MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
October 30, 2007
Tuesday, 10-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Room 129

Present: Henry Burnett (Media Services Director), Elisabeth Cameron (Chair), Rachel Dewey (NSTF Rep), Ruth Harris-Barnett (CTE Director), Kevin Karplus, Roxanne Monnet (Senate analyst), Jie Qing.

Absent: Doris Ash.

Guest: Barry Bowman, Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel.

**1.	Chair's Announcements.**

Members were reminded of the November 1 opportunity to meet with UC President Dynes, of the November 9 Senate Meeting, and that the November 13 COT meeting will occur in a different room, Kerr 61.

On the COT agenda for November 13 will be the systemwide proposal to modify the graduate student instructor policies.

Chair Cameron informed the committee that she would like to move to the culture of raising hands and being called on to speak in meetings in order to ensure that people have a shared opportunity to speak in the limited time given to topics.

**2.	CTE Director's Announcements.** None

**3.	Minutes.** The October 16 minutes were accepted as amended.

**4.	Symposium planning.**

The results of the recent faculty survey regarding format and content for the next teaching and learning symposium were discussed. Survey respondents did not favor having a keynote speaker nor a series of longer faculty presentations with discussions. The responses did not demonstrate a clear preference of one single event versus a series of shorter linked events. Since respondents favored short faculty presentations, round-table discussions, and hands-on or demo sessions with learning technology staff, COT will work on a format to include some or all of these formats. COT decided to forgo having a keynote speaker this year. Director Harris-Barnet will create some scenarios and email them to COT for feedback within a week. Titles along the lines of "maintain excellence with growing course enrollments" will be considered and discussed at the next meeting.

5. Mini grants. None.

6. Consultation with CAP Chair regarding on-line evaluations.

Barry Bowman, Chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), visited COT to discuss the on-line evaluation project under consideration by COT.

He indicated that CAP supports the idea of on-line student evaluations of instructor performance; they understand the advantages of going on-line. However, CAP does not want evaluations reduced to a mere numeric score.   The open-ended written comments part of evaluations need to be retained in CAP's opinion. CAP finds this style of question to be the most useful to their getting a picture of faculty teaching performance as a rule.   CAP thinks that there are too many questions on the current Scantron form and does not use several of them in their evaluation process. As far as the uniformity of questions, CAP would not want to take away from departments their right to set the questions. Three to five well-stated questions should be sufficient for the CAP's review. He noted that evaluations tend to highlight things like problems and popularity of the course or the individual, but that very little comes through regarding the course itself such as whether it is being taught at the right level, amount of work, etc. Chair Bowman noted that on a couple UC campuses grade distribution information is included with review files. He thinks that this information could be useful to CAP in addition to the evaluations.

It was speculated that the number of A and B grades given by an instructor leads to that instructor's popularity perhaps more than actual teaching success. Director Harris-Barnett expressed awareness of evidence suggesting that there is some weak correlation between student responses on course evaluations and their grades. That is, students who receive a higher grade in the course tend to give slightly higher ratings of the instructor. She will provide resources on this topic.

Since it is thought that some students respond differently when writing evaluations in the classroom, it seems important to have a disclaimer as to how the evaluations will be used (e.g. in the faculty members file and used for personnel reviews versus those that may be viewed only by the faculty member).

Chair Bowman gave feedback regarding CAP's concern that these evaluations appear to be the only way to assess teaching success. He and COT discussed the value of peer review of teaching by attending each others lectures occasionally.

COT asked how involved CAP would like to be with the pilot. Chair Bowman would like to see the nature of the questions that would be asked and to know how the students would be encouraged to respond and/or monitored. CAP also needs to know how the data will be collected and provided to them.

COT confirmed that public access to any of the information is not a part of the pilot that is planned to occur this academic year. Nonetheless, COT is interested in CAP's feedback to

public access. Chair Bowman indicated that this was not an element of CAP's discussion regarding on-line evaluations.

It was noted that some campuses are putting evaluation information on the web, on the thinking that it is better to decide what to put out publicly rather than leave the information solely to what is found in places like "pick-a-prof". UC Registrars are having discussions on this topic.

COT is happy that CAP is in support of the pilot going forward. When the questions are in more final form CAP will be invited to give feedback to them.

So attests,

Elisabeth Cameron, Chair
Committee on Teaching