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Annual Report, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee, 2005-2006

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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**Professional Standard Committee
Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Summary Academic Year 2005-2006**

Committee members:

Division representatives:

Expressive Arts: Gloria Cook

Humanities: Nancy Decker - chair

Sciences: Don Griffin

Social Sciences: Maria Ruiz

At-large members:

Alex Boguslawski

David Charles

Steve Phelan

Paul Stephenson - Secretary

Dean of Faculty: Hoyt Edge (ex-officio)

Student:

Summary

The Professional Standard Committee dealt with four major issues

1. review of
 - i. early Critchfield/Ashforth Grant requests, FYRST Grant requests,
 - ii. regular Critchfield/Ashforth/Course Development Grant requests, and
 - iii. Faculty Technology Development Grant requests
2. implementation of the new on-line Course and Instructor Evaluation form
3. creation of an Institutional Review Board (IRB)
4. amendments to the faculty travel policy

1. Critchfield, Ashforth, FYRST, and Faculty Technology Development Grant requests

The committee considered grant proposal in three rounds:

September 28: FYRST, early Critchfield and Cornell Grants

January 24: regular Critchfield, Cornell, Ashforth Grants

April 25: Faculty Technology Development Grants

These reviews brought about some discussion about the need for clearer borders from one grant to the other. There was also discussion concerning a possible need for a cap on the total amount of Rollins-funded support that a faculty member might be permitted to receive over a five-year period. However, the committee ultimately did not come to any consensus on what those limits should be.

2. Implementation of the new on-line Course and Instructor Evaluation form

Having established a new CIE form in January 2005, PSC next worked to evaluate the effectiveness of the new on-line form. To that end PSC created two task forces:

- A task force including individuals with expertise in measurement and statistics considered the CIE results from Fall 2005 and faculty feedback to:
 - Confirm the reliability and validity of the form and the implementation process.
 - Identify critical indicators and methods for identifying problems (e.g., 3 sigma control charts).
- A task force including members of PSC, FEC, and the Dean of the Faculty's office, as well as other constituents in the promotion and tenure process, met to discuss:
 - The most effective means of using the new form in the promotion and tenure process.
 - The relative weight of the CIE in the faculty evaluation process compared to other indicators of teaching excellence (e.g., peer evaluation, outcome measures, etc).

At a meeting on May 3, representatives from both subcommittees came together with Nancy Decker, Maria Ruiz, and Dean Hoyt Edge to discuss the initial results. Paul Harris, the chair of the "measurement and statistics" subcommittee submitted the attached report on the CIE. John Houston represented FEC in the May 3 meeting. He reported that the quantitative results have helped his committee in determining the significance of ambiguous words that often appear in narrative portions of evaluations. The quantitative results help place words like "good" more firmly in the spectrum of student reactions to a class and/or to the instructor.

Paul Harris also sent a copy of an article entitled "Electronic Course Evaluations: Does an online delivery system influence student evaluations?" for our considerations. (see attached)

Reminder: During Fall of 2006, after reviewing the findings and recommendations of these two task forces, the faculty will vote on whether or not to adopt the new CIE on a more permanent basis

3. Creation of IRB

PSC brought to the faculty a proposal for an Institutional Review Board based on the following:

Rollins College Institutional Review Board

Guiding Principles

In order to provide for the protection of human participants and to promote professional research standards, Rollins College is establishing an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The goal of the IRB is to work with administrative, faculty, staff, and student researchers in a collegial way to enhance the validity of their research by helping to ensure that projects involving human participants adhere to established ethical, moral and legal standards. The IRB also serves to weigh any potential risk to research participants against the benefits that the proposed research may provide. Human research is any activity developed for the purpose of collecting and organizing data from human

participants in such a manner as to test hypotheses, address research questions, or contribute to generalizable knowledge. The IRB reviews proposals to confirm that the project design provides safeguards for research participants.

Research proposals involving human subjects at Rollins College should guarantee:

- that ethical and moral standards are in compliance with federal guidelines
- that informed consent has been obtained from all participants
- the anonymity or confidentiality of the participants
- that participation is voluntary and that participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty
- that researchers will avoid the use of deception whenever possible. In the event that deception is essential to the integrity of the research, a debriefing must follow.
- a full IRB review if participants include vulnerable populations such as minors, mentally compromised, or incarcerated people.
- a full IRB review if risk to participants is more than minimal.

Recommendations

- The membership of the IRB should include at least six members and a chair. The six members should include two full-time faculty (one who teaches primarily in undergraduate programs and the other who teaches primarily in graduate programs) elected by the all college faculty, an at-large member appointed by consensus of the IRB, a person from the student affairs division appointed by the provost, and two students (one undergraduate student and one graduate student) elected by the student government association
- The terms of office should be staggered so that membership constantly rotates. The position of IRB chair, a full-time tenured professor, should rotate every three years and the person in this position should receive 4-semester hours course release each year he/she serves as chair
- All proceedings of IRB meetings should remain confidential

During the deliberations of the faculty, the following amendment was added to the policy:

The Executive Committee of the Faculty will nominate a slate of individuals to serve as the provisional Institutional Review Board for a period of no longer than 14 months.

4. Amendments to the Faculty Travel Policy

The Dean of Faculty requested that PSC submit recommendations to him with regard to the distribution of Faculty Travel monies. During the May 3, 2006, Arts and Sciences Faculty meeting PSC communicated its intention to submit these recommendations from the Professional Standards Committee to the Dean of the Faculty concerning faculty travel policy:

1. require that intent to travel forms be submitted to the Dean at stipulated semester deadlines
2. stipulate strict limits as to the amount and use of faculty travel money:
 - a. 2 trips per academic year
 - b. \$1200 total support for domestic travel
 - c. \$1500 total support for international travel
3. require 21-day advance purchase for airline travel
4. limit support of mere conference attendance (without presenting a paper or performance, responding to a paper or speaker, serving on a panel, serving as an officer of the professional association) to 50% of actual travel costs. Faculty members may apply for additional funds up to 80% of actual travel costs. The merits of the applications will be judged based upon their benefit to the individuals and to the College at the discretion of the Dean.

We provided the following reasons for our recommendations:

- exploding faculty travel costs require Dean to scrounge from other budgets
 - budget now \$145 000
 - budget 00-01 \$85 000
- zero increases in budget for 06-07 budget
- If everyone spent allotment next year, need would be \$258 000. (172 full time faculty members)
- Some now spend more than \$1500

There will likely be an interest in continuing the discussion about the faculty travel policy during the Committee's deliberations 2006-07,

**2005-2006 COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION (CIE) FORM
GOALS AND PROGRESS OF “NORMS” TASK FORCE**

Purpose

- The “Norms” task force was composed of individuals with expertise in measurement and statistics in order to consider the CIE results and faculty feedback over the course of the year to:
 - Confirm the reliability and validity of the form and the implementation process
 - Identify critical indicators and methods for identifying problems (i.e., quantitative norms)

Background

- After three years of research and development, PSC offered a new Course and Instructor Evaluation (CIE) form to the Rollins College Arts and Sciences faculty. For a full history of this process see the Web pages at:
 - <http://web65.rollins.edu/~pharris/cie/introduction.html>
 - http://web65.rollins.edu/~pharris/cie/CIE_Colloquium.ppt
- On May 4, 2005, the Arts and Sciences faculty passed a proposal to adopt the new CIE for a trial period during the 2005-2006 academic year. The proposal can be viewed at
 - <http://web65.rollins.edu/~pharris/cie/proposal.doc>
- During this year, PSC was charged with forming two task forces:
 - “Norms” task force to explore the statistical properties of the new quantitative questions and develop appropriate norms to evaluate scores
 - “Application” task force to determine how the CIE should be used in evaluation decisions and its relative weight with regard to other methods of evaluation
- During Fall of 2006, after reviewing the findings and recommendations of these two task forces, the faculty will vote on whether or not to adopt the new CIE on a more permanent basis

About Norms

- When interpreting quantitative responses (scores) norms are critical; they let us know what scores should cause concern and what scores are “normal”
- Like other measurable attributes (e.g., height, weight, BP) there is no one normal score for CIE measures – there is a range of scores that can be considered normal (see Table 1)
- It is possible that the normal range of scores may differ depending on factors such as department, division, level of classes
- CIE scores that fall outside the normal range will should draw attention; non-normal scores may be cause for concern (i.e., a particularly low score) or celebration (i.e., a particularly high score)
- Patterns of consistently low scores should cause greater concern than an occasional low score (i.e., this the difference between a one-time problem and a long-term problem)
- If norms are not established, interpreting scores is left to each individual, creating the potential for confusion, misuse, and abuse of quantitative results in evaluation and decision making
- CIE scores are only one source of information and should be balanced with other indicators of course and teaching quality

Table 1
Analogy Between Body Weight and CIE Scores

<i>Body Weight</i>	<i>CIE Scores</i>
There is no one normal body weight for human beings, there is a range of weights that are considered normal	For each CIE question, there is no one score that is normal, there is a range of normal scores
Ranges of normal weights vary with a number of factors including age, height, and gender	Ranges of normal CIE scores may vary over time or across departments, divisions, or course levels
Weight that is outside the normal range draws attention and may be cause for concern	CIE scores that are below the normal range may be cause for concern (those above the normal range may be cause celebration)
A recurring pattern of non-normal weight should cause greater concern than an occasional fluctuation outside the range of normality	A recurring pattern of non-normal low CIE scores should cause greater concern than an occasional low score
Without established norms for weight, medical professionals might make faulty decisions that could potentially cause harm to patients (e.g., unnecessary treatment; withholding treatment when it is necessary)	Without established norms for CIE scores, quantitative data may be misunderstood and misused in a way that could potentially cause harm to faculty and the institution
Weight is only one indicator of health – a good physician will take a variety of factors into consideration when assessing physical and psychological well-being	CIE scores are only one source of information about course and teaching quality – a good system of evaluation should take a number of factors into consideration when assessing faculty for promotion and tenure

Goals of Norms Task Force

- Data Reduction – Although faculty may want to examine the 28 scale questions individually, a smaller set of indicators may help to summarize the results (see attached list of “Critical Indicators”)
 - Two “overall” questions (overall ratings of course and professor)
 - Five scales that combine 26 individual questions – these categories were used when initially developing the CIE questions:
 - Outcomes – What the student obtained from the class
 - Organization – How well the class was structured
 - Effective Teaching – Ratings of professor’s skills as an educator
 - Caring and Concern – Relationship factors in teacher-student interaction
 - Engagement – The degree to which the student was drawn into the course

- Scales have an advantage over individual questions in that they represent broader conceptual categories and they are less susceptible to random fluctuations (i.e., they are more stable)
- Control Limits – The range of normal scores is defined by an upper and a lower limit; the task force must decide on the criteria to be used to set these limits
- Comparison Groups – Once the “formula” for calculating control limits is decided, relevant normative groups must be decided
 - One size fits all for the whole campus?
 - Different limits depending on division, department, or course level?
- Report and Recommendations – Summarize recommendations for faculty so that the vote on the CIE during Fall 2006 can be informed

Other Issues, Other Committees

- CIE in the Big Picture – A separate task force as specified in the approved proposal will be discussing the role of the CIE in the context of other indicators of teaching effectiveness (e.g., peer review, objective outcomes, etc.)
- Education – If the institution adopts a quantitative form, there will need to be some effort to educate faculty on how to read and understand reports, and how to use this information in efforts to improve the quality of teaching
- Continuous Development – In a dynamic educational environment, the effectiveness of assessment tools must be checked periodically; the CIE should continue to be monitored and should be considered a work that will always be “in progress”

CRITICAL INDICATORS FROM CIE

Overall Evaluation (Single Questions)

Overall Course	Overall, how would you rate this course?
Overall Professor	Overall, how would you rate this professor?

Scales

Outcomes 5 Questions, $\alpha = .94$

Interest	Sparked a desire to learn more about the topic
Critical Thought	Ability to evaluate information and form conclusions
Skills	Taught you specific skills relevant to the field
Knowledge	Increased your understanding of the topic
Perception	Course caused you to think about the world in a different way

Organization 5 Questions, $\alpha = .89$

Organization	Course had a clearly identifiable structure including goals and strategies for reaching goals
Syllabus	Organized, clear, & comprehensive
Policies	Course policies (e.g., attendance, late assignments, etc.) were clearly stated and followed
Grading	Prompt, fair, & useful assessment & feedback on performance
Homework	Assignments aided in the learning process

Effective Teaching 6 Questions, $\alpha = .88$

Effective	Able to explain complex material & accomplish course goals
Interesting	Draws your interest & keeps your attention
Enthusiastic	Genuinely excited about teaching & interacting with students
Knowledgeable	Comprehensive & current knowledge in her/his field
Discussion	Involving students in meaningful dialogue
Prepared	Organized & prepared when teaching students

Caring and Concern 5 Questions, $\alpha = .90$

Respectful	Treats students with courtesy and respect
Egalitarian	Treats students equally – does not play favorites
Tolerant	Open to student attitudes & opinions that are not her/his own
Supportive	Encourages students to do their best & supports their efforts
Available	Easy to approach & available for meetings outside of class

Engagement 5 Questions, $\alpha = .90$

Engagement	You were drawn into the learning experience
Challenge	Course required you to work at your full potential
Enjoyment	Learning in this class was enjoyable
Participation	Degree to which you actively contributed while in class
Preparation	Attended class having completed assigned readings & homework
Performance	Your overall level of achievement in this class