chair asked Jeanne Christianson, who was part of the Goal One Implementation Team, to speak on the issue of student evaluations. She discussed the work of this team in developing university-wide learning outcomes. She also provided the committee with materials on developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system. These were in the form of a summary of a seminar at the Center for Educational Development and Assessment (CEDA) that Nancy Wanamaker and Ding Johnson from UI had attended in March 2006.

Jeanne urged the committee to include questions on the on-line evaluations that could in some way correspond to the general learning outcomes that are being developed.

Kathy Dean pointed out that this would require a major overhaul of the on-line evaluation system concerning their purpose and function. If student data were needed to evaluate these learning outcomes, the committee should keep in mind that we already gathered student opinion in the form of the senior exit survey.

- 3) General discussion ensued of the advisability of attempting to use the on-line evaluations as a tool to evaluate faculty teaching and to provide data to assess learning outcomes.

Lisa Jennings reported on how difficult it would be to reprogram the questions to provide greater customization.

- 4) The committee then discussed some more general ways in which the on-line evaluation system could be changed. Among the many points raised in this discussion were the following:
 - The current collection of questions had taken a long time to develop and was difficult for the Faculty Council to agree on. It was not likely that we could overhaul all those questions.

- The return rate of the evaluations (62% overall) was not very high and was a matter of concern.
 - The possibility of a faculty member asking a specific open-ended questions would perhaps be a good addition to the current choices.
 - The committee wondered at the percentage of courses whose instructors actually customized the form.
 - The time of day at which students did the evaluation was perhaps a factor in how seriously the students took the responses.
 - Perhaps the on-line forms should include an option for the students to "sign" the form electronically, as a means of promoting greater commitment and responsibility on the part of the students. These "signed" responses would then carry more weight than unsigned, anonymous responses.
- 5) The chair proposed that he write a draft of a short report that would summarize the committee's recommendations about the on-line evaluations, so that the committee could at least have fulfilled its charge to "review" the these evaluation. A more far-reaching revision of these evaluations would then be put off for later in the year or perhaps even taken up by a different committee (a task force, for example).

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting will be Thursday, October 5.

Respectfully submitted,



Gordon Thomas, Chair 2006-2007