

Minutes of the University Council on Teaching
 November 7, 2003
 Bourneuf House, 4 PM

Present: Fred Yen (chair), Sue Barrett, Theresa Hammond, Ellen Winner, Larry Ludlow, William Petri, Mary Joe Hughes

This was the first meeting for the '03-'04 academic year. Our basic objective was to set an agenda for this year. AVP Jack Neuhauser attended and offered his perspective on items that we might address. These items included:

1. Renewal of "Andover Weekends" with a faculty teaching emphasis.

- In the past they served an important function in introducing faculty to the university.
- We could host a couple this year.
- They should be focused on specific topics (e.g. approaches to teaching)
- We would want new/newer faculty and experienced faculty to participate.

While this idea was only briefly discussed, it did receive strong support, particularly by those of us who had attended one of these.

2. Re-consideration of the University Core.

- Is it currently providing the best educational experience that it was designed for?

There was not much discussion about how to tackle this topic.

3. Post-tenure seminar experience

- Newly tenured faculty could receive one semester freed from teaching to attend and participate in a "Great Books"-like seminar. This would not be required of anyone but would be available as an option for those seeking to expand their liberal education and teaching opportunities.

This did not receive much attention but it was thought of as an interesting and attractive idea.

4. Review and revamping of the faculty course evaluation system (mentioned in our April 16 minutes as a topic to be continued for discussion).

- Can it be turned into a web-based system?
- It was stated that the current system seems to be understood by most faculty (but not everyone agrees with this perception)

There was not much interest expressed to take on this obviously complex topic. It is considered, however, an important topic to some.

5. Consideration of how to "assess educational outcomes".

- Pressure is building from federal agencies to develop measures and conduct analyses to ensure "how do you know students are learning what you think they are learning."
- Something within the next three years will likely have to address this issue because of accreditation accountability requirements.
- Existing metrics are apparently inadequate and there is no clear consensus for how or what to develop to meet this issue.

There was no committee discussion about this topic.

6. Remaining freshman advising issues.

The general issue here seems to be to get more new students into closer contact with faculty in small-group interactions. These could take a variety of formats with differing credits for students and loads for faculty.

- Summer orientation could be supplemented with a stronger academic component.
 - Existing programs such as Cornerstone could be modified to provide a stronger academic component (removing the “shared inquiry” component was one strong suggestion; in its place, professors could offer freshman seminars on their area of expertise).
 - New programs could be developed under the auspices of the TAM grant system to create creative university, social, and academic experiences for freshmen.
 - Whether the proposed freshman seminars were offered in 1 or 3-credit packages, all the proposals that were discussed included more of an academic component. This component was often some form of “research seminar” experience.
 - This additional experience could be offered to all freshmen as a common core requirement
- Most of the remaining time was spent on this agenda item and it will be continued into at least the next two UCT meetings. In particular, Fred will try to make arrangements for Clair Dunsford to attend our next meeting to discuss her experiences with the existing programs for freshmen and what kinds of budgeting and logistical problems might be encountered with new programs.

General questions about the advising issues:

1. What was implemented from the proposal submitted by this committee last year?
2. Why wouldn't the new Advising Center be given the task of continuing these specific questions about additional advising?

In addition to Jack's items a couple of other topics are possible:

1. Review of the classroom technology enhancement program (mentioned in our April 16 minutes as a topic to be continued for discussion).
 - What has been the response to the new Champion computer classroom and what other such projects are underway?
2. Review of the classroom size issue related to new building construction and renovation projects (mentioned in our April 16 minutes as a topic to be continued for discussion).
 - Volunteers might visit other schools to look at their classroom structures.
3. Creation of the mechanism for reviewing new TAME grants and upcoming proposals for the TAM program.
 - The newly received TAME grants will be reviewed by the entire committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 with a strong sentiment that future meetings not be held at 4:00 on Fridays.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Ludlow