Committee on Teaching
Minutes
Wednesday, April 10th, 2019
Zilber Hall 470, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Members Present: Evelyn Donate-Bartfield, Jake Carpenter, Cynthia Ellwood, Jill Guttermson, Julian Hills, Laurieann Klockow (Chair), Paul Martin, Sarah Peck, Susan Schneider, John Su, and Joyce Wolburg

Members Excused: Carolyne Hurlburt

Reflection: Sarah Peck

Recorder: Joyce Wolburg

I. Approval of Draft Minutes from March 20th, 2019. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

II. Announcements and Information
   A. Teaching and Learning Materials and Faculty engagement will be discussed at the next COT meeting.
   B. Laurieann Klockow reported that she is on a committee with Jenny Alexander that has looked at two vendors for textbooks and other learning materials—Follett (our existing vendor) and Barnes & Noble. Laurieann noted that the cost of learning materials can be reduced significantly by early adoption of texts. Jenny Alexander has proposed to reach out to faculty to make them aware of this in order to minimize costs to students. It would be useful for Jenny to come to our next meeting.
   C. Joyce Wolburg is leaving committee at the end of the semester and is being replacing by Dr. Gee Ekachai.
   D. Carolyne Hurlburt (grad student rep) will miss next two meetings, and Lisa Lamson is filling in for her.
   E. So far there are no applicants for summer grants to infuse themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion into new courses or to significantly revise existing courses. The COT should encourage faculty to apply. Information is on the provost page on MU website.

III. New Business
   A. Classroom Seating Counts
      The committee reviewed a document that identified a problem concerning classroom seating, particularly the removal of furniture from one classroom to another, which results in chairs or desks no longer being in its original location. Two options are posed—Option 1 is to maintain the status quo and do nothing to alleviate the problem. Option 2 is to place signage in each classroom and require the faculty member or the organizer of an event to enforce the room capacity requirements. A discussion ensued and eventually a middle ground was suggested—given the desire to maintain a safe environment and to be courteous to others, the deans and department chairs should remind faculty and staff to move classroom furniture back to its proper location and to report broken chairs to facilities.

   B. Syllabus Guidelines and Annotated template
      Based on a request from a previous COT meeting to consider the essential components of syllabi, Paul Martin shared a template he created with various elements including the course description, course overview, required materials, course learning objectives, etc. Beyond the need for boilerplate items, the group discussed ways the syllabus can help to create an inclusive classroom. For example, there may be best practices for instructions in syllabi for students who register with the Office of Disability Services.
It was also noted that faculty who use turn-it-in should state so in the syllabus.

John Su commented that all new courses submitted to him for approval must include a syllabus with a minimum of four elements: learning outcomes, assignments, the grading system, and required materials. However, courses developed in the past were not held to this standard.

Any recommendations for creating a policy should go to Senate for approval.

Paul asked that the committee read the template and send him any suggestions. He can bring the template back for the next meeting for further discussion and endorsement.

C. President’s Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion on the topic of "Disrupting Racism" in the Classroom.

Jill Guttormson noted that the College of Nursing has created an initiative that addresses Diversity and Inclusion (Project BEYOND-2), and she provided a handout that offered details. As part of the project, the college focuses on enrolling, retaining, and graduating students with a BSN degree from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds to improve nursing workforce diversity, develop leaders, and address social determinants of education and health.

Much discussion followed regarding the initiative, and members agreed that it is a topic that requires serious consideration regarding approaches that other colleges might pursue. As a model, the committee recalled the way that IDEA was discussed in colleges across the university, and members supported the idea of proceeding in a way that is faculty driven.

Lisa asked about efforts at the graduate level, and it was noted that there are different services aimed at undergrads than graduate students. Lisa commented on the difficulty of talking about controversial events/topics in history classes and noted that grad students who teach need mentoring in this area. Paul agreed and explained that many workshops through the CTL are open to grad students.

John asked that since implicit bias affects us all, could we incentivize faculty to explore bias and to report out? Are there ways to un-learn racism? Laurieann, Cynthia, Sarah, and Lisa all agreed to meet with John to brainstorm ideas.

D. At the next meeting, the committee will elect a chair for 2019-2020.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Wolburg