

University Council on Teaching Minutes 10-2-14

Present: Jeff Cohen (Chair), John Rakestraw, Tom Groome, Jackie Lerner, Pat DeLeeuw, Julian Bourg, Danielle Taghian, Katie McInnis-Dittrich, Kathy Bailey

Guest: Audrey Friedman

The meeting began with introductions of new and returning members. The minutes from the May 2014 meeting were approved.

1. John Rakestraw, the newly appointed Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, gave a brief overview of his vision for the (CTE). They are summarized below:

- John gave some details about his past positions and love for students and teaching and the experiences that led him to his current position as Director of CTE.
- He noted that when students first all had computers he had to understand the evidence of whether they (the computers) were working to enhance learning.
- John Bransford was formative in his thinking while he was at Vanderbilt and he studied Bransford's ideas about how people learn.

Since coming to BC he noted that he wants the faculty to be very rigorous in their thinking about teaching. Most people learn to teach from others in stressful situations. While John was at Georgetown he ran several programs to engage students that involved a large faculty commitment. He hopes to use some of what worked at other places at BC.

John's vision for CTE is that it can be a safe space or a risky space. He wants it to be a place where people feel free enough to take risks. It should be a celebratory space as well, where people can share good teaching and learning outcomes. He hopes it will engage cross-disciplinary people informing each other and reflecting on their work. John wants to build on the teaching resources we already have in place, and to deepen the conversations about teaching in general. How we teach is as important as what we teach. John wants to set up a faculty advisory board for the CTE.

John was asked: What will he bring here that worked from Georgetown? He answered that he would like to engage faculty who agree to participate in multiple sessions rather than single workshops. He wants to bring a sense of trust to groups that can work around common challenges, etc.

Reactions- questions to John from UCT:

- All members of UCT expressed their delight with the formation of the CTE.
- Part time faculty need special attention and people from the practice who have never been in front of a classroom. Also, PhD students need support in their teaching. They cannot work under the assumption that “if you know it, then you can teach it”.
- One question was: How do we get people really interested in helping us understand that just because we know it, does not mean that we can teach it or teach it well? We need to face areas of weakness to start the conversation.
- What will the structure look like? IDES is currently there, and has a sense of community. Sue Barrett’s program is also there as is the writing fellows program.

Jeff Cohen asked what we can be doing between now and next meeting to enact the vision of the CTE. John responded that he would like us to bring him information about what we think our faculty need and want. There is an Open House at the CTE October 16th, 3-5 PM.

Pat De Leeuw would like to have a program with someone who would be a Master Teacher, who would get a course off and be linked to the CTE for a semester to talk with faculty about teaching. Members of the UCT also indicated that the teaching award should be re-instituted. Questions were: When to give it? What to give? Would we divide A and S into several awards? Pat D. will send the old proposal about the awards around.

2. Report on women: what can we share, with who and how much? And what can faculty do?

Jackie and others talked about our response to the report on women and asked if Pat D. could make the report available to all Chairs, who could share with faculty. We also would like a list of what programs are already in place to address the concerns noted in the report.

We learned that there are things going on University wide: Student Affairs has initiated some programming to see if through programming we can change the behavior of the women. The Council on Women has also initiated a “Women in Leadership” speaker series. In addition, the Women’s Center has added staff dedicated to the sexual assault problem.

We agreed that faculty needs to brainstorm about ways we can also help, and we agreed to put this in the agenda for the November meeting.

Minutes submitted by Jackie Lerner