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Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate Student Ratings of Instruction Meeting Minutes: 10-28-2013

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Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate Student Ratings of Instruction
Meeting Minutes: October 28, 2013, 4:00

Present: Rebecca Ziegler, chair
Helen Bland
Trent Maurer
Jim Harris
Jim Reichard
Sonja Shepherd
Nan LoBue

Rebecca distributed copies of the agenda, committee charge from the Faculty Senate moderator, and the present SRI instrument. She then asked committee members to introduce themselves.

After introductions took place, discussion began about the SRI instrument currently in use at Georgia Southern. Rebecca expressed concern that SRIs are weighed too heavily in assessing faculty teaching ability and that the scores of teachers with high standards for student performance might suffer unduly. She asked about whether other measures are used to evaluate teaching effectiveness. Nan said that in her department, other measures are certainly used, and SRIs from courses in the core are not compared with SRIs from upper-level courses. However, several people felt that SRI may carry undue weight in evaluating faculty teaching effectiveness. Several people pointed out that one negative comment made by a student on the SRI can be damaging to a faculty member. In response, Jim Harris suggested that good department chairs look for patterns of student comments. Trent said that in his experience, numbers generated from SRIs are not always used fairly to evaluate faculty; he distributed a list he had prepared, "Factors Unrelated to Teaching Effectiveness that Negatively Influence Teaching Evaluation Scores," to demonstrate his point. He also suggested that a basic lack of understanding of statistics often leads to the abuse of SRI data. Unfortunately, SRIs are perceived by many to carry much weight; Helen mentioned that SRI score totals are one of the few items going to upper-level administrators in personnel decisions. Trent pointed out that the current instrument, which has been in use since the 90s, is dated.

The committee then turned to ways to gather faculty and administration opinions about how the current instrument is used and its effectiveness. Trent mentioned that the neither the Board of Regents nor the Faculty handbook states definitely how the current SRI instrument is to be used or how the results interpreted. There was general agreement that we need to poll faculty and administrators to gather information about

how the current instrument is used and interpreted before we can make any recommendations for change. There was some discussion about how to disseminate a survey. Jim Reichard suggested that this could perhaps be done via GSINFO or department chairs. Trent argued that we need both qualitative and quantitative questions. Trent and Sonya volunteered to draft surveys for administrators and faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan S. LoBue