

## **Committee on Teaching (COT)**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Meeting of October 8, 2014**

**Present:** Judith Scott (chair), Viqui González-Pagani, Phil Hammack, Matthew McCarthy, Marc Matera, Kevin Bell (NSTF), Jim Phillips (Director of Learning Technologies), Nadia Mufti (CUIP Intern), Barak Krakauer (committee analyst).

#### **Chair's Overview of the Committee on Teaching**

Members reviewed the charge and discussed items that COT should address in 2014-2015. Chair Scott noted that the COT Charge is out of date, since it states that director of the non-existent Center for Teaching and Learning should sit with the committee. Members reviewed the confidentiality statement and the previous year's annual report.

#### **New Senate Members' Website**

ASO Staff showed committee members the new Google Site for Senate service and navigated through the page for COT.

#### **Discussion of Topics for 2014-2015**

Members discussed various topics of interest for the coming year, informed by the work done by last year's COT.

The committee looks forward to helping to evaluate a potential successor to eCommons, along with CCT and other interested parties. Director Phillips reported that Sakai, the consortium that runs eCommons, will most likely continue to exist, despite the fact that several of its most important contributors (UC Berkeley, University of Michigan, and University of Indiana) are switching to Canvas, although Director Phillips believes that eCommons will remain a stable and workable system. The committee noted various alternatives to eCommons, some of which are already being used at UCSC, such as Wordpress, Google Classroom, and Canvas. While there are various technical and legal obstacles to address before moving to a new system, the committee decided that helping to select the direction the campus may go with respect to learning management was very important.

Last year's COT noted that participation rates for online course evaluations are quite low, and that this is especially troubling for lecturers and junior faculty who rely on evaluations for purposes of hiring and promotion. That committee discussed several strategies to increase the participation rate on these evaluations, and this year's COT continued that discussion. These strategies included discussing the importance and anonymity of these evaluations with students, scheduling class time to fill out the evaluations (if possible), and giving some kind of class-wide incentive for reaching some set participation target. COT plans to give a report on these strategies at the next Senate meeting.

This year, the VPAA announced that it would not administer the Excellence in Teaching Awards (ETA), and offered COT the \$2000 it would have spent on the awards. COT will survey deans

and departments and determine what kinds of teaching awards already exist, but the committee believes there should be a campus-wide award, and that this award should be a prestigious and high-profile award, regardless of what already exists at the divisional or departmental levels.

This led to a discussion the lack of administrative support for instructional development. Several years ago, funding for Instructional Improvement Grants (IIG) was eliminated, and support for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) dwindled to the point where the center was disestablished. In this context, the elimination of administrative support for the ETA seemed particularly troubling. The committee decided to respond to this lack of support in part by seeking funding for these kinds of initiatives from an outside donor, and in part by raising the issue to the Senate and soliciting ideas and support from the faculty at large. The hope is that the committee can build momentum among faculty and other agencies to increase the visibility of the need for teaching support and receive some financial support for larger initiatives in the future.

The committee was also interested in the history of the CTL at UCSC. COT would like to better understand how the CTL fell out of the hands of the Academic Senate, so that this mistake can be avoided should a new teaching center be established. Additionally, the committee would like to discuss the kinds of centers for teaching at other UC campuses as well as other peer institutions, to determine what UCSC could emulate or improve upon.

### **CUIP Intern and Teaching Website Project**

Last year, COT was awarded an intern from the Chancellor's Undergraduate Intern Program (CUIP). COT's intern, Nadia Mufti, attended this meeting, and the committee discussed how best to work with her to better promote teaching pedagogy at UCSC.

The committee determined that at least part of the intern's project should be the development of a website that would serve as a kind of public face for teaching innovation at UCSC as well as a way of dispersing information among instructors about methods and outcomes of different teaching pedagogies. The website would include interviews with students and instructors, as well as discussion of trends and research in teaching.