

TEACHING and ADVISING COMMITTEE

Minutes

2007-2008 Meeting #1

October 4, 2007, 3:30-4:30

Present: Matthew Brehm (chair), Barbara Zuck, Chris Berven, Nick Sanyal, Cheryl Johnson, Jo Lacher, Molly Steiner, Jeanne Christiansen

Absent: Heather Pearson, Jean Henscheid, Kris Roby, Barbara Williams, Kerri Vierling

Call to Order: Chair called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in room AA 206

Introductions: New and existing committee members introduced themselves.

Meetings: The chair provided the following dates for Fall Semester meetings: Oct 18, Nov 1, Nov 15, Nov 29, and (if necessary) Dec 13. All meetings will take place from 3:30-4:30pm in Room AA 206 (College of Art & Architecture Conference Room).

Business:

- 1) Chair distributed the meeting Agenda, list of committee members, the committee description (section 1640.87 of the Faculty/Staff Handbook), and the committee's "Report on the On-Line Evaluation System" dated November 16, 2006.
- 2) Discussion was held regarding the committee's "Report on the On-Line Evaluation System." Jeanne Christiansen reported on her discussion with Faculty Council (see Addendum #1 at the end of these Minutes), and requested that the TAC review the policy regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching (section 2700 FSH), including input from other parties. The goal would be to potentially revise sections A and B of the policy, and to potentially remove section C. Ultimately the TAC's review and report would lead to action items for revising the policy by the end of Fall Semester 2007.
- 3) Discussion was held regarding the Faculty Development Workshop series – including the three primary foci of 1) Technology in Higher Education, 2) Teaching and Learning, and 3) Assessment of Learning Outcomes. Jeanne Christiansen asked the committee whether it would like to have a voice in the development and organization of the series. The committee agreed that the workshop series would continue to be organized by the Vice Provost's Office, with input as needed from the TAC.
- 4) Discussion was held regarding the Teaching and Advising Excellence Awards, and the processes used to notify potential nominators of the awards as well as the formatting of materials to be submitted by nominees. The committee would like to see clarification in the letter soliciting nominations on who is eligible for the Hoffman Award, such that nominators/nominees would understand better which award to pursue – i.e., the Hoffman Award or the Teaching Excellence Award. Likewise, the letter soliciting nominations for the Advising Awards should ask for clarification from the nominees on whether they are applying for the Graduate or Undergraduate Advising Award. The committee will be provided with the relevant letters and forms for review prior to the next TAC meeting.
- 5) Jeanne Christiansen reported on the existence of Teaching Grants available annually from the Vice Provost's Office to support improved teaching, and asked whether the committee would like to be involved in the proposal review process for awarding the grant money. Concerns were raised regarding the additional workload for the committee. Molly Steiner suggested that proposals be evaluated in April/May for grants to be awarded the following academic year. Such a schedule for evaluating proposals would create less conflict with the TAC's other responsibilities.
- 6) Discussion was held regarding "Report on Advising" submitted by a group led by Bill McLaughlin (<http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/facultycouncil/2007-2008FC/Documents/AdvisingSummitReport.doc>). The report recommends actions to be implemented at a variety of levels (Faculty Council, College,

Department, etc.). Jeanne Christiansen summarized the findings of the report for the committee, and in some instances the recommendations are directed toward the TAC. The action items are to be implemented within a 2-year window.

- 7) Molly Steiner asked about the status of Core Clusters, and it was reported that the UCGE (University Committee on General Education) will be making the recommendation that “clusters” be simplified into a more manageable set of grouped course requirements. Jeanne Christiansen also reported that the existing “Degree Audit” system will be replaced by a new system called “Degree Works” – by all accounts a vastly improved system. These issues evolved into a broader discussion regarding advising. Chris Berven advocated for an improved approach to advising across the board, perhaps involving a greater sense and clarity of standardized expectations throughout all levels of the University, and increasing the amount of information-sharing among units. Molly Steiner said that advising duties and procedures must be valued at the levels of Dean and Department Chair. Jeanne Christiansen agreed that standards could be established. Also, the possibility was raised that some grant money from the Vice Provost’s Office could be used to support faculty travel to regional or other remote advising workshops/conferences.
- 8) Discussion was held regarding New Faculty Orientation. Matt Brehm reported that the TAC has not had much involvement over the previous two years (the extent of his history with the TAC), and was unaware of when or why such involvement had decreased. Jeanne Christiansen described the Orientation session as it occurred this year, with the committee agreeing that there was general improvement as compared to individual member’s experience. It was suggested that, rather than a single orientation session just before the first day of classes, the orientation might continue into the Fall Semester with one or two additional meetings. This would allow new faculty to digest what was learned in the initial session, and to generate more specific questions to be answered as they become acclimated to life on campus.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m. The next meeting will be Thursday, October 18.

Respectfully submitted,
Assistant Professor Matthew Brehm, Chair 2007-2008

ADDENDUM #1:

FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES
2007-2008 Meeting #6, Tuesday, October 2, 2007

[excerpt]

Student Evaluation of Teaching: Jeanne Christiansen, vice provost for academic affairs, brought to council’s attention the need to revisit FSH 2700, the policy on student evaluation of teaching. She noted that when the university faculty had voted to go from paper evaluations to electronic ones, it had been on the basis of a particular set of procedures that were put into the *Handbook* and with the explicit understanding that a thorough review of the new way of doing things would be conducted after four semesters. The four-semester period was up in 2004 when the university was in a state of crisis and that review did not get done. The faculty secretary had brought the issue to the attention of the then vice provost, Linda Morris, in fall 2006 and the vice provost had charged the Teaching and Advising Committee with doing a belated report. The committee had done so and vice provost Christiansen had given that report to council in preparation for this meeting.

As could be expected, given the topic, a lively discussion ensued. Issues raised included; (1) how much of the actual procedure should be written into the policy, (2) how valid is the response, given that the response rate has declined by approximately a third, (3) are we getting useable data or has the current system become obsolete?

There was some discussion of creating a special subcommittee of Faculty Council to address these issues but then it was moved and seconded (Sullivan, Ch. Williams) to charge the Teaching and Advising Committee with a full review of the current system of student evaluation of teaching, taking counsel with

other faculty and students as appropriate, availing themselves of the information that Institutional Research may be able to provide them, and reporting back to Faculty Council by the end of the Fall 2007 semester with possible recommendations concerning both policy and procedures. The motion carried unanimously.