**ATTENDANCE:** Sarah Beckjord (Romance Languages); Sue Barrett (Connors Family Learning Center); Jonathan Laurence (Arts and Sciences); Dominic Doyle (School of Theology and Ministry); Jeff Cohen (Carroll School of Management); Bob Murphy (Arts and Sciences); Chris Hepburn (Arts and Sciences) Jacqueline Lerner (Lynch School of Education); Michael Martin (Arts and Sciences); Pat DeLeeuw (Provost’s Office); Don Hafner (Provost’s Office).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Chris Hepburn called the meeting to order at 12:10.

**MINUTES:** Minutes of the meeting of February 14th, 2012 were approved without emendation.

**GRADE INFLATION:**  Chris Hepburn reported that department chairs now receive grade reports on all courses. He added that recent data shows little improvement: the percentage of “A” grade continues to rise; as do the median grades for the schools. He added that the 2009 UCT report on grade inflation had caused some concern among the trustees.

Don Hafner stated that the data reports contain median grades and they are still rising while the mean grades, which might be a better indicator of changing trends, were going down slowly. This might reflect a shift in the number of majors. Departments with traditionally lower grades – such as Economics, Chemistry and mathematics – had seen a rise in the number of majors. Also, increased awareness and attention to grade inflation might be helping to slow the rise.

Jeff Cohen noted that course GPAs were discussed at promotion and tenure reviews in CSOM stating that faculty needed to be held accountable for their grades. Jacqueline Lerner noted that at some schools – such as Michigan State and Tufts – course averages were enforced or “A” grades had to be “justified”. Michael Martin added the same was true for first year courses at the BC Law School. Jeff Cohen and Sarah Beckjord both stated that accountability was essential.

Jonathan Laurence asked if the data was broken out to reflect tenured, non-tenured and supplemental faculty who may be concerned about course evaluations. Pat DeLeeuw noted that published research indicated that giving high grades did not mean a course would get higher evaluations. In fact, ‘gut’ courses tended to get low evaluations.

Jonathan Laurence stated that the question was “what to do?” Don Hafner stated that certainly there needed to be conversations between the chairs of departments and their individual faculty, especially junior and supplemental faculty. Chris Hepburn suggested that departments needed to formulate grading guidelines. Pat DeLeeuw noted that some department’s wanted to institute the “Princeton Rule” limiting “A” grades to 35% for undergraduate courses and 55% for graduate courses. Bob Murphy stated that the Provost needed provide some explicit direction.

Chris Hepburn asked if the UCT should send a memo to the Provost suggesting

* that both median and mean averages be given in the data reports;
* and that the data be disaggregated by
  + school
  + department
  + course
  + rank
  + and faculty member.

The committee expressed a general consensus that the chair should draw up such a memo to send to the Provost.

**LECTURE AND WORKSHOP ON TEACHING EXCELLENCE:**  Chris Hepburn stated that the subcommittee had met and had pursued getting Ken Bain to speak this spring. They discovered that he was not available and generally needed a year’s notice. He added that consequently, there would not be time to have an event promoting teaching excellence this spring.

Pat DeLeeuw noted that at present no school would own such an event. Hence, it would be better to first found a “Center for Teaching Excellence” and then hold an event. She added that there needed to be discussion of ‘inducements’ or ‘incentives’ to promote faculty participation. DeLeeuw also stated there would be a meeting in the next couple of weeks to discuss repurposing of space in O’Neill Library to such a center. Sue Barrett noted this would then bring the testing center and a Center on Teaching Excellence into proximity.

**OTHER ISSUES:**

* Should there be a discussion about changing the much extended withdrawal – “W” grade – deadline? Jacqueline Lerner asked why the “W” date was so late. Noting that the “Add/Drop” period was only a little over a week long, Michael Martin answered that late “W” deadline allowed a student to be “full-time” for the purposes of university housing and financial aid. He added that the number of students who dropped below full-time was low enough that the deadline could be moved up and these cases handled as deans’ exceptions.
* Chris Hepburn asked if there was a role for UCT in the assessment process. Michael Martin pointed out that departments were already facing assessment requirements from the colleges for their major degrees and minors as well as separate assessment requirements for Core courses from the UCDC. Hence, adding another ‘voice’ might not help BC move forward on the issue.
* Chris Hepburn reported there were 15 Teaching and Mentoring grant applications and 6 Teaching and Mentoring Expense grant applications adding up to about $172,000. He stated that the TAM/TAME committee would review the applications before the next UCT meeting and added that committee had about $150,000 left to disburse.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 1:25.

Submitted by Michael Martin

Acting Secretary.