

**University Council on Teaching  
Meeting of Tuesday, September 20, 2021  
12:00-2:00, CTE Seminar Room**

**Meeting Minutes**

**University Council on Teaching Meeting of Tuesday, February 9, 2021 12:30-2:00, Zoom Meeting**

**Attendees: Kathleen Bailey, Billy Soo, Patricia Tabloski, Anna Karpovsky, Daniel Daly, Julia Devoy, Jacqueline Lerner, Kristin Heyer, Jessica Black, Sarah Castricum, Shaylonda Barton, Stacy Grooters, Sylvia Sellers-Garcia, Peter Pinto**

The meeting began with an update on the CTE and its roundtable events. The current series of roundtables will continue after their strong success last semester. There is a roundtable upcoming that will focus on contemporary approaches to trauma informed pedagogy that we hope will help raise awareness of something very relevant in the world today and will take into account questions and concerns of teachers and students. The CTE will keep the current roundtable format in place but is currently looking for more informal conversations. In addition, junior faculty conversations on teaching have also been conducted that follow a similar format but are offered only to faculty who are in their first and second year at BC. This junior faculty program is ongoing with the first session taking place last week and three more this semester and four planned for Spring Semester. The CTE is currently advertising these junior faculty conversations and hope that it will scale in the coming semesters.

The next topic of conversation centered on the midsemester feedback project. The lead committee member explained that the project is almost over but noted that gathering data on the feedback will require a considerable amount of additional time and devotion. Regarding the success the new feedback, preliminary data revealed that the uptake of the new form by faculty was less than originally hoped for. However, the UCT hopes that further data relating to professor usage will provide more insight into the success of the program. Currently, there is no pressing need for this project and data gathering and so the UCT can take a break from the surveys for now. Plans are underway to send out the midsemester feedback on October 1<sup>st</sup> or at some point during the first week of October. The Provost's Office will send out a memo to faculty alerting them to the arrival and need to complete the midsemester feedback forms.

The meeting then moved to the topic of the syllabus search tool on canvas and the attempt to increase its usage amongst current professors. Overall, incorporating the syllabus search tool was unsuccessful for the current Fall Semester. The UCT hopes that the tool will be fully utilized and efficient by November 2021 so that it can be fully operational before Spring registration. The syllabus tool is currently operating on an "opt-in" setting rather than an "opt-out." The committee members expressed approval that changing this system to "opt-out" could assist in the usage rate and compliance of professors. A committee member then asked how soon the canvas infrastructure could implement the new system? As of right now, the new Eagle Apps system has caused a delay in the implementation of the program.

The purpose of the syllabus search tool is to assist students with registration since it allows them to survey the class and its requirements without registering and then determining whether they wish to remain in the class. In addition, access to the tool also fulfills legal requirements relating to national education policies. Although technically operational, the tool has been significantly hindered by bugs and a confusing interface, leading to a faculty compliance rate of approximately 7% (an extremely low and unacceptable number). In the long run, the committee expects that Eagle Apps will provide a better interface and search tool. The committee hopes that by adjusting the structure to opt-in and providing time for Eagles Apps to mature, the compliance rate amongst faculty will significantly increase.

The committee is planning to have the tool ready for spring semester (thus fully operational by November when students register). An email will be sent to faculty encouraging them to upload their syllabus onto canvas so that the tool can automatically pull it and upload it. The committee will also encourage them to upload their old syllabus if an updated one is unavailable.

A committee member then proposed creating a tutorial that would provide detailed instruction to faculty regarding how to properly upload syllabi and use the tool. Another committee member suggested that rather than a mass email, the issue be circulated to the chairs and deans of departments in the hopes that the response rate among faculty would be higher if impressed upon by their respective chairs. A committee member responded, however, that the purpose of shifting the tool into Canvas was so that the deans and chairs would not be involved and it would instead be purely faculty driven. In addition, department administrators already are overwhelmed with their current number of tasks and it would be unfair to make them responsible for the uploading of at least 100 syllabi each semester. The committee then proposed that all committee members attempt to upload their syllabus to at least on current course and the student member can test to see if such actions were successful.

The last topic of the committee was a discussion regarding the primary issues and topics that the committee should center on for this academic semester. The possible topics included: student mental health, academic integrity, pandemic learning, academic advising and grade inflation. The committee chair asked: What would be the most helpful topic to work on this semester for both the student and faculty bodies.

Regarding Academic Integrity, the recent case out of Dartmouth Medical School found that a technological mistake in Canvas was the primary cause of the perceived cheating scandal. The internal audit office of BC has said that they are reviewing the policies in order to avoid any negative publicity if a similar situation were ever to occur at BC. The initial thrust of this review was focused on online learning. However, in the course of all their research, they've broadened their scope a bit more. More information regarding academic integrity and student recommendations will be sent to the BC administration and other committee members as well.

Regarding student mental health, a committee member suggested that academic integrity is reflective of student mental health. The committee should really address the student mental health issue and come up with some ways of addressing it, including focusing on the pandemic's effect on student mental health.

A committee member then proposed the creation of a subcommittee that would investigate successful innovations on other campuses that address student mental health. The committee would champion these policies internally for possible approval and implementation. Two committee members then volunteered to lead the project, but all other members are encouraged to participate as well.

The committee then moved to discussing Academic Advising. Regarding student feedback, many students have expressed disappointment with their advisors in that many have failed to show up to meetings or have been inexperienced in the field of their advisee's major. The students were very vocal in their complaints, especially that relating to incoming freshman orientation. A committee member then suggested inviting Joe Desciak, director of the Academic Advising Center to meet with the committee to discuss how to improve the mechanism by which advisors are assigned to students.

CSOM, CSON and LSOE advising seem to be working very well. MCAS is the only school with significant issues. Only HCE students did not have significant issues due to the fact that the engineering department was purposeful in assigning prospective engineering students faculty advisors based in engineering.

The chair then asked the committee who they would like to hear from at the next meeting? This could include someone from either the academic integrity audit office, the academic advising center, or UGBC.

The committee then agreed that the academic integrity center and UGBC may be more universally applicable since advising for students is only MCAS problem and thus they should be prioritized. Additionally, advising and academic integrity are much more pressing.

A committee member then suggested that student input would be most valuable and asked whether there is an advisory council of students that could contribute to various meetings such as this. He then asked whether there should be a student rep on the UCT? This suggestion was tabled until a future meeting.

Lastly, TAMES cycles are due October 4th. Thus, by the October 18th UCT meeting everything should be ready. Two committee members are required to review these grants. TAM grants are not until February however. No call for proposals has been set out yet as the committee fears faculty may be overwhelmed by emails currently. An email will be sent however to select faculty and department administrators to remind them of the TAMES grants.

Sincerely Submitted,  
Peter Pinto