

MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
May 13, 2008
Tuesday, 10-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Room 129

Present: Doris Ash, Tammi Blake (ASO Staff), Henry Burnett (Media Services Director), Elisabeth Cameron (Chair), Rachel Dewey (NSTF Rep), Carley Friedman (GSA Representative), Ruth Harris-Barnett (CTE Director), Kevin Karplus, Cynthia Polecristi, Jie Qing.

Consult: Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education Bill Ladusaw

1. Chair's Announcements:

One more COT meeting this year on May 27th.

2. CTE Director Announcements

Update on Learning Management System (LMS): A group has been reporting to ITS on what the new LMS should be capable of and writing a report to be used in selecting the new LMS. ITS is now recruiting faculty with an interest for selecting the new LMS. The deadline by which a new system will need to be adopted is October 2009 when the current system, WebCT, is no longer supported.

3. Minutes

The minutes from April 29 were accepted with minor corrections.

4. Mini-grants:

One mini-grant was approved.

One mini-grant was denied.

One major grantee was granted a slight modification in their budget.

5. Consult Bill Ladusaw, VPDUE on recruitment of new CTE Director and COT's relationship with CTE.

Topics:

Organization of CTE:

The committee would like to know if there will be organizational changes in CTE with the hiring of a new director.

VPDUE Ladusaw referred to the CTE Curriculum document and expressed to the committee that he does not want to lose the momentum of organization achieved with CTE. He thinks the Center could serve the campus better and should have the new title of Center for Advancement of Teaching and Learning. The Center should focus on training faculty, faculty of the future (grad students), TAs and primarily attend to matters of teaching and learning. The diffusion of the Center to other areas on campus for better support is being considered. He sees the new name of the center is an indicator of the state of teaching and learning on campus and how we advertise to the outside world. His view is that undergraduate education is the mission and should be the focus of the university and that is what the state pays for. The direction for the Center should also be to see what faculty can do in leveraging its expertise and teaching and include TAs and grad students in faculty discussion because they are future faculty and coach them on how to become effective instructors.

New Center director search criteria:

Committee members presented ideal criteria for the new Center Director: a well rounded individual academically, administratively and professionally who comes with a weight of authority and faculty credibility.

VPDUE stated that the COT Chair has been invited to be on the search committee for the new Center director and encourages COT's input and involvement in the process. He agrees with the candidate criteria committee members presented. A national search for candidates will begin and local candidates are being considered as well.

The Center's role in supporting faculty/teaching and evaluations:

A committee member is concerned about "learning" being in the new name of the Center because that is usually seen as "student-centric". The Center is meant to support faculty and focus on teaching. There seems to be little connection between what the Center does and what goes on in individual departments regarding faculty support. COT would like to see departments develop a culture of considering teaching as a craft.

VPDUE agreed that teaching should be seen by departments as just as important as research and queried how this can be encouraged. He sees it as important for a department to view its curriculum as jointly and not individually owned by the faculty and posits: what is the goal of curriculum overall and how do individual classes and teaching fit into that curriculum? Regarding evaluations and the LMS: we need faculty advisors for the LMS and the online evaluation system.

Relationship of CTE to COT

The committee addressed the fact that the line between the Center and COT has become blurred and there is confusion regarding which body “owns” what tasks and events the committee works on (teaching awards, grants, learning symposium).

VPDUE responded that while the two should work together but there should be clear boundaries of who does what. COT is “historical” in that it provides a record of work and action as a senate committee. He would like COT endorsement on the CTE curriculum provided by the current CTE Director and to preserve the organization by which outstanding teaching is recognized.

Finances:

COT is concerned about what effect budget cuts might have on the Center.

VPDUE Ladusaw stated that there are no answers to financial questions at this time and that we must analyze what the most effective use of the money the Center has and how to preserve and protect those monies.

COT continued to discuss the Center after VPDUE Ladusaw’s departure. The committee still feels that there should be clear delineation between COT and CTE to provide boundaries between faculty issues and COT’s role as an advisory body. Faculty should continue to be the main concern of COT. COT would like the grant guidelines to be reviewed. A member suggested that COT get together with CAP to award good teaching and noted that reduction in course loads is important in teaching excellence.

Action Items:

Members to review COT charge

Define which activities “belong” to CTE and to COT: Teaching Excellence Awards, Teaching and Learning Symposium

So attests,

Elisabeth Cameron, Chair
Committee on Teaching