

University Council on Teaching
Meeting of April 9, 2014
Waul House Presentation Room 10:30 – 12:00

Present: Kathy Bailey, Sue Barrett, Thomas Groome, Katie McInnis-Dittrich, Don Hafner, Vidya Madhavan, Stephanie Leone, Jeffrey Cohen, Nick Gozik (guest).

Note: Thomas Groome agreed to serve as Facilitator in Jackie Lerner's absence.

Minutes: The minutes of the March 12, 2014 meeting were approved.

Business:

Updates on Pending Business

In view of Dr. Lerner's absence, an update on TAME's and TAM as well as the discussion regarding the UCT's response to the Report on Women at Boston College were postponed until the May meeting.

Presentation by Nick Gozik, Office of International Programs (OIP)

At the request of the UCT, Nick Gozik addressed the group to discuss international teaching opportunities available to Boston College faculty specifically in the undergraduate curriculum. Approximately 1200 undergraduates, half of any given class, spend at least one semester studying abroad. It is the hope of OIP that faculty will avail themselves of opportunities to be part of an international experience as well as to assist undergraduates in integrating their educational experiences into the curriculum.

BC has a formal arrangement with Venice International University but has also developed partnerships (in various stages of development) with 60 partner universities throughout the world. The logistics and funding, however, are not in place for all of these partner universities.

Nick would like to see undergraduate faculty take advantage of summer teaching opportunities abroad. While the March 31 application deadline for proposing teaching courses abroad has passed, OIP is interested in working with faculty across a broad spectrum of the curriculum (especially the sciences) to develop proposals that demonstrate active integration of course and curriculum content. Specifically, OIP welcomes proposals that reflect their strategic priorities (Asia; China and India, the Middle East; Turkey, and Latin America).

Two priorities of significance to UCT are course sequencing and faculty seminars.

Course sequencing: OIP is interested in moving beyond the traditional Junior Year Abroad experience in which the courses students take abroad may “stand alone” as opposed to being integrated into the larger curriculum. Faculty could be helpful in integrating the on-campus educational experience with the off campus experience. For example, the international course that focuses on Islam in Spain occurs on a continuum from a full developed course students take before going to Spain, through the trip to Granada which builds on the BC course, to post-trip content that integrates the student’s experience into courses back on campus. Nick feels that the faculty, in conjunction with OIP, can assist in making the international experience more challenging and more intense by promoting this type of continuum of education as well as developing opportunities of interdisciplinary coordination using courses already in place. Questions raised by faculty to this proposal include: Would the specialized course work before or after the trip be considered as part of the core curriculum? (Answer: It depends on the course and whether it actually reflects the requirements of the core or not) and How is it determined which existing courses could be adapted to reflect the specialized knowledge required for some international experiences? (Answer: Each area of the core curriculum would need to determine what a base level of content should be to reflect a core requirement). Committee members suggested that collaboration might be especially fruitful with other Jesuit universities throughout the world and recommended those associations be explored.

Faculty Seminars: Nick moved the discussion into OIP’s interest in developing faculty seminars, cohorts of faculty who participate in condensed international experiences (two weeks) to develop expertise in a thematic area (e.g. water in India). The multidisciplinary perspective a mixed cohort of faculty would better inform the goal of enhanced course sequencing and integration with the core curriculum. Such an effort might focus on faculty without a lot of international experience who then adapt the course(s) he or she teaches to integrate what was learned in the international experience. The intent of that approach would be to focus on nontraditional places in the curriculum to expand a global perspective, specifically beyond a traditional Western European experience. The question of funding such a program remains. Members of the committee requested that Nick follow up with UCT as this idea develops and perhaps he can address the committee on another occasion.

BC Partnership with Saudi Arabian university in Medina

Kathy Bailey indicated that Pat DeLeeuw has been approached regarding BC’s interest in doing a videoconference course on women’s issues in Islamic nations with a group of women in Saudi Arabia. As Medina is a very conservative Islamic area which does not allow men and women to take courses together, it would be necessary to honor that social norm from the Boston College’s participation as well. This would suggest that male students would face significant challenges taking this course. However, if the course is considered to be housed in Saudi Arabia, local norms could be honored. It was recommended that when the course was listed that it require “instructor approval” prior to registration to accommodate these special requirements.

Report on Women at Boston College

The findings of the Report on Women at Boston College remain deeply troubling to the UCT and the committee is committed to formulating a response to the report. Suggestions regarding a formal response to the report include:

* Extend invitations to the following for the purpose of informing the UCT about what is being done/what programs are already in place/what is being considered to address the problems identified in the Report on Undergraduate Women's Academic Self-Perception:

-Office of Student Affairs, possibly Katie O'Dair, executive director and Title IX coordinator

-Office of Residential Life to discuss housing and alcohol issues

-Women's Athletics, possibly Jody Mooradian, Senior Associate Athletic Director, Senior Women's Administrator

-Akua Sarr to discuss mentoring programs such as pre-major advisors, who receive some training in mentoring

-First Year Experience/Freshman Orientation/Mission and Ministry

* Give department chairs copies of the Report to discuss in department meeting

* Develop ways in which faculty and other offices can collaborate to bridge the academic and social divide in students' lives

* Develop ways to increase awareness of behavior that undermines self perception, such as student discussion groups, a standing committee that monitors these issues

*Any other means to continue the conversation, such as retreats for women, speaker series on women and leadership (CWBC)

*Video along the lines of online academic tutorial for plagiarism.

These suggestions will be considered at the next meeting of the UCT.

Respectfully submitted:

Katie McInnis-Dittrich