

Minutes of the University Council on Teaching
Wednesday, September 12, 2018
12:00-1:15, CTE

Attendees: Kathleen Bailey, Shaylonda Barton, Jeff Cohen, Billy Soo, Kristen Heyer, Robert Bloom, Jeff Cohen, Silvia Sellers-Garcia, Stacy Grooters, Julia Whitcavitch-Devoy

The agenda of the September 12 meeting was the course evaluation project, the teaching retreat, the UCT budget, the UCT website, and future UCT topics.

[Course Evaluation Project]

The meeting began with a summary of the status of the course evaluations review process, i.e., what has taken place so far, the concerns that have been raised about the current system of evaluating teaching with student surveys, a recap of the meeting with members of tenure and promotion committees.

The Provost has authorized the formation of a university committee that would complete a report on how to improve course evaluations.

The question was raised of whether the course evaluations should be different, or customized, for the different schools, programs, departments.

The possibility of using an outside company, such as IDEA or SmartEvals, to handle student ratings of instruction discussed.

It was agreed that the committee responsible for designing the new course evaluations should report back to the UTC periodically.

A list of names for the new ad hoc committee is being compiled by the UTC and will be presented as suggestions to the Provost. Deans will be contacted to recommend faculty with expertise and interest in the matter. The size of the committee should be no more than 10 people to ensure efficiency. It is hoped that the committee will be formed within a month and have its first meeting in October.

The expectation is that the committee will be comprised mostly of faculty. A question arose as to whether CTE staff should sit on the committee—would involvement in evaluating teaching compromise its mission to support instructors?

[Teaching Retreat]

John Rakestraw submitted a written report on the teaching retreat based on

participant feedback. The goals of the retreat were all met and respondents agreed it was a resounding success. Participants noted the importance of conversation and community that the retreat fostered as well as the value of the plenary sessions facilitated by CTE staff on particular pedagogical topics.

The principal limitation to the retreat concerned the time that the participants had to work on the individual projects that they intended to develop. Each day was divided into two group-related activities followed by independent work time. Participants agreed that there was a good balance between group and independent time, but felt they needed more time to accomplish their goals.

One solution would be to extend the retreat time by arriving earlier on Monday and leaving later on Friday, which would effectively add a day to the retreat.

The question arose whether the retreat primarily attracted individuals who were already very interested in teaching, as opposed to attracting teachers who would become more interested in teaching as a result of the retreat.

There were several faculty members who raised concerns about how the retreat was promoted/advertised. Some wished that they had known about the retreat and the application deadline sooner. The UCT and CTE will develop more ways to publicize the retreat; sending out the application earlier and providing information sessions is important.

The announcement should come from deans and chairs. Announcements should be made during department meetings. Someone from the CTE could attend department meetings to provide an overview of the retreat and the application.

Some faculty members thought the application for the retreat was intimidating because they were not familiar with the pedagogical language. Info sessions would help with this concern.

There were some last-minute withdrawals from the retreat due to child-care issues. The announcement should mention that Ocean Edge provides child care at an additional fee to the participants.

[UCT Budget]

The UCT voted unanimously to contribute \$50,000 of its budget to the CTE cohort programs and \$13,000 to the 2019 teaching retreat.

[UCT Website]

A UCT website needs to be developed. Shaylonda Barton will work with a website designer at BC who can draft a new design.

Some ideas for content: modifying the UCT's mission statement; an invitation to contact the UCT; a list of the funding opportunities from the UCT; links to specific pages for the CTE; photos from the teaching retreat; an article about the teaching retreat.

[Future UCT Topics]

Academic integrity came up as a topic for UTC consideration. What can be done from the outset at the undergraduate level to develop a more serious commitment to academic integrity? Are there new ways of cheating that faculty are not aware of, as a result of technology, online courses, etc.? Is there new technology to detect cheating?

Next Meeting —Monday October 15 in the CTE Seminar Room