Committee On Teaching  
Meeting Minutes for October 8, 2014

In attendance: Alan Burkard, Terence Ow, Jake Carpenter, Evelyn Donate-Bartfield, John LaDisa, Shaun Longstreet, John Moyer, Maura Moyle, Kristin Haglund, Kathleen Hazlett

Meeting began at 3:30pm.

1. Reflection: provided by Maura Moyle.

2. Approval of Minutes: The minutes were approved anonymously after corrections were made as follows: The spelling of Kristin Haglund’s name was corrected, and “change” was replaced by “charge” in the last sentence of #8.

Discussion regarding Announcements and Information:

3. The committee agreed the timeline for the Teaching Excellence Award was fine.

4. The committee discussed the US Prof. of the Year award and the Baylor University Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching. Regarding the US Prof. of the Year Award, Terence suggested that any applicant should have first won a Department or School teaching Award, should have won an award within his or her discipline, and should teach at least one undergraduate class. Kristin suggested that the committee look at recent Marquette Teaching Excellence Award winners to see if any would be competitive candidates, and that if a sub-committee is formed to create the candidates dossier and application, then professors from that candidates department should also be on the sub-committee.

5. Terence is going to try to get copies for Maura Moyle, Jake Carpenter, and John Moyer of the book on high impact practices that was distributed several years ago to COT members.

6. Way-Klinger Teaching Enhancement Report workshop has not yet been scheduled. Shaun will let the committee know when it does get scheduled.

Continuing Business:

7. D2L Archiving: The request to archive materials from D2L is no longer being pursued. But, all materials from 2006 and before will be permanently purged, so professors wanting to save any of that information will need to save their material if desired.

8. Final Exams: Data showed that 80 students have more than 3 exams on one day, while 1500 had more than 2 on one day. Also, 28% of all exams were on Tuesday. The committee’s discussion raised the following points:

   a. Can the algorithm be tweaked to spread exams out more evenly (avoiding 28% on Tuesday)?
b. Students can see when their finals are going to be, so students can often avoid this problem themselves when scheduling their classes.

c. Would lengthening the exam period be an option to make it less likely students will have multiple exams on the same day?

d. This problem may be a result of few Friday classes

e. Weekend exams could impact professors (who have to proffer) and students (who have to work on weekends) in negative ways.

f. Could the school add a “conflict day” to allow students with conflicts to make up their exam(s) on that day? If so, should professors, not students, decide what a “conflict” is?

g. Could the scheduling program be modified to block students from signing up for a class if it will mean they will have more than three exams on one day?

h. Ultimately, the committee decided more information is needed before solutions can be established, including whether the students with these scheduling problems are largely coming from the same Schools or Departments, or whether this problem is actually a campus wide problem.

9. Peer Evaluation of Teaching Progress: Alan began the conversation by passing out a handout outlining a framework for good practices of review. The committee discussed what the COT’s goals are for this project, and how to best proceed. The following points and comments were shared by members of the committee:

a. In the future, the administration will likely push for, or mandate, annual reviews and evaluations to ensure compliance with HLC expectations. The COT may be in a position now to study, create, and provide effective guidelines that can then be used by Departments so that the review is most effective and does not marginalize any of the faculty. The COT is trying to be proactive so that if such a top-down mandate occurs, Departments could quickly and easily adopt (with possibly the ability to tweak for their own Department’s unique needs) effective guidelines and procedures.

b. The end product the COT may provide is a set of guidelines or procedures that Departments could adopt that take into account the best practices for review and that would provide for the most effective reviews.

c. Significant discussion was had on whether the reviews should be formative (to help inform the professor being reviewed on how he or she can improve) or, alternatively, summative (to evaluate the professor, without the focus being as much on improvement). The consensus was that the COT should be focusing primarily, or at least first, on guidelines for formative assessment. As a Committee on Teaching, our primary focus should be on assisting professors to improve their teaching, which formative assessments would further.
d. When formative reviews are conducted, how and will those reviews be used in the summative review process? Careful thought needs to be given as to who controls the information gleaned during a formative review (the professor or, for example, a P&T committee), and if and how the information from the formative review will be used in any subsequent summative review.

e. When a department performs a subsequent summative review, that review should parallel the formative standards established to avoid surprises to the professor being reviewed (and to make the formative assessment more beneficial).

f. The idea seemed to be agreed upon that the COT should establish the process for formative reviews first, and then later determine how that information would be used to inform a summative review.

g. Three desired outcomes of this project include (1) Department Chairs have better guidance, (2) professors improve through formative assessments, and (3) students ultimately receive better instruction.

h. The COT decided that the best way to move forward is to attack one part of Alan’s proposed outline (from his handout) at a time. The first part is to develop a stated rationale for this project, then move on to the next part of the outline. John, Jake, and Kristin volunteered to work together to write up the rationales for this project.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00pm.

The Minutes are respectfully submitted by Jake Carpenter.