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Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluations

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Submitted by Richard Flynn

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Motion: I would like to have the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for Student Evaluations made available to the faculty. (If the report has been made available and I missed it somehow, would you please direct me to a place I can find it? I tried to revisit the minutes and librarian's reports, but it appears that some from the fall are not available on the Senate's web site)

Rationale: I see that the committee proposes its own discussion. Before that occurs, I believe it would be appropriate for us to get the committee's conclusions.

Faculty are entitled to see the minutes and reports of committees doing work that may affect them.

Response: Richard Flynn asked about the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for Student Evaluations. That report has been posted.

Motion, Dissolution of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluations, Ron MacKinnon (CIT) for Leslie Furr (CHHS), Attachment: Senate Ad-Hoc Committee Minutes of April 24, 2006 Meeting: MacKinnon moved that the Ad Hoc Committee for Student Evaluations be dissolved. Prior to the dissolution, he suggested that all matters currently before the Ad Hoc Committee be transferred to the Faculty Welfare Committee for resolution. The motion was seconded.

Patricia Humphrey (COST), Senate Moderator, asked if there were any discussion.

David Robinson (CLASS) who was serving on the ad hoc committee, requested background information.

Patricia Humphrey (COST), Senate Moderator replied that, in November 2006, when the SEC met, members determined that oversight of student evaluations is in the

purview of the Faculty Welfare Committee, which has not had to conduct much business for the last year-and-a-half or so. The ad hoc committee was formed for the primary purpose of investigating proposed on-line student evaluations.

Apparently, on-line evaluations are no longer used.Members were also going to conduct focus group sessions on uses and understanding of the current instrument for student evaluations. No focus groups met. So, the ad hoc committee has served its purpose. The SEC would like to refer the matter to the standing committee that has student evaluations in its purview.

Patricia Humphrey (COST), Senate Moderator, asked if there were additional discussion. There was none. The motion was approved.

Attachments: (see below) Senate Approved Evaluations
Ad-Hoc Committee
April 24, 2006
Minutes

Senate Approved Evaluations Ad-Hoc Committee

April 24, 2006

Minutes

Present: Mary Hazeldine, Chair; Bryan Griffin; Doug Johnson; Abby Lynes, student working with Doug Johnson; Bob Cook; David Robinson; Leslie Furr

1. Old Business

The following is a list of recommendations/thoughts to forward to the Senate. We will meet again at the beginning of the Fall 2006 semester and finalize these recommendations.

• Low response rates for on-line evaluations

• The mode of evaluation (on-line/face to face) should match the teaching environment.

• May hold grades until students complete on-line evaluations (could be a button on the screen to fill out the evaluation or to decide not to fill out the evaluation). If students decide not to fill out the evaluations, they will still be given their grades.

• Send reminders to students to fill out evaluations.

• Frame reminders positively.

• No company external contracts—we can write the programming code for on-line evaluations.

• Charge a learning assessment committee with preparing and improving the evaluation instrument, e.g. appointed by Senate or Provost.

• Do not use written comments in the formal P&T faculty evaluation (only for summative purposes or for decision making).

• No handwritten comments should be given to the faculty member.

• If on-line evaluations, check to ensure written comments are not verbatim or very similar.

• Improve the name of the student evaluations. For example, change the name to student ratings form.

• Develop a way to assess faculty and learning independent of the student evaluations.

• Student evaluations should not be used for rank ordering faculty for promotion and tenure.

• Use cohort/discipline for comparison purposes if used to rank faculty. Otherwise, it is difficult to see absolute differences.

• Remind administrators that 4.0+ is good. (Caution—may reflect easiness of course.)

• Do not use numerical rankings outside the college for promotion and tenure. Use descriptions.

• Give students control over a question or two to make results public if the faculty member allows that.

• Include a statement of the importance of the evaluations in the instructions for administration.

• Make evaluation responses available to students.

• Make evaluations available to the faculty to administer within the last third of the semester.

• Make results available to the faculty before the start of the next semester.

• Consider not rating every course, every semester (possibly based on tenure status).

• Make course assessment be consistent with departmental learning outcomes.

• Consider department specific items with standard items.

• Ensure minimum response rate is met in order to use numerical ratings.

• Add questions on the student evaluations related to study habits.

• Consider adding peer evaluations to the process; compare peer evaluations to student evaluations.

• On-line evaluations produce less paperwork, are easy for students to fill out, saves secretaries work, and saves money due to the paperless nature of the evaluations.

• Recommendations from Griffin's May 2000 study:

> o "Have trained observers attend several classes and then correlate student ratings with observers' ratings.

> o Compare student achievement as measured by a common test across sections of one course to determine whether faculty with higher ratings had students with higher achievement.

> o Follow students' change-of-major decisions over time and link these to faculty ratings in introductory courses in those majors. It is possible that better instructors, as judged by students, are likely to guide more students into a given major areas of study."

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 a.m