MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
February 12, 2008
Tuesday, 10-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Room 129

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

Absent: Rachel Dewey.

1.   Chair's Announcements.

At an upcoming meeting COT will receive a brief orientation regarding the newly created AIS faculty portal. ITS is requesting that the faculty who are currently serving on Senate committees test the portal and give them feedback. Half of the Senate committee faculty will test it now and half in spring quarter.

2.   CTE Director's announcements.

Director Harris-Barnett provided an update on the UCOP Teaching, Learning, and Technology Conference to be held at UC Davis this summer. The conference organizing committee would like to invite selected faculty to attend. Director Harris-Barnett has communicated to the organizing committee COT's position that any faculty attendance funded through IIP minigrants must be solicited by open invitation to all faculty. She hopes to get an announcement out to faculty soon.

When COT looks at major grants for the March 4 major grant adjudication meeting, members are asked to watch to be sure that there are support letters from department chairs who must support the application and commit to regularly offering the course.

3.   Minutes. The minutes from January 29 were accepted.

4.   Symposium update/business.

Approximately 20 registrants had confirmed their intent to attend the Teaching and Learning Symposium by the time of this meeting. Another announcement will be sent by the Senate Office via email and a paper announcement will be distributed this week by the CTE. Director Harris-Barnett will create guidance procedures for the round-table facilitators. At the symposium, she will "meet and greet". Chair Cameron will emcee and COT members are asked to distribute themselves among the round tables. COT members should arrive a few minutes early, if possible.

5.   Professor of the Year Award.

COT members were asked to re-read the files of the three possible nominees. Director Harris-Barnett will send out the nominating letters for COT consideration.

6.   Professional Schools.

At the request of the Senate Chair and the Committee on Planning and Budget, COT considered four professional school pre-proposals.

It sounds to COT that a School of the Environmental would build on existing strengths and would need no new infrastructure. The limit of 25 students has both drawbacks and advantages.

A School of Public Health would build on several recent hires and five existing departments. However, COT notes that since UCSC does not have a medical school it may not adequately compete for this top-down initiative from the State.

The Education Department is asking for a new School of Education that would bring in the largest graduate enrollment of the four. The pre-proposal was found to be poorly written and lacking in focus. It needs to make a more convincing argument for this professional school as opposed to expanding the existing department. One COT member noted that the existing program is already overloaded, with 150 students per year; and that the State has a great need for bilingual teachers. UCSC needs this professional school if it is to compete for certain State resources.

COT could not find benefits to the campus that would stem from the pre-proposal for the School of Management since it will be entirely in Silicon Valley. It was also noted that the proposal does not discuss diversity, equity, or teaching.

7.   Visit to CEP on February 13.

Chair Cameron and Director Harris-Barnett will attend a Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) meeting tomorrow. CEP wants to explore the idea of using grants to re-do courses to fit into a new general education structure, if one should be the outcome of their current general education reform efforts. Since COT has established grant-giving priorities (usually just six Course Development Fellowships per year), the Committee would need a large, specifically marked fund to give new and more grants.

8.   Mini-grants. None for consideration at this meeting.

9.   Paper on Remote/Online Instruction.

COT considered the paper on online instruction send to the Divisional Senates by CCGA and UCEP. The Committee notes the paradox of this lengthy discussion about online teaching when the actual trend peaked at universities (during the dot-com boom) several years ago. A COT member noted that the largest market for online teaching is now the military.

The Committee has especially grave concerns about quality control, with several members arguing that "UC quality"—ideally, the highest quality—is not possible with extensive, exclusive use of online teaching; in fact, there is no real definition of "UC quality" throughout the entire discussion. COT emphasizes that residency requirements are also important even in online courses, with standards for face-to-face interaction with instructors and other students.

One member believes that the issues being raised in the "Dialectic" paper, are good issues asking the right questions, and that there is a certain place for these courses, if they are done well. It was also noted that it is the faculty's right and responsibility to build excellent courses.

So attests,

Elisabeth Cameron, Chair
Committee on Teaching