Committee on Teaching (COT)
MINUTES
April 3, 2012, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall 129

Present: Daniel Selden (Chair), Dee Hibbert-Jones, Maria Schonbek, Graeme Smith, Mary Flannery (NSTF), Michael Tassio (ASO staff)

Guests: Jim Phillips

Absent: Pascal Garaud (with notice), Peter Rovegno (GSA)

The minutes of March 6 were approved.

Updates from the Chair
Chair Selden updated members on the status of a letter he sent to Senate Chair Gillman regarding COT's role in pedagological innovations on campus. He has not received a response, and COT members agreed that it would be prudent to wait a few more weeks before sending a second letter.

COT has been asked for formal comment on the recent Silicon Valley Academic Plan and Chair Selden stressed the need for COT to thoughtfully address issues related to teaching. Members questioned why COT had not previously commented on this document, and why they were not being given more time to develop a response. There is concern amongst COT members that Senate committees in general are being given less time to respond to proposals from campus administration. Jim Phillips suggested establishing a rule that guarantees a one month review period for any proposal.

Chair Selden has not formally written to the Committee on Education Policy (CEP) with COT's recommendations for expanding undergraduate grading options, but will soon do so.

Update on the Learning Technology Committee
Member Maria Schonbek, COT's representative on the Learning Technology Committee (LTC), was unable to attend the recent meeting. Jim Phillips updated the committee on the meeting proceedings.

Learning Technologies has added support staff in the evenings to focus on classroom technology. Most of the courses impacted are in the School of Engineering and require a significant amount of video conferencing.

Learning Technologies is preparing to remove 35mm slide equipment, laser discs, and VHS players from classrooms. All of the equipment will be archived in their facilities and will be available to faculty upon requests. They expect this change to cut costs on regular maintenance of these machines, but acknowledged that some faculty will be burdened with having to check out this equipment.

eCommons grew by an additional 100 courses and the LTC is considering expanding its use to include non-classroom functions such as project webpages for staff and faculty. Several instructional use videos have been posted online to assist faculty new to eCommons.

LTC has begun to discuss storage issues on eCommons. Should they archive courses on eCommons that have not, for instance, been taught in several years? COT is interested in being involved in this conversation to ensure that faculty opinions are represented.

As more faculty are using eCommons, LTC continues to be concerned over copyrighted materials posted without permission on course websites in eCommons. IT administrators may be responsible for content posted on sites they support, even if they do not post the content themselves. There are several lawsuits currently in court that the LTC is following. It is possible that IT administrators are taking on far greater risks than they are aware.

Robin Ove, Project Manager for the Online Instructor Evaluation System, will provide reports on instructor evaluations. Responding to concerns, Jim Philips assured COT members that archived evaluations and course materials will be securely stored.

LTC continues to discuss UCSC's presence on iTunes U. Apple has recently expanded the functionality of the platform and LTC members are becoming increasingly attracted to it. COT is interested in playing a role in developing the areas of focus for iTunes U should UCSC move forward in developing a presence.

LTC members discussed the changing nature of student's use of technology. A growing cohort of students are using cell phones or tablet computers (e.g., iPads) to connect to the internet and read course materials but are using university desktop computers to work on assignments and write papers.

Turnitin.com, a database for detecting plagiarism, is changing their fee structure and has prompted UC campuses to reconsider subscribing to their service. UCSC currently does not have a subscription but most other UC campuses do. UC Berkeley recently ended their subscription over concerns that students' papers submitted to the database were not adequately protected from further unauthorized uses.

Review Excellence in Teaching Awards Nominations
Members spent a large portion of time reviewing student nominations of faculty for the 2011-12 Excellence in Teaching Awards. Ten nominees were selected for further review at the April 17 meeting.

A few members voiced frustration with the review process stating that there is very little to no criteria to evaluate nominations. The process is further complicated by the fact the some nominees teach for more students due to the size of their classes than do other instructors.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Selden, Chair
Committee on Teaching