Committee on Teaching (COT)
MINUTES
February 18, 2014, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Present: Charlie McDowell, *Chair*, Maria-Elena Diaz, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Michael Chemers, Jim Phillips, *sits with*, Suzanne Millward (ASO Staff)

Absent with Notice: Annapurna Pandey (NSTF), Matthew McCarthy, Anjali Dutt (Graduate Student Rep.)

Routine Announcements
Chair McDowell reported on the webinar about online course evaluations. A study has determined that response rates have fallen with the switch to online instructor evaluations, however while the response rates are lower with online evaluations, the quality of the responses has remained about the same. The webinar also suggested that the best way to get responses was to make them part of the course credit (as opposed to extra credit).

Director Jim Phillips will work on follow-up from the webinar since the report did not provide information on what number of responses are necessary (based on various class sizes) for instructors to receive statistically significant input from evaluations.

Learning Support Services (LSS)
COT is primarily concerned with exactly what support is available to students, and if the type and amount of support is sufficient. The committee will first try to get the most extensive and recent report available (annual reports do not show the data from the last few years), and will then decide who to direct questions to. The possibility of inviting the director of LSS to a COT meeting was also discussed. COT is looking to understand how it can support the LSS.

The committee was reminded that UCSC no longer has a center for learning that serves support programs as well as support for teaching, and it was noted that this may be a good time to re-instate such an office.

Plagiarism Software and Faculty Guidelines
COT discussed a request from Senate Chair Konopelski to consider initiating policies or guidelines for faculty use of plagiarism software.

The committee agreed that software can be used as a means of teaching students about plagiarism. COT discussed whether or not it is okay for faculty to submit student work to the software and discover plagiarism through this means, Committee members also expressed concern about racial bias; the percentage of non-white students getting caught plagiarizing is high, and these students may not feel entitled to contest accusations. There may be, however, some pedagogical value in plagiarism software if it is made available to students to check their work, thus becoming educated about what the boundaries of plagiarism are.

COT will make guidelines on the appropriate ways to use this software. For instance, plagiarism software cannot just be used on specific students in a class; if used on one student, it must be used on all students. The committee also agreed that based on previous campus negotiations, Turnitin.com is not a good business partner and that UCSC should wait until there are better options available.

On-line Course Evaluations (OCE)
The committee continued discussions about how to improve response rates for online course evaluations. The Languages program responded to COT's inquiries, and it turns out they are doing all the things the committee discussed; giving class time to complete evals, giving students an extra credit point if they respond, etc. Chair McDowell will do a little data manipulation to better understand response rates in relation to class size. Generally, all faculty want more evaluations because it is important for the personnel process, however a higher number of evaluations does not really correlate to the quality of evaluations (according to the University of Oregon website).

By the end of the year, COT wants to collect enough information to produce a list of best practices.

Forum Lightning Talks- April 23, 2014
COT considered outreach to get more presenters as well as a different format for the forum.

The event will go from 3:30-5:00 p.m. ASO staff will revise the call for proposals and send it out. The committee will also contact Excellence in Teaching nominees and department chairs of the Arts and Social Sciences. Whether or not to reach out to instructors with high online evaluation response rates will also be considered.

Learning Management System Update
COT questioned how it can determine the number of instructors at UCSC who are unhappy with Sakai. It was suggested that the committee send a short letter to all eCommons users inquiring into satisfaction with the various services provided, then using this information to compose a report.

Chair McDowell noted that while UCSC looks into options for a new vendor, it may be convenient to see what contracts other UCs have signed with vendors other than Sakai in order to expedite the process.

Future Agenda Items
The standards of classrooms and computer labs are changing, Director will give an overview on classroom technology. UCSC is moving forward to lecture-capture technology, so lectures can be captured digitally. It was noted that ADA compliance came up at SEC; there are concerns about the impact such technologies will have on teaching practices, as well as academic freedom. Faculty can refuse to have lectures recorded, however the new policy requires all course materials to now be accessible to students with disabilities. The question remains as to how the gap of providing this service will be filled.