

Minutes of the meeting of the UCT, February 16, 2007

Present were Jackie Lerner, Jim Gips, Mary Joe Hughes, Suzanne Barrett, Danny Willis, Bill Petri, and Chris Hepburn.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved in principle.

Before the arrival of student members of the Quality of Student Life Committee, we discussed the problems with the extended drop period: namely that after late drops of closed courses, students who wanted to take that course cannot get in. This issue was tabled until we could discuss it with students.

We then summarized the discussions of the teaching evaluations at the faculty lunch meetings. General dissatisfaction with most of the questions except number 1 was reported, though many participants wanted to keep but reword Question 6. Many wanted a question about whether the faculty member showed respect for the students, and whether the faculty member showed enthusiasm for the subject matter. Many wanted a question or questions about the course, not just the instructor. There was some discussion of inappropriate comments on the open-ended questions on the part of the students, and how to deal with them. Several people also suggested the university provide help and support to faculty as to how to evaluate the evaluations. The sub-committee on teaching evaluations will try to synthesize all these suggestions before the next meeting.

At 11:00 A.M. Kerry Brennan, President of the Quality of Student Life Committee, arrived, along with members Lauren Kelly and Jorie Soskin.

These students reported that the online evaluations have been popular with students, and that their major concerns were the confidentiality of the evaluations and the question of whether they were read and taken into account. The three students have been reassured about confidentiality, and suggested that there be some feedback process for the smaller classes that are not evaluated.

The students suggested that there be a question on whether the course matched the course description and syllabus, and if not, were the deviations beneficial? (They favor the posting of e-syllabi.)

They favored a question on respectful teacher/student relationships and on fairness: that is, did the grade reflect the amount of work and effort put into the course? Did the professor bring out the best in the topic and the students? They did not think easy courses automatically got good reviews.

They recommended that there be an open-ended response to a question as to whether the student would recommend the course to others. Why or why not?

In response to the problem of inappropriate or abusive comments on the part of the students, the student members of the QSL committee suggested that the evaluation specify that the written comments would be made available to the faculty member.

In response to the problem of students dropping courses too late for others to get in, the members of the committee offered to write a letter, or annual letters to the Heights urging students to drop courses during drop/add if they were certain they were going to drop them. We also discussed the possibility of a mass email to students before the end of drop/add.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Joe Hughes