

University Council on Teaching
Meeting on 10/9/2013
Waul House Presentation Room
10:30 -12:00pm

MINUTES

Present: Jackie Lerner (Chair), Kathy Bailey, Tom Groome, Michael Martin, Sue Barrett, Jeffrey Cohen, Stephanie Leone, Vidya Madhavan, Katie McInnis-Dittrich

Guests: Rita Owens, Patricia DeLeeuw and Don Hafner, Office of the Provost

The minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Rita Owens, Executive Director for Academic Technology, provided an update on the Academic Innovation Program, which is jointly sponsored by the UCT and Academic Technology Advisory Board (ATAB). The program is designed to enhance student-faculty interaction through technology, especially in large classes, interdisciplinary classes, experiential classes, foreign languages, and writing. Rita invited faculty from all of these categories to come together for meetings and to generate ideas. A subcommittee from the UCT and ATAB identified possible projects from among those discussed, which were then were scoped and investigated over the summer. Ten, described in the attached document, are moving forward. The projects will support classes in the College of Arts and Sciences, CSOM, LSOE and the Law School, as well as more general areas (e.g., study abroad).

The projects will run for two years, with a budget \$75,000 per year from the UCT and \$250,000 from ATAB. The budget covers stipends, technology and other needs. Rita credits Manager of Innovative Programs, Bryan Blakely, with much of the work on this project.

After bringing this report to the UCT today, she will take it to ATAB.

Several questions followed the presentation. Vidya Madhavan asked about the time burden on students participating in these projects, as most of them require additional out-of-class work. Rita said that this is one of the questions her group will be studying over the next two years. Another question was whether BC is taking advantage of already existing tools. For example, if a textbook offers a good online supplement, will BC purchase it? The answer is yes.

Jeff Cohen asked if there is any consideration of purchasing plagiarism-detection software. Rita said that the new CMS, Canvas, offers that option and that BC will investigate it. Blackboard also offers plagiarism software, but most faculty are unaware of it.

Rita suggested a joint meeting of the UCT and ATAB.

Next, the UCT discussed two pieces of business from last academic year. Last spring, the UCT proposed that a policy on consensual relationships between faculty and students be added to the Faculty Handbook. The UCT wrote up a policy and would like to present it for inclusion in the handbook. After brief discussion, Pat DeLeeuw said that the next steps will be to present it for discussion to the Council of Deans and the Provost's Advisory Council.

Also last spring, the UCT wrote a response to the report of the Alcohol Task Force (ATF), specifically to its finding that binge drinking at BC does not appear to have a negative impact on GPA. The UCT supported the recommendations of the ATF to increase the rigor of BC courses and especially recommended further attention be given to grade inflation, an area where the UCT has done work in the past. Don Hafner reported that statistics from last year show that grade inflation has begun to level off. This may be due to increased information available to faculty about how their grades compare with those of others in their departments and at BC in general. Don will follow up with more information as it becomes available.

Pat DeLeeuw reported on progress towards the Center for Teaching Excellence. The CTE may open as soon as Fall of 2014. An RFP for designers is being completed and a search for a director may begin in the spring. The director should have experience running a center that combines instructional design technology with traditional teaching support. It should also be someone who is good at outreach and can develop programs that attract faculty from across schools and departments.

Don Hafner shared the results of the Advisor Evaluations developed by the UGBC. Students completed the evaluations last year and the results reflect some dissatisfaction with advising, especially in the areas of help with long term academic goals and planning and with interest in students' non-academic life (involvement in co-curricular activities, internships, etc.). The UCT wondered if there are positive interventions that would improve the situation. For example, the university could sponsor workshops on how to be an effective advisor or distribute advising guides such as those offered by the UGBC.

At future meetings, the UCT will discuss the transition from tracking courses to credit hours and whether it has resulted in any new 1-or 2-credit courses, questions about granting transfer credit for online courses and the study of self-esteem among women students at BC.

Meetings for the semester will be November 6 and December 11, 10:30 to 12:00, Waul House.

Submitted by Sue Barrett