

MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
April 21, 2009
Tuesday, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Rm 129

Present: Elisabeth Cameron (Chair), Doris Ash, Jessica Fiske Bailey, Tammi Blake (Staff Advisor), Henry Burnett (Director of Media Services), Claire Max, Jim Phillips (Director of Instructional Technology Group), Hongyun Wang.

Absent: Ian Fullmer (SUA Representative), Daniel Selden.

1. Chair Announcements
 - a. Reviewing goals and committee work for this year yet to be accomplished: CTE restructuring recommendations, IIG restructuring, Teaching Awards Call restructuring.
2. Mini-grant: Grant approved conditionally. This proposal led to a discussion of equipment purchasing using grants and equipment as a vehicle to improve courses and disseminate knowledge. COT needs to develop guidelines for equipment purchasing through IIG grants stating that the equipment must provide a vehicle through which to disseminate knowledge.
3. Textbook Affordability: Bob McCampbell at the campus bookstore asked COT to review how proposed state legislation might affect faculty regarding textbook bundling with technology. COT thinks placing the burden to justify choices of texts on faculty and building in additional layers of oversight might actually raise the cost of textbooks for students. Feedback to Bob McCampbell: The chair will let him know that COT discussed and agreed with his concerns regarding this legislation and that he should let the committee know if he needs more from them.
4. Student Union Assembly (SUA) TA Diversity Survey: The Chair reported that SUA is concerned with student treatment by TAs in the classroom and would like to see TA diversity training. A forum was held with administrators, students and faculty. Chair Cameron attended and offered COT support. SUA developed a TA diversity survey for students that they'd like co-sponsored by COT. The committee suggested that an outside consultant along with EEO/AA work with SUA on what is the highest priority for them regarding diversity. Matt should go to the Office of Institutional Research to refine the survey. The committee notes that SUA should plan on working closely with the Grad Division on this. The SUA thinks the survey is necessary because concern for diversity issues already exists amongst students. It was observed by members that the proposed survey may need to be more focused. COT agrees that it should support dealing with classroom issues and a way of gathering information that doesn't lead to legal complications. A member points out that diversity training for TAs should be differentiated from course content training. COT wonders if there are any national or systemic surveys on this topic that could be used to support SUA's efforts.

5. Teaching Awards: COT received 42 nominations for 27 instructors. Adjudication is to take place the May 5th meeting. After review, eight award finalists were selected. The committee agreed to give three or four awards and divide the available money between them. Finalists who do not receive an award will get an honorable mention with a letter. CTE asked deans for a summary of teaching evaluations and the teaching record for each nominee. Jessica sent a letter to each nominee requesting a teaching statement, syllabus and CV. The Excellence in Teaching Awards ceremony will be combined with the Student Achievement Awards ceremony on June 5 at the Music Recital Hall from 3-5 pm. Biographical data and student comments will appear in the program rather than read. A plaque will be presented to each winner.
6. CTE follow-up discussion will be at a future meeting. More information will be posted to the committee website. COT will discuss what feedback to give to the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education at the end of the year. COT wonders about the possibility of a faculty director of CTE and notes the importance of continuing to build a culture of good teaching and rewarding good teaching on campus.
7. Instructional Improvement Grants (IIG) handout: Jessica developed a document for use in discussing the revision of the IIG guidelines and criteria. There is confusion as to whether the grants are for faculty improvement or improvement for students. The central issue the committee sees in regard to IIGs: what is the impact of these funds?
 - a. The committee questions what should be supported by divisions versus these grants. Jessica will ask the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and the VPDUE for more information on what is divisionally supported.
 - b. Thematic development with the call: This has been tried in the past but applications received did not match the themes. It is suggested that a larger theme could be used such as diversity or General Education reform.
 - c. The committee notes that there is no course relief for course development in departments currently and agrees that the issue of divisions giving relief for research but not for teaching should be highlighted.
 - d. The committee had a discussion of “improvement in teaching” as presented in the Call.
8. Mini-grants: Jessica will request feedback from former grantees by having them respond to three questions via email. Information on responses will be included with the COT annual report. The committee agrees that it is important to show that COT follows up on recipients reports on the use of grant money. The committee would like to know from grantees 1) what does and does not work about this grant process, 2) how the monies were used, 3) how knowledge is being disseminated and 4) what the impact of the grants are.

So Attests,

Elisabeth Cameron, Chair
Committee on Teaching