

Minutes of the University Council on Teaching
Monday, September 29, 2008
Waul House

Present: Sue Barrett, Chris Hepburn (Chair), Jackie Lerner, Rita Olivieri, Virginia Reinburg, Akua Sarr, Lad Tobin, Pete Wilson, Fred Yen

Guests: Provost Bert Garza, Vice Provost Don Hafner, Vice Provost Pat DeLeeuw

Chris opened the meeting by reviewing the two major projects the UCT worked on in 2007-2008: the move from a course to a credit-based graduation requirement for undergraduates and the new electronic course evaluations.

Vice Provost Hafner reported that the provost's office has presented the credit-based system to the deans and asked them for feedback by December 2008. The provost's office proposes that all requirement descriptions in the catalogue and on department websites be updated for the class entering BC in 2010.

The new evaluations developed with input from the UCT will be in place at the end of the current semester. The numerical data from the evaluations will be released to students starting either in spring or fall of 2009; the technicalities are being worked on by eCollege and IT.

Chris also reported that the UCT administers the TAM and TAME grants for faculty, with a total of \$150,000 in funds, each grant for a maximum of \$15,000.

The Committee next discussed possible items for UCT attention this year.

Provost Garza suggested the topic of grade inflation. After researching how other universities are addressing this problem, the provost's office suggests that rather than taking any immediate direct action to combat grade inflation, BC should begin by informing faculty of how their grade distribution compares with others in their departments, schools and the university. A further suggestion is that faculty reflect on their grade distribution in combination with student evaluations as part of their annual reviews. The Provost would like the UCT to consider the issue and formulate a statement by the end of the semester.

Vice Provost DeLeeuw asked us to examine the Distinguished Teaching Award and whether it accomplishes its purpose. While most schools do have some form of award, they differ widely in how winners are chosen and what the awards seem to mean. If we expect the award to contribute to the improvement of teaching, we may want to require the recipients to give a talk or in some other way share their insights about teaching with the larger community.

Vice Provost Hafner would like the UCT to take a look at undergraduate research awards. Since the focus of these awards is undergraduate education rather than research itself, the

UCT decided that they are the appropriate group to consider them. Since the awards help prepare students for later scholarships and grants, it may be effective to award some of them to incoming freshmen and to make sure that they are available to outstanding students.

The committee has also decided to look at the role Advanced Placement plays in undergraduate education. Departments and Schools use AP scores differently and there are concerns that students are placing out of too many core courses.

The Committee decided not to take up the question of the length of the drop/add period.

Meetings for this semester will be on Mondays, from 1:30 to 3:00:
October 27, November 24, and December 15.

Respectively,
Sue Barrett
Secretary of the Day