Committee on Teaching
Minutes for October 14, 2015
470 Zilber Hall (3:30 to 5:00 pm)

Members Present: Jake Carpenter (Chairperson), Bridget Dolan, Evelyn Donate-Bartfield, Cynthia Ellwood, Shaun Longstreet, Patrick McNamara, Daniel Meissner, Gary Meyer, Maura Moyle, Terrance Ow, Cameron Vrana

Recorder:
Cynthia Ellwood

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Jake Carpenter at 3:30.

2. Reflection
Maura Moyle provided the reflection.

3. Minutes
The minutes from the September 9, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved without changes.

4. Announcements and Information
The committee reviewed the timelines for the Way Klingler Teaching Enhancement Award and the Teaching Excellence Award.

The timeline for the Way Klingler award is slightly later this year, reflecting the later start to the fall semester in 2016. The application deadline will be December 11, and packets will go to the committee by December 15. The CoT rankings due date and CoT discussion will be forthcoming (TBA). Dr. Gary Meyer distributed the timeline for Teaching Excellence Award.

6. Continuing Business

a. Timely Feedback Policy
The committee discussed a potential meeting with Alix Riley, Director of Institutional Feedback and Analysis, regarding concerns surfaced by the senior exit survey about the timeliness of feedback instructors provide. Initial indications suggest the concerns may not be widespread, but Marquette’s scores are lower than peer institutions. Committee members raised such issues as: How large are the numbers indicating dissatisfaction? Are they substantiated on other measures, such as MOCES? Are these college-specific issues or broadly spread? What steps might the committee take if cause for concern was deemed warranted – possibly: share results with individual colleges, issue “reasonable guidelines” to faculty, engage in peer-to-peer conversation, include statements in syllabi articulating what students could expect?
Follow up: It was agreed that Jake Carpenter will meet with Alix Riley to learn more about specific numbers; possible patterns by stage in the program, college, and size of classes; and trends over time.

b. Additional Funding to Support Teaching

Last year’s committee suggested investigating additional ways to recognize, award and provide incentives for good teaching. The committee brainstormed some ideas, including:

- Suggest to colleges that they sponsor individual awards, a practice that is in place in such colleges as Engineering, Nursing and Education.
- Recognize college level awards university-wide on the faculty affairs webpage.
- Offer travel awards to institutes and conferences.
- Provide summer stipends for excellence in teaching.

Follow up: The committee will continue to discuss the issue and consider whether there are ideas we want to pursue.

7. New Business

a. Course Evaluations

The committee considered: Do we want to further discuss switching to a new provider for course evaluations? If so, what would the CoT’s role be? The current provider has other instruments that could be considered, or we could look at alternate providers. Dr. Gary Meyer indicated it is the role of the CoT to consider this issue. It was also suggested that it would be important to get the input of the Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Follow up: Chair Jake Carpenter will invite Alix Riley to a future meeting of the CoT.

b. Digital Course Support Systems

The committee discussed potential issues surrounding the use of digital course support programs such as MindTap. Among the issues explored:

- What is the distinctive value of a Marquette education? Is that compromised if the digital support program constitutes the major architecture of the course?
- Might MU require that the instructor engage with the students face-to-face or electronically for a x% of the time?
- Must an instructor develop original content?
- What about the case that the digital support program might be of higher quality than an instructor could put together independently for an on-line course?
- Might MU require that the program be a supplemental, not primary, teaching method? How would that be defined?
Given that we do not issue such requirements for face to face courses and that there is research suggesting that a well-designed on-line course is as effective as a face to face course, is it even-handed and appropriate to put such parameters on on-line courses only?

What is a Jesuit education in an on-line context?

Given that students can manage to find on-line answers to quizzes/tests/assignments from established digitally supported courses, might we allow digitally supported content as a learning tool, but not for a grade?

Should we limit the number of on-line courses students can take?

Shaun Longstreet indicated that the Center for Teaching and Learning currently provides substantial support to instructors in the development of on-line courses, and the Center has a Quality Assurance Checklist, used by peer evaluators of on-line courses.

As to the possible role of the Committee on Teaching, committee members discussed whether any policy proposed by the CoT should go before the Academic Senate. The committee might educate department heads or build awareness across the university.

Follow up: Shaun Longstreet will bring the Quality Assurance Checklist and on-line course evaluation information to a future meeting. At that meeting, we will specify some options.

c. Other Business
A possible future item of business is the question of how we create awareness of the new peer evaluation document/system.

5. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Next Meeting: November 11, 2015

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia M Ellwood