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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee Meeting, Thursday, January 14, 2010

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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Professional Standard Committee
Minutes—January 14, 2010
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Bush 105

The meeting was convened at 4 p.m. by Thomas Moore. Faculty members present were Joshua Almond, Erich Blossey, Marc Fetscherin, Emily Russell, and Claire Strom. Assoc. Dean Don Davison was also present.

- 1) Announcements—Paul Harris’s CIE tutorial will be released by the end of February. We will meet at 4pm on January 28 in lieu of our regular meeting to review grant proposals (location TBA).
- 2) Old Business
 - a. H. Kypraios will appear before the committee next week.
 - b. Evaluation of teaching (Blossey/Strom): E. Blossey distributed a handout reviewing the definition and principles of peer review for faculty evaluation (see attached). Blossey suggests that an elaboration of our currently vague criteria would require a bylaw change. T. Moore notes that 2 plans for evaluation are forthcoming from the Merit Pay Committee, but that while those plans specify the weight applied to teaching, they are no more specific than our current criteria. E. Blossey asks if a set of guidelines incorporated into the Faculty Handbook would be more straightforward than a bylaw change. Davison replied that changing the handbook would be easier, but lacks the faculty-centered democratic process involved in a bylaw change; the handbook reflects administrative decisions, but since this issue touches the day-to-day life of faculty, it needs to come before faculty. Involving faculty, however, could take different forms and might include either a change to handbook—with a straw vote—or bylaws. M. Fetscherin asked, is this a problem with implementation or are the criteria inadequate? E. Blossey observed that even existing teaching evaluation criteria are often unevenly enforced and there is no body to enforce standards. E. Russell asked, are we developing criteria to define evaluations in general, e.g. a faculty observation must include classroom observation, or are we outlining a specific evaluation rubric, e.g. a set of concrete criteria by which classroom observation can be assessed? T. Moore responded that as a committee we should define the makeup of a teaching evaluation. E. Blossey added that in terms of implementation, departmental evaluation committee should be responsible for review. E. Russell expressed concerns about the feasibility and jurisdictional implications of moving forward with a series of competing proposals from multiple committees, and asked, when will these conversations will be integrated? T. Moore responded that we plan to suggest a model for teaching evaluation that will cover the college as a whole. J. Almond summarized to general acclaim: Our goal is to construct a model of teaching evaluation with clarity, transparency, and fairness.
 - c. Update on blended learning: T. Moore had no progress to report from AAC.

3) New Business

- a. CIE for Holt and graduate classes: E. Russell offered an update on previous concerns about structural problems with CIEs, namely: consistent evaluations for field study courses; adapting questions as appropriate for lab and studio courses; individual instructor evaluations for team taught-courses; the timely administration of intersession and field study course evaluations. Each of these concerns needs to be addressed by cooperation between student records and IT because CIEs are tied to Banner course numbers. E. Russell will coordinate with J. Almond and will hand off follow-up for this project to him. D. Davison raised the further concern that all four Holt graduate programs have different evaluation instruments. We agreed that these evaluations should be keyed to the current CIE. T. Moore noted that if we require graduate programs to move to the A&S CIE, we will run into problems with integrating their higher averages, adding that grad teaching is different animal. M. Fetscherin suggests that despite clear differences, teaching is teaching, and some data for these courses would be more valuable than the current model. T. Moore suggests that we invite the heads of graduate programs to talk about evaluation instruments.

Respectfully submitted by Emily Russell

Attachments: 1

A Review of Peer Review!

1. A Definition of Peer Review of Teaching:

“Peer review of teaching is informed colleague judgment about faculty teaching for either fostering improvement or making personnel decisions”.

Nancy Van Note Chism, “Peer Review of Teaching”, 2nd edition, Anker Publishing-Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2007.

2. Where Used:

- Hiring faculty
- Establishment of community practice
- Mentoring and coaching faculty
- Merit faculty pay or salary increases
- Decisions on contract renewals
- Proper assignment of faculty (courses and/or departments)
- Promotion and tenure decisions
- Approval of faculty sabbatical requests
- Decisions regarding faculty teaching awards
- Evaluation of post-tenure faculty

3. Type of Review Evaluations:

- **Formative:** provides instructors with information that can be used to improve their teaching. This use is more personal and not for public consumption.
- **Summative-** used in personnel decisions. This type of evaluation is for more public use and dissemination. Includes more quantitative and comparative information.

4. Why Use Peer Review?

Increased emphasis and responsibility placed on the teaching profession to *monitor* itself has involved the use of peer review to a greater extent than that of student evaluations.

*“When teaching is viewed as professional knowledge, there must be an accepted way to define characteristics of teaching excellence and to make judgments based on a stated set of **criteria** and **standards** that reflect the complexity of teaching. Because peer review is a way of making teaching public, it is also seen as enhancing the value of teaching and engaging peers in scholarly examination of their profession”.*

The culture of teaching recently has focus on a large degree of privacy: “*Shulman points out that such culture inhibits the growth of what Boyer (1990) has termed the **scholarship of teaching**, the thoughtful, problem-solving, discipline-based approach to teaching that involves continual reasoning about instructional choices, awareness of the solutions that other scholars have made to key problems in facilitating student learning in the field, and active, ongoing research about the effects of instructor actions on student learning”.*

Nancy Van Note Chism, "Peer Review of Teaching", 2nd edition, Anker Publishing-Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2007.

5. How and What?

- Peer review of course materials
- Classroom observations
- Special contexts: laboratories, studios, practice settings, POGUL, case studies approach, team teaching, and blended learning.

6. Contributions to the scholarship of teaching, departmental contributions to teaching, and leadership of teaching.

7. Teaching portfolios

8. To Do?

We have in place (faculty bylaws and handbook for faculty) a number of rather vague criteria that would be difficult to use with an increased emphasis on peer review rather the current major weight placed student evaluations. Development of more specific descriptors of Sections 5 and 6 above would lead to the possibility of implantation of better system of evaluation.