

Committee on Teaching (COT)

MINUTES

January 8, 2013, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall 129

Present: Charlie McDowell, *Chair*, Deborah Gould, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Nandini Bhattacharya (NSTF), Noelle Lehnhard (GSA), Gabi Cruz (SUA), Jim Phillips, *sits with*, Director of Learning Technologies

Absent: Michael Chemers

Absent with notice: Martin Weissman

Consent Agenda

The meeting minutes of October 30, November 13, and November 27 were all approved.

Winter Quarter Forum on Online Education

Director Phillips notified members of a conference on online education titled “Rebooting CA Higher Education” that is taking place today at UCLA. The URL to the live stream will be emailed to members following the meeting.

CEP is planning the second online education forum to be offered on January 30, and COT will plan the third (offered in Spring Quarter). Chair McDowell stated that COT has chance to choose what sorts of questions get discussed. Panelists can, for instance, engage with big questions about how the roles of faculty might change once more courses are offered online; whether or not faculty salary will be based on teaching; if online courses will just replicate textbooks; how large online courses will affect UCSC’s matriculated students; the cost of online education; UCSC’s mission for online education; and, if the UC will be permitted to alter the content of online courses created by its faculty.

Following this discussion, members formed a consensus around the need to have a forum that challenged participants by asking big philosophical questions about online education. Further, members agreed that marketing for the event needs to clearly state the purpose of the forum.

Members discussed possible titles for the second forum including “Varieties of Online Learning,” and “Increased Learning Through Online Resources.”

Members discussed whether to have UCSC faculty on the panel at the third forum, or to invite non-UC experts. This prompted a conversation about who to invite and members recommended UCSC Professor of History Gail Hershatter, and UCB Professor of Political Science Wendy

Brown. These faculty have thought a lot of online education and could present a variety of perspectives.

A member raised the concern that faculty may currently be trading in their practice of teaching students in the classroom by following the hype of online education to teaching online, and will not easily be able to return to the classroom. Another member stated that in disciplines that require more mediation of language, online education can be very expensive. Moreover, faculty need to know more about how student learning styles are changing and what pedagogical methods actually improve their learning.

Members next discussed possible formats for the third forum and tentatively decided on the interview format. One member recommended publicizing the questions that will be asked in advance of the event so faculty and staff can come well prepared with follow up questions. Ideas for titles were suggested including the following: “Technology and Quality in Education,” “Online Education: One Size Doesn’t Fit All. When is online applicable and when is it not?” and “How Online Education Affects Quality of Education.”

Chair McDowell mentioned that some of his colleagues have expressed concern that UCSC desperately needs a plan for our involvement in online education. Being pro-active and developing a plan might encourage UCSC faculty to be innovative in online education, rather than just merely waiting to see what other universities do.

A member expressed concern that much of the discussion about online education is being driven by budgetary concerns. Rather, the member argued, COT needs to be studying the way cuts to public education are really impacting teaching. Chair McDowell mentioned that a Joint Senate/Administration Task Force on Pedagogy is being created and this is an issue they will likely take up.

On a separate note, Director Phillips informed members that he recently attended a consultation with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), and that he would share his response to CEP with COT. Further, he announced that there will be organizational changes to the Library IT staff, moving them to Learning Technologies.

Center for Teaching and Learning Vision Statement

Chair McDowell queried members on what next steps COT might take in re-envisioning a Center for Teaching at UCSC.

Director Phillips noted that IT continues to invest in technology, and that it would be beneficial to have a Center for Teaching that could assist IT in ensuring that investments are driven by pedagogical interests.

A member raised the question of who it is University Relations (UR) might make a funding pitch to, stating that different audiences will have different preferences. Alumni, for instance, will likely be interested in preserving the special learning experiences and environments they had while attending UCSC, while corporations might have different preferences. Alternatively, the member continued, COT might just focus on envisioning the sort of Center members would want, and then pitch that to UR.

Members continued by identifying services they would like to have available to them through a Center for Teaching. The following suggestions were made:

- Research in tracking faculty success in teaching
- Staff that could identify granting opportunities to improve teaching
- Opportunities and a space for faculty to collaborate on teaching efforts
- Staff with expertise in teaching that span many disciplines
- Staff or a faculty director that could connect faculty to teaching resources, technological or pedagogical
- Staff or a faculty director that could assist with faculty collaboration on interdisciplinary teaching and learning efforts
- An endowed chair in Education, for instance, that could spend half their time as a director for the Center
- A Center that could leverage funds from the administration to be used for Instructional Improvement Grants

Excellence in Teaching Nomination Process

Due to a lack of time, the Chair asked that COT revisit this item at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.