

DRAFT
Committee on Teaching (COT)
MINUTES
November 29, 2011
Tuesday, 10:00am – 11:30am, Kerr Hall 129

Present: Daniel Selden (Chair), Brandin Baron-Nusbaum, Maria Schonbek, Graeme Smith, Michael Tassio (ASO staff)

Absent: Pascal Garaud, Mary Flannery, Jessica Fiske-Bailey, Mary Thomas (GSA), Nicol Gaffney (SUA)

Guest: Jim Phillips

The minutes of November 1, 2011 were approved.

VPDUE Richard Hughey's Response re: Class-Times Proposal

The committee discussed VPDUE Hughey's November 28, 2011 response to Senate feedback on the class-time proposal. In his response, the VPDUE highlighted proposals by CPE and CEP, both of which add one time slot per week, and asked that Senate committees provide additional feedback. COT unanimously agreed that the CEP proposal was a better alternative.

In discussing alternatives to the proposals by CPE and CEP, Chair Selden proposed the option of restoring Saturday morning classes. Instructors would not be required to teach on Saturdays, but would have the option to. If enough classes are offered on Saturday, class time slots during the week will be less impacted.

Some committee members were opposed to this option. Reasons stated included conflicts with weekend conferences, a current lack of campus resources on weekends including Learning Technologies staff, no heating in classrooms, potentially excluding Jewish students, faculty and staff by holding classes on Shabbat, as well as less bus routes on weekends to transport students and faculty to classes. If COT is interested in pursuing this option, these concerns need to be addressed. One member recommended that correspondence to VPDUE Hughey be clear that not all COT members endorse the proposal to restore Saturday morning classes.

It was noted that lecturers might be particularly interested in teaching on Saturdays and might be willing to teach classes if faculty do not chose to.

Other options discussed included adding late night class slots during the week, and offering online instruction. The mention of online instruction prompted a brief discussion on its merits and disadvantages. One member noted the temptation to overload students with visual data when

using, for instance, PowerPoint presentations. Instructors teaching online courses will need to find a balance between effectively communicating with students and not creating convoluted courses that are unnecessarily time consuming. Another member noted that successful online courses do not emulate the classroom experience, but take advantage of new tools and means of effectively teaching course materials. As a result, shifting traditional classes to online courses will be time consuming and instructors will need an incentive to do so.

Jim Phillips, Director of Learning Technologies, offered to provide examples of successful online courses, and an update on recent changes to remote instruction policy at UCSD.

Chair Selden agreed to respond to VPDUE Hughey conveying the committee's view that the CEP alternative is the better option. He will also mention the possibility of restoring Saturday morning classes, late night time slots during the week, and online instruction.

Second Letter to VPAA Lee re: Classroom Climate Question

COT sent a second letter to VPAA Herbert Lee clarifying and augmenting its proposal regarding the phrasing of a classroom climate question on instructor evaluations. The letter was sent to VPAA Lee on November 23. COT has not received a response.

College Core Courses

Chair Selden began this discussion by stating that he has heard from some faculty members that they are interested in teaching college core courses. He suggested the possibility of polling faculty to gain a better sense of how many faculty members are indeed interested.

College core courses are currently taught by adjunct lecturers, although they were originally designed and taught by later-rank faculty. As such, later-rank faculty associated with colleges (fellows) played a major role in shaping the curriculums of each college.

Not all COT members present at the meeting were familiar with college core courses, and had not heard from faculty that they are interested in teaching them. Several of these members expressed concern that few later-rank faculty members are adequately prepared to teach college core courses given that their areas of expertise are not within the curriculum of the core course. Moreover, departments need their latter-rank faculty to teach departmental courses.

Another member stated that appointments to teach college core courses are compensated at a lesser rate than courses through their department and that faculty will likely have to take an overload to teach them. This raised the question of what the incentive to teach these courses would be.

The committee agreed to invite the Chair of the Council of Provosts to COT to learn more about the curricular goals of the college core courses and opportunities for senate faculty to teach them.

Cross-Divisional Courses

Chair Selden proposed meeting with divisional deans to discuss the possibility of supporting a pilot program to offer cross-divisional courses. The committee was interested in this proposal and agreed to develop ideas for specific courses before the January 10 COT meeting. Chair Selden plans to take these ideas to a meeting with the deans.

Other Items

Because several members were absent, Chair Selden chose to postpone the discussion re: Support for Teaching at UCSC until the January 10 meeting.

Online instructor evaluations have been posted. One member expressed concern about allowing students to evaluate their instructors after their grades have been assigned. Jim Philips stated that Department Managers have a lot of flexibility in setting up evaluations (including setting due date) and offered to give COT a demonstration at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

So Attests,

Daniel Selden, Chair

Committee on Teaching