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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee Meeting, Thursday, February 25, 2010

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee

February 25th, 2010

The meeting was convened in Bush 105 at 4:03 p.m. by Thomas Moore.

In attendance were Erich Blossey, Marc Fetscherin, Josh Almond, Billy Kennedy, Claire Strom, and Laurie Joyner. Invited guests were Don Rogers, Alicia Holmrich and Patricia Lancaster.

Approval of the minutes of the February 18 meeting was postponed until the meeting on March 4.

Announcements:

The chair was chastised for insensitivity, poor memory, and an egregious lack of propriety. He agreed that he owed Professor Strom a drink for forgetting that he had asked her to manage the passage of the open access motion at the faculty meeting on February 25. He offered his resignation as chair, which was rejected by the committee to further punish him.

The committee was reminded that the proposals for the Collaborative Scholarship Program are due March 1 and that consideration of these proposals will take place at the meeting on March 18.

Business:

The chair asked the committee for a sense on whether there needed to be a discussion before the Faculty Salary Council was allowed to review personnel documents, including Course and Instructor Evaluations, as part of the merit pay process. The committee unanimously agreed that the FSC should have access to all pertinent records and that there was no need for a discussion of this.

Old business was tabled so that the invited guests could contribute to a discussion on Course and Instructor Evaluations used in master's programs.

Moore noted that the CIEs for the master's programs were not available to the Dean of the Faculty. This needs to change, but in the process we should discuss whether we need a standardized CIE for these programs. Currently there are two forms that are very similar, with the other two being quite different.

Rogers, Holmrich and Lancaster all responded that graduate programs need a different CIE than the one that the undergraduate programs use. Rogers noted that he was especially interested in keeping the open-ended questions, and additionally he believes that it is important to keep them before questions with numerical choices.

Lancaster noted that the MLS program is in the process of moving to online responses, so this discussion comes at a good time. However, she also agrees that the undergraduate CIE is not the appropriate vehicle for a graduate program.

Holmrich noted that the high response rate that they get is something they do not want to sacrifice, so there may be issues with an online form. There are also questions of what role these responses play in the accreditation process. However, she agrees that a graduate-level specific CIE is appropriate. She also noted that there may be problems with standardization across programs.

Joyner noted that it is important to have the information at an institutional level, especially in the case where faculty teach both graduate and undergraduate courses. She proposed that the solution may be a standardized evaluation with additional questions for specific programs.

The guests agree that it may be possible to standardize some questions across the graduate level programs, and even use some of the questions used in the undergraduate CIE. However, they all reiterate the importance of including program-specific questions, especially those that require a written response.

Almond noted that discussions with IT have revealed that altering the CIE online will take up to a year to complete. Although no one is sure why this is so, it does indicate that implementation for next fall is probably an unreasonable goal.

Lancaster, Holmrich and Rogers agree that they will meet with a representative of the education department and determine a series of questions from the undergraduate CIE that are appropriate for use on a graduate-level evaluation. These questions will be incorporated into new graduate-level CIEs that are specific to each program. This will allow the administration to make some comparisons at an institutional level while still keeping the questions that are important for programmatic reasons. The programs will submit these questions to the PSC, with the goal of contacting IT with the changes by the end of the current semester.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.