

## **Minutes of the Faculty Standards Committee, University Senate, 12/5/2016**

In Attendance:

\*Jc Beall, Chair, Philosophy

\*Sandra Bellini, School of Nursing

\*Jack Clausen, CAHNR

\*Maria-Luz Fernandez, CAHNR

\*Elizabeth Jockusch, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

\*Del Siegle, Neag School of Education

Lloyd Blanchard, OIRE

Preston Britner, Human Development & Family Studies

Amy Fehr, Graduate Student Senate

Shabaz Khan, Undergraduate Student Government

Brandon Murray, Office of the Provost

Girish Punj, School of Business

Sally Reis, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (*Ex Officio* Member)

Andrew Rogalski, Undergraduate Student Government

Sarah Woulfin, Neag School of Education

Guest: Suzanne LaFleur, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)

Jc Beall called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

### **Old Business**

The 11/7/2016 Minutes were approved (unanimously).

### **New Business**

#### Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs)

Jc informed FSC that he had charged the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness - OIRE (via the Provost's office) to examine other SETs for purposes of addressing some ongoing questions about them. Today's data from OIRE can then lead to subsequent FSC discussions re. whether to recommend a revision of current practice.

Lloyd Blanchard, Associate Vice Provost, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) shared a presentation on SET history/context, current practices, average response rates and instructor and course medians (by School/College and by course level), OIRE efforts to monitor and improve response rates, and some possible next steps (with input from FSC and the Office of the Provost).

During and after the presentation, FSC members raised questions and issues related to the FSC measure, implementation, and interpretation, including:

- Measurement and interpretation: Disparities between individual items vs. summary items (course and instructor), the 5-point scale (vs. previous 10-point scale), interpretation of means of medians, use of summary scores for either positive or negative letters from the Office of the Provost or Schools/Colleges.
- Usage: SETs are supposed to be but one aspect of an assessment of teaching, as per approved FSC and Senate statements.
- Improvements have included the option of extra optional questions (by the instructor) and use of mid-semester formative evaluations. A question on “critical thinking” or “individual challenge” might be useful to pilot.
- Validity: the faculty-led committee that created the current SET measure used questions grounded in literature and peer institutions’ measures, but there has been little work to assess validity in terms of student learning/outcomes.
- Generalizability: There were a number of issues raised about response rates, “windows” for the SET period, and strategies for improving response rates.
- Bias: Suzanne LaFleur (from CETL) mentioned that there are potential biases (gender, ethnicity, age) that sometimes surface in comments that seem to associate with the overall instructor score (and sometimes contrast the individual item ratings). There is an established research literature on such biases in SETs, which should also inform interpretation.

FSC will consider the data shared and the topics raised. OIRE will work with CETL to investigate other measures and best practices in SETs. Collectively, we will continue the discussion re. SETs in Spring 2017.

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The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

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Minutes submitted respectfully by Preston Britner.