

MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
April 20, 2010
Tuesday, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Rm 129

Present: Hongyun Wang (Chair), Dan Scripture, Dan Selden, Graeme Smith, Stephanie Casher (ASO)

Guests: Jessica Fiske-Bailey, Jim Phillips

Absent: Kate Edmunds

The minutes of April 6, 2010 were approved.

Commission on the Future Recommendations

COT spent the bulk of the meeting discussing their response to the preliminary recommendations circulated by the five Working Groups of the UC Commission on the Future.

The first issue discussed was whether or not UC should explore differential enrollment structures, based on the “ability to pay.” In essence, those who are able to pay, will pay the full cost of admission, while those who are unable to pay will be “subsidized.” While the committee agreed that this was most likely the direction UC was heading, in reality, students will probably have differing levels of “need,” so more than two enrollment categories will most likely be needed.

When the committee returned to the topic of the “three-year pathway,” the concern was expressed that for many departments, a three-year pathway would require a complete restructuring of the major. While this option may work for some departments, it won’t for others, so flexibility in implementation would be key. For example, the three-year pathway only works if GE courses are taken out of the equation and students arrive at UCSC knowing what degree they want to pursue.

COT then turned to the bigger issue of “What is the primary function of higher education?” There seem to be two types of students who attend the University—those who know what they want to do and are here to get their degrees and get out into the workforce, and those who are interested in a liberal arts education that enables them to “sample” a variety of fields before settling on a career path. For those that enter the University “undecided,” GEs are an essential part of their undergraduate education. But for those students who have identified a clear pathway, are GE requirements the best use of their time?

Another point raised is that many UCs spend the first two years of a student’s undergraduate career getting them trained to do UC level work. Is UC subsidizing the failure of K-12 institutions to prepare our students for college-level coursework? Are the GE requirements better handled at Community Colleges BEFORE students transfer to UC, and if so, what implications does this have for UCSC’s recently adopted GE reform? COT concluded that every school

system in the state needs to be thought about strategically. Trying to slap band-aids on micro issues without addressing macro issues is a waste of time.

This led the committee to ponder if a Liberal Arts education was a viable concept in the current budgetary climate. Do all campuses need to provide a liberal arts component? Perhaps some degree of campus specialization isn't a bad idea? However, we need to be careful that what we advocate doesn't come back to bite us. We should stay away from statements such as "UCSF should be the designated Medical School; UCB is the designated science institution..."

Locally, should we be thinking about a divisional restructuring, for example, by fleshing out the idea of a College of Humanities and Social Sciences? The reality departments are facing is that there are shrinking numbers of faculty FTE (due to retirements and separations), and increasing enrollments. For example, in the Literature department, the faculty size is down 50%, while enrollment has increased. As a result, Literature only has the manpower to mount courses for their general Literature curriculum. How are we going to handle these capacity issues? If there *was* a College of Humanities and Social Sciences, could the smaller departments be folded under the larger umbrella, so that workload is shared?

Chair Wang will draft a response to the working group recommendations, and circulate to the committee via email for comment. COT response is due on May 7th.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15am.

So attests,

Hongyun Wang, Chair
Committee on Teaching