

Committee on Teaching (COT)
MINUTES
April 17, 2012, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Kerr Hall 129

Present: Daniel Selden (Chair), Pascal Garaud, Maria Schonbek, Graeme Smith, Mary Flannery (NSTF), Peter Rovegno (GSA), Michael Tassio (ASO staff)

Guests: Jessica Fiske Bailey, Jim Phillips

Absent: Dee Hibbert-Jones (with notice)

The meeting minutes of April 3 were approved with minor corrections.

Final Selection of Excellence in Teaching Awards

The committee reviewed the shortlist of nominees and made final selections for 2011-12 Excellence in Teaching Awards. Members discussed the merits of having long recommendation statements from students and generally agreed that this year's process was better than previous years. Because the committee did not require nominees to write pedagogical statements, the chair will encourage faculty selected for the award to write them.

COT's Course of Action

Members discussed COT's role and decided to focus on rewriting their charge this spring. Chair Selden framed the conversation around either reducing the number of COT meetings to focus almost exclusively on Excellence in Teaching Awards, or to pursue COT's mission of improving teaching on campus. If the later, it would be prudent for COT to consult with CEP on issues that are of mutual interest; perhaps members from COT and CEP can better integrate their work by forming a sub-committee. One member argued that COT's mission is to improve teaching and that this has become far more difficult without funding for Instructional Improvement Grants, and support from the Center for Teaching & Learning. Another member noted that there is currently an opportunity for COT to take a leadership role in evaluating and reporting on online instruction. Online instruction is a contentious topic and there is a need to better inform campus on the pros and cons of using online and hybrid courses. Further, it is not clear that there is a Senate committee better aligned to comment on this topic than COT. A member noted that many (if not all) divisions have curriculum advisory committees that review course proposals and, more generally, divisional curriculum. These committees have a significant impact on the direction of the curriculum and COT may have a role to play in consulting with them. This conversation will be continued at the May 1 meeting.

Silicon Valley Academic Plan

Members discussed the Silicon Valley Academic Plan and raised the following questions:

- Will implementing the plan delocalize some of the most interesting graduate courses and research to the Silicon Valley?
- Will courses offered at the Silicon Valley Campus also be offered at the Santa Cruz campus?

- Where do the supposed desires of corporations to have greater interaction with academic research and instruction come from? Why are they coming about at this particular juncture? In what form(s) have they made their desires known to the UCSC?
- Members agreed that adding 20 FTE is excellent for improving teaching, but where will the funding for these positions come from?
- Will UCSC invest in the Silicon Valley campus at the expense of reducing the quality of education at the UCSC campus? Given UCSC's limited resources, is it a good idea to invest funds in the Silicon Valley campus when current programs at UCSC are struggling?
- Which faculty—under what conditions and with what facilities—would be able (or required) to teach at the Silicon Valley campus?
- The plan views its mission to ensure that new programs “grow... in a way that lets [them] serve SV best.” Is this priority desirable? Or should UCSC not rather conceptualize such partnerships in a way that places the interests of the UCSC campus first, partnering with Silicon Valley corporations to the extent that it benefits UCSC, and not the other way around?
- How will the Silicon Valley campus foster, monitor, and evaluate teaching, particularly with an eye to UCSC personnel processes?

Other Items

The committee was unable to discuss the UCSC Climate Study Faculty Survey nor Methods to Increase Completion Rates of Online Instructor Evaluations. Both items will be discussed at the May 1 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Selden, Chair
Committee on Teaching