Members Present: Daniel Meissner (Chairperson), Evelyn Donate-Bartfield, Cynthia Ellwood, Shaun Longstreet, Donald Neumann, James Pokrywczynski, Terrance Ow.

Recorder:
Cynthia Ellwood

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Daniel Meissner at 3:30.

Reflection
Terrence Ow provided the reflection.

I. Minutes
The minutes from the September 14, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved without changes.

II. Announcements and Information
A. The committee discussed the Way Klingler Teaching Enhancement Award. Shaun Longstreet noted that additional innovation had arisen as a result of recent awards, especially in inter-professional collaboration. For example, the 2015 award for an inter-professional education effort among faculty from Psychology, Speech & Language, and Education has supported additional service, education, and research initiative, including an ongoing partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin.

B. Dan Meissner noted that new member Don Neumann brings valuable perspective to our committee, having served on the Promotion and Tenure committee for six years.

III. Continuing Business
A. MOCES Revision
Research on Course Evaluation
Alix Riley, Crystal Lendved, and Shaun Longstreet provided extensive summaries of the research on course evaluation systems in response to the Committee on Teaching’s queries. What follows is highly abbreviated and undoubtedly inadequate summary of their presentations. Committee members should peruse the compilation of research for the committee prepared by Alix Riley and Crystal Lendved at: https://sp.mu.edu/sites/oira/courseval-cot.
Shaun Longstreet discussed key findings from “over fifty years of credible research on the validity and reliability of student ratings,” noting that the research largely supports the reliability and validity of course evaluation systems studied. The preponderance of evidence suggests that most factors faculty members worry about do not in fact affect results. For example, student ratings tend not to be tied to the difficulty of the workload. There is no appreciable difference in ratings between online and paper & pencil evaluations. Results can be impacted, generally weakly, Shaun reports, by such factors as faculty gender, ethnicity and “attractiveness.” Female faculty in male-dominated fields may receive lower evaluations, for example.

Alix Riley reported on a pilot run at MU where students were offered a chance to win iPads for submitting course evaluations. This resulted in a 7% increase in participation. The committee discussed (without conclusion) the relative value of universal incentives vs. “chance to win” incentives.

Alix also reported that the timing of course evaluations, say one month before the conclusion of the semester vs. the final day, does not affect ratings.

Alix reiterated that most research finds course evaluations to be valid and reliable.

It was suggested that the faculty member who sets high demands and helps students successfully attain them, gets high evaluations.

Sharepoint Resources
Crystal reviewed the contents of the Sharepoint resources, including an executive summary, resources, a website search of the tools and practices of 52 schools (to the extent they are reported on the websites), and the validity and reliability of various pre-packaged instruments. The Sharepoint site includes research on:

- Tools – questions and formats
- Timing and incentives
- Results and scores – factors affecting variance
- Educating students, faculty and others about course evaluation

Purpose of This Work
Don Neumann posed the question: Why are we doing this (exploring course evaluation systems/ reconsidering MOCES)? Committee members offered the following reasons:

- The system has not been evaluated in a long time.
- There is concern about the quality of the instrument, particularly among faculty. This includes criticism of the practice of reducing 4 questions to a single score for high stakes decisions, such as promotion and tenure; questions about the value and validity of the selected questions; and concerns about process.
- We need to address issues of diversity and inclusion.
The Core Issues
Alix stated that the key decisions to be made about a course evaluation system fall into three realms:
1) The instrument itself
2) Policies and procedures (issues such as timing, incentives, whether the evaluation is administered in class, whether it is given in all classes, how results are reported, how results are used, etc.)
3) How we communicate with and educate constituent groups (For students, how to evaluate courses. For faculty, how to interpret results. For administrators and decision-makers such as P&T, how to use the results.)

IV. New Business

A. The Baylor Cherry Award
   The committee discussed whether to nominate a faculty member for the Baylor Cherry Award for teaching and how that individual would be selected. Chair Meissner presented a list of 8 individuals who had won MU teaching awards and who had responded affirmatively to an email asking if they wished to be considered for nomination. After some discussion, the committee decided not to nominate a candidate this year and to place the discussion of appropriate criteria on a future agenda.

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

Next Meeting: November 16, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia M Ellwood