

Minutes
University Council on Teaching
December 9, 2005

Attendees

Committee Members

Chris Hepburn, Chair
Sue Barrett
James Gips
Mary Joe Hughes
Bill Petri
Danny Willis
Fred Yen

Guests

Academic Vice President Bert Garza
Associate Academic Vice President for Faculties Pat Deleeuw
Director of the Academic Advising Center, Elizabeth Nathans

The Academic Advising Center

Elizabeth Nathans updated the UCT on planning for the Academic Advising Center. She began by reassuring the committee that she is committed to the idea that advising should primarily be done by the faculty, not by professional advisors. As of now the plans are to improve advising for first and second year students in Arts and Sciences and Carroll School of Management.

Starting in '06, all first-year students will enter undeclared and be assigned to advisors from their first day on campus in the fall. (There will also be a greater faculty role in summer advising.) She is concerned that some students currently declare majors simply in order to take majors-only introductory courses.

She will start recruiting advisors in January/February 2006, beginning by asking department chairs to recommend faculty. She would like to recruit advisors from the full-time and long-term part-time or adjunct faculty. Each advisor will have a group of 15 students and will meet with those students two or three times in addition to the course registration period. Students will fill out an information form to help the Advising Center match them with advisors and to provide the advisors with background information. Advisors will be compensated, possibly through a professional development account rather than direct payment.

In addition to the director, the Academic Advising Center will be staffed by associate and assistant directors of academics and an assistant director for operations. The staff will meet with advisors and with students. The Center will have a web site with an advising calendar and important information for departments. It may be located in Carney.

UCT members asked how the center will work with already existing programs, such as the Health Professionals advising and the Cornerstone Program. Nathans said that she plans to find ways to help the existing pre-professional advising, not replace it. There are no plans to make changes to Cornerstone.

Visit from Academic Vice President Garza

Bert Garza said that his office is ready to support the UCT and that he would like to know specifically how best to do that. He suggested that the student committee on the quality of life could do research for the UCT on any topic that we would like to assign.

He asked that the UCT look at the current distribution of classes, where proportionally many more classes are meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays, rather than Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This situation has academic as well as social consequences for the university. Dr. Garza would like the UCT to develop a plan to present this information to the faculty. Bill Petri agreed to look at the data on course distribution.

Update on Electronic Course Evaluations

Associate Academic Vice President Pat DeLeeuw reported that the Gap Technology product for the evaluations turned out to have security problems. BC's ITS department was very concerned about confidential information being transmitted through this company and is currently helping to find a more reliable product.

Chris Hepburn asked why BC needs to use an outside vendor and Jim Gips explained that it would take much more effort to develop our own technology as opposed to using something developed for a large group of schools with the same needs.

One challenge of choosing an evaluation system is that must be able to function now and also interface with the new student system that is under development.

AnDover Teaching Weekends

Sue Barrett spoke briefly about the teaching weekends. There have so far been three weekends held at the Connors Retreat Center in Dover, each with between 15 and 22 participants from different departments and schools. Another weekend is planned for Spring 2006. There will also be follow-up seminars and social occasions to build on the sense of community developed during the weekends.

Topic-based Cornerstone Seminars

Bill Petri reported on the 12 topic-based seminars offered to first-year students this year. He would like the UCT to consider whether more should be added and if there is a good way to fill seats when students drop the class at the very beginning.