

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE ON TEACHING**  
**April 6, 2010**  
**Tuesday, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Rm 129**

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

Guests: Jessica Fiske-Bailey, Jim Phillips

Absent: Daniel Selden, Gordon Wells

The minutes of March 16, 2010 were approved.

**Chair's Announcements**

Chair Wang welcomed new COT member Graeme Smith (Astronomy and Astrophysics). It was also decided that COT would aim to adjourn fifteen minutes early (@ 11:15am) due to Chair Wang's teaching commitment immediately following COT.

**Excellence in Teaching Awards - Update**

Jessica Fiske-Bailey provided an update on the nominations for the Excellence in Teaching Awards. Around twenty applications have been received, and the Divisional Deans have been asked to comment on the applications and rank them. The goal is to narrow down the pool to two finalists, per division.

At a May meeting, COT will review the nomination packets of each selected finalist, which will include a teaching statement, Chair's letter, and Dean's letter. The Excellence in Teaching Awards Ceremony and Reception will be held on the afternoon of June 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Commission on the Future Recommendations**

COT began discussion of the preliminary recommendations circulated by the five Working Groups of the UC Commission on the Future. One committee member expressed frustration that the study contained too much unfocused content. The overarching question is how UC can maintain accessibility, affordability, and high quality, but in reality, as a result of current fiscal conditions, it is impossible to maintain all three at the current levels/standards. The committee member's perception is that the Commission's failure to acknowledge this fact is a fatal flaw in the design of the study.

That said, the committee proceeded to wade through the recommendations. The first discussion centered on the proposal to push students through UC in three years, instead of four. The following concerns were expressed:

- There are *some* students who can make it through in three years, so it may not be a bad idea to encourage/institutionalize this practice.
- The primary barrier to the 3-year pathway is that many incoming students lack basic preparatory education, and need General Education coursework and training to get them up to speed.

- UC needs to acknowledge the wide range of students who land at this institution to be educated. How can we continue to serve ALL students, without becoming elitist?

It was agreed that COT's response to this point should marry vision with pragmatic results.

On the proposal to streamline/encourage the community college transfer pathway, COT pointed out that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The quality of community colleges varies dramatically, so there is no guarantee that just because a student satisfies all the transfer requirements at their particular community college, that they will be adequately prepared for UC-level coursework.

COT is very wary of the proposal to move towards distance learning and online instruction. What happens if after these options are implemented, it is decided that certain topics are best taught at a particular University? Have we opened the door to intellectual/academic centralization? What consequences might that have for a smaller campus such as UCSC, or for faculty at a given institution whose specialty has been moved elsewhere?

COT also cautions that budget-driven decision-making has a very different objective than change based on best practices. We need to be very clear about what we're doing, and why.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15am.

So attests,

Hongyun Wang, Chair  
Committee on Teaching