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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 12, 2006

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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Professional Standards Committee
Approved Minutes from September 12, 2006
12:30 pm CSS 249

Next Meeting: 12:30-1:30 p.m., Sep. 26, 2006 (CSS 249).

Introduction/Preliminaries

The meeting was convened at 12:30 pm in CSS 249 by the chair, Wendy Brandon. Faculty members present were: Gloria Cook, Don Griffin, Steve Phelan, Alicia Homrich, Mario D'Amato, Maria Ruiz, and Paul Stephenson. Associate Dean Deb Wellman was also present as well as Paul Harris (who was invited by the committee to discuss the C.I.E.).

1. Agenda Items

A. Early Grant Proposal Information Session

(Since only 2 faculty were interested in attending the information session the Chair (Wendy Brandon) was able to meet with them directly to answer questions without the need of a formal 20 minute session)

B. Old Business

Introductions of new PSC members
Approval of 8/29/06 minutes
Review of Grant Proposal Form Revisions
C.I.E. Discussion

C. New Business

9/8 Executive meeting report
Webpage updating
Faculty Party Theme
Role of Exec. Committee
Request from Dean Edge for PSC to discuss the issue of a special category of long-term, full-time non-faculty hires that would be eligible for renewable contracts each year and no restrictions on the number of times the contract could be renewed.

D. Other Business

Diversity Goals

2. Old Business

I. Introductions: W. Brandon introduced Mario D'Amato to the committee and notified the PSC that two students (Tyler Kartzinell and another whose name she could not recall) may be attending regularly scheduled PSC meetings.

II. Approval of minutes (8/29/06): The minutes were approved as amended...a statement by Debra Wellman amended to read as follows:

D. Wellman added that the new C.I.E. showed an elevated level of narrative responses with a negative tone. This seems due to the new narrative questions #6 "What, if anything, could have been changed about this course to improve your learning experience?" and #7 "What were the major strengths and weaknesses of the instructor?" which prompt students to critique the course and instructor.

III. Review of the new Grant Proposal Form: PSC examined the revised grant proposal application for Critchfield/Ashforth, Individual Development, Course development, and Cornell Research Grants. PSC approved the new format and the new "report form" section. The PSC discussed dates for the review of Grant Applications. **Wednesday, October 4, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cornell Campus Center** was set to be the date for grant reviews.

IV. C.I.E. Discussion: At the request of the PSC, Paul Harris attended the meeting to answer questions regarding the interpretation of the C.I.E. results and to discuss the manner in which the C.I.E. should be used with regard to

tenure and promotion. P. Harris distributed to members of the PSC some background documents relevant to discussion of the C.I.E.

1. A copy of the proposal adopting the C.I.E. which was approved by the faculty (5/4/05).
2. A summary of recent C.I.E. results
3. Documents that outline how to use an instrument such as the C.I.E. by looking for trends and patterns of responses that can help you to accurately evaluate teaching.

He also provided documentation regarding the two task forces that PSC is charged with putting together with regard to the C.I.E.

Task Force 1 is already convened and is composed of Maria Ruiz, Paul Harris and Don Davison

Task Force 2 is to be composed of members from PSC, FEC, the Dean of faculty's Office, as well as other constituents in the tenure and promotion process.

P. Harris began the discussion by noting that the mean score for most questions on the C.I.E. is above 4 (on the 1-5 scale). The means are heavily skewed towards excellent. Since the data is skewed, you need to focus on the tail end of the scale and not focus on single numbers but a range of values. He also noted that the C.I.E. is composed of questions grouped as lists of multiple indicators (e.g. Outcomes, Organization, Effective teaching, Caring and Concern, Engagement). All are closely related and you would not expect to see extremely different responses from students on one vs. another.

M. Ruiz asked what the α designation meant above each category.

P. Harris replied that it is a measure of how closely related the subtopics are on each scale.

P. Harris noted that the college must "norm" internally because other institutions do not share their evaluation data between schools. He also noted that the diversity among types of measures between schools is huge (e.g. qualitative vs. quantitative formats, 7 point scales, 9 point scales, etc.). There is no national "norming" available, so the college must "norm" internally, which is what Rollins has already been doing. Ideally, if we use the C.I.E. from now on, professors should be able to see a summary of their scores for the past several years to help them evaluate their teaching.

W. Brandon asked about procedural issues. How professors get students to complete the C.I.E...what effect does that have?

P. Harris replied that some schools withhold grades until students complete the evaluations but it doesn't always work. He noted that ultimately it comes down to a "carrot or stick" approach. He stated that did not know the answer.

D. Griffin voiced his concern that students put off completing the C.I.E. until late in the year and then sit down, fatigued, at the computer in their room and try to do all 4 of their C.I.E.s in a row.

P. Harris replied that this was really a decision for the administration to make. If the faculty wanted to go back to a scantron type form, it could be done. Few people have opted for the scannable handwritten forms. A concern with the handwritten forms is that professors can recognize students' handwriting. He further noted that initially when the C.I.E. was conceived the idea was to implement it somewhat like voting, with groups of students being assigned a date and time to complete the C.I.E. online.

A question was raised about the return rate for the C.I.E. (what percentage of the student body completed the forms?). Discussion ensued and the consensus was that return rates were lower in the spring semester than the fall. And that the spring return rate was ~80%.

D. Griffin raised the question of evaluation by the FEC. How do we handle the different forms that candidates will now have in their records? Right now, the FEC only has access to narrative comments. The FEC does not have access to any of the numerical scores generated by the C.I.E.

S. Phelan added that it was the teacher's responsibility to show the FEC how they have used their evaluations. How have they learned from the C.I.E.? As long as we can keep this in the hands of each individual faculty member this will work fine.

P. Harris replied that this year nobody in the Dean's office (or FEC) can see the quantitative numbers. He then demonstrated how one would use the C.I.E. Patterns and Results to Make Decisions handout, to analyze the quantitative measures of the CIE.

For example: If a professor is consistently getting a low score in Caring/Compassion in all of their classes, then that might point out an area where improvement needs to be made. Of greatest concern would be low scores in all courses, in all areas, in all semesters. Of lesser concern would be a single low score in a single class for a single semester.

He went on to explain that we should be looking for a pattern that crosses both quantitative and qualitative measures. The "numbers camp" and the "narrative camp" are complimentary.

D. Griffin stated that P. Harris had just described the perfect use of these forms. His concern is...will these be evaluated correctly in that manner. He suggested that there should be training for the faculty evaluation committee on how to use these forms intelligently.

W. Brandon asked if there was a way to know the characteristics of the faculty scoring at the lower end of the scale (e.g. gender, age, etc...)?

P. Harris replied that confidentiality rules prevented that.

W. Brandon asked, what if we find that our students are reacting to types of professors time after time?

P. Harris replied that one has to ask ...does this make them a bad professor? Or is something else going on? What do other measures tell us? He noted that Rollins has no formal peer review system but other institutions use such a system.

D. Wellman commented that she came from an institution that had a point system and that she was afraid of using a single point value to rate faculty at Rollins.

P. Harris clarified...There is no single point value generated by the C.I.E. The scores which appear to be single point summations ("Overall Professor" and "Overall Course") are actually single questions for students on the C.I.E. and not an average of all the other C.I.E. values rolled into one. P. Harris continued, clearly you can't start throwing these figures about at individuals. It's an issue in terms of FEC because of continuity on the committee. People should not look at these scores as an "I feel bad" or "I feel good" set of numbers. Professors should use their scores as a tool to help their teaching.

Discussion ensued in the PSC regarding the implementation of educational sessions so that Department Chairs, FEC, and Jr. Faculty learn how the C.I.E. is to be used and its strengths and limitations.

M. Ruiz remarked that teaching Jr. faculty on how to use this as a tool is important so that when they come to FEC they can discuss their evaluations in terms of how they use their C.I.E. results.

P. Harris noted that education of faculty and administrators regarding the C.I.E. should be done in conjunction with members or representatives of the second C.I.E. task force, so that everyone agrees on *How* the C.I.E. is to be used in evaluation of faculty. He further noted that FEC would be happy to get some guidelines.

W. Brandon asked... how should we start?

P. Harris replied that the two task forces should be running in parallel. PSC needs to put the 2nd task force together. The second task force must address issues of how the C.I.E. and other indices are to be used in evaluating faculty. The second task force is dealing with a "weighting" issue.

M. Ruiz commented that she sees the relationship between the two task forces as one in which task force one tells task force 2 how the C.I.E. is to be properly used.

G. Cook noted that the records show that the second task force is supposed to be headed by S. Phelan and H. Edge.

W. Brandon asked...what about the PSC being the second task force?

Discussion followed about the stipulations of the composition of such a task force... *members from PSC, FEC, the Dean of faculty's Office, as well as other constituents in the tenure and promotion process.*

After this, D. Griffin and P. Harris summarized the task at hand for the two groups.....

Task Force One:

- a. Instrumentation
- b. Education

Task Force Two:

- a. Implementation

P. Harris added that all parties involved must establish the “norms” for the C.I.E. There must be cut off points. He suggested that these be scores that fall in the range of the lowest 5% or 10%, to really capture the tail of the distribution. But he cautioned that you don’t want a single score in that range to be overweighted.

D. Griffin suggested using standard deviations as cut offs. For example, two standard deviations below the mean.

P. Harris replied that when the C.I.E. was developed they proposed using the lowest 10% as a cut off point because percentages seem to be easier for our faculty to understand.

W. Brandon proposed that the PSC fulfill task force two’s charge of developing an implementation strategy within the next two meetings.

P. Harris commented that it would be better to bring in external people for Task Force 2.

M. Ruiz supported that sentiment stating that it was a stronger way to do it, with a second independent committee for task force two.

3. New Business

At this point time was short and D. Wellman asked PSC to quickly consider the request from Dean Edge for PSC to discuss the issue of a special category of long-term, full-time non-faculty hires that would be eligible for renewable contracts each year and no restrictions on the number of times the contract could be renewed.

Members of the committee exchanged brief comments on the subject. Most expressed hesitation to endorse such a proposal. D. Griffin pointed out that it may not be within the legal ability of the college to do such a thing. There may be AAUP restrictions prohibiting such contracts.

4. Adjourn The meeting was adjourned (2:00 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Stephenson, Recording Secretary