Minutes of the University Council on Teaching  
Monday, February 11, 2008  
Waul House  

Present: Sue Barrett, Pat DeLeeuw, Don Hafner, Chris Hepburn (Chair), Paula Mathieu, 
Bill Petri, Danny Willis, Pete Wilson  

Chris reported that all the TAM and TAME applications were funded to some level, 
although not all received the full application amount. The committee will request follow-
up reports from last year’s TAM winners. It was clarified that all full-time faculty, 
including full-time adjuncts, are eligible to apply for TAM and TAME grants.  

Most of the meeting was devoted to discussing student evaluations. The UCT was asked 
last spring (2007) to survey faculty about what questions they would want to see on a 
student evaluation. After extensive meetings with faculty, the UCT developed a 
proposed evaluation which is now ready to be sent to on for consideration by the Provost 
and consultants with expertise in testing. UCT members discussed final issues, especially 
in light of two pieces on student evaluation: an article by Ken Bain and a section of BC 
graduate Carolyn Fidelman’s dissertation.  

Several issues were discussed:  

- Most of the questions on the evaluation concern minimal standards for a class, but 
  may miss out on discovering whether a course was truly great or inspiring. The 
  committee recommended replacing Question 3c, regarding class attendance, with 
  a question from the Bain article: “Rate the effectiveness of this course in 
  challenging you intellectually.”  

- At least some of the evaluation results will be released to students, but it is not 
  clear whether this will include the answers to all the questions or to only a 
  selected few. The UCT recommends that all the information be released to 
  students, since they need it to choose classes wisely. If it is not all released, 
  students may still use PEPs.  

- There was consideration of whether all faculty members should have their 
  evaluations released or if new teachers should have the option of not releasing 
  them. The UCT recommends that graduate student teaching assistants and 
  teaching fellows, faculty teaching at BC for the first time and anyone teaching a 
  course for the first time be given the option of not releasing their evaluations. It 
  was further recommended that only the most recent time a course was taught by a 
  particular faculty member will be readily available.  

- Making student evaluations public will probably cause some anxiety among 
  faculty. The UCT recommends enhancing the current resources for faculty who 
  want to improve their teaching and also holding sessions that will help faculty
interpret the results of student evaluations. The UCT will discuss ways to develop workshops and consultation resources at our next meeting.

The next meeting of the UCT will be at noon on May 9th.

Sue Barrett recorder.