

Minutes of the Faculty Standards Committee, University Senate, 2/6/2017

In Attendance:

*Jc Beall, Chair, Philosophy
*Sandra Bellini, School of Nursing
*Jack Clausen, CAHNR
*Maria-Luz Fernandez, CAHNR
*Michael Fischl, School of Law
*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
Sally Reis, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (*Ex Officio* Member)
Andrew Rogalski, Undergraduate Student Government

Guests:

Karen Bresciano, Assistant Dean of Students
Cathy Cocks, Director of Community Standards
Katrina Higgins, Director of Advising

Jc Beall called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Old Business

The 12/5/2016 Minutes were approved (unanimously).

Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs)

Lloyd Blanchard shared a report on Fall 2016 SETs (with similar reporting distributions and displays to his December report) and a set of survey instruments from peer institutions. Approaches at other institutions are varied, including more versus less detailed instruments.

Questions from FSC members were raised across several domains.

- A concern was raised about the level of (statistical) precision that was appropriate for interpretation and reporting.

- Another concern was raised about instructors' approaches to provide incentives for participation in SETs in order to improve response rates.

- OIRE sought clarification on the reporting of results in an instance in which SETs were administered (class enrollment of 5+) but there were fewer than 5 responses. FSC members recalled a previous discussion and decision on the topic, which allowed for qualitative comments to be shared, but not numerical data or analyses.

[See 9/21/2105 FSC Minutes <http://senate.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1323/2015/10/FSC-2015-0921.pdf>]

- Sally Reis shared data for Fall 2016 on 2740 instructors. Those with instructor SET ratings of “1 or 2” = 54 [low] and “4.5 (equal numbers of 4s and 5s) or 5” = 744 [high]. These have been used to generate teaching letters from the Office of the Provost related to concerning or excellent performance. Sally noted that the “low” teaching letters are generated after consultation with the relevant Department Head to make sure there are no extenuating circumstances.

- Interpretation of SETs vs. other measures of teaching was raised, both in terms of the appropriateness of the Provost’s letters and broader use in merit, PTR, and other decisions. The FSC remains steadfast in its assertion that the SETs are but one measure of teaching effectiveness.

We will continue to discuss these issues of the form/procedures, reporting, and interpretation in the upcoming months.

New Business

Academic Misconduct Policy

Karen Bresciano (Assistant Dean of Students), Cathy Cocks (Director of Community Standards), and Katrina Higgins (Director of Advising) shared that the Senate’s Student Welfare Committee had discussed the University’s academic misconduct policy and was concerned that it was not being employed broadly and uniformly. There is also an NCAA initiative to clarify that policies exist at member institutions. A survey was disseminated in Fall 2016, and only 30% of the responding faculty said that they “always” sent written reports of any academic misconduct sanctions to the student and to Community Standards.

FSC was asked to consider the issue of the policy itself, its uniform implementation/reporting, and the roles of various units within the University.

A chief concern is that what is considered plagiarism within academic disciplines or programs can vary. The original policy (in place since 2005) came to the Senate through Scholastic Standards. There was a question of scope in terms of standards (perhaps Scholastic Standards?) and uniform implementation and roles within the university (perhaps Faculty Standards?).

FSC encourages Scholastic Standards to address the issue of departmental standards and practices, including education of both students and instructors. Rights and standards should be part of syllabi and reminders to students.

Further discussion might be necessary to define the standard/level of misconduct that rises to the level of reporting to Community Standards under the policy (current or modified).

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) could also be asked to develop some resources or training to improve practices.

After some discussion, the FSC recommended that academic misconduct be included in the Provost's key policies to include in syllabi and to encourage the Provost's Office to ask department heads to remind faculty of the current policy (with uniform reporting). [On 2/7/2017, the link was added to <http://provost.uconn.edu/syllabi-references/>]

Alleged Misconduct of Research

The Office of the Vice President for Research would like FSC to review a revision of the policy. [The policy was shared electronically, after the meeting. Representations from the Office will join the FSC to discuss the policy at the next meeting.]

Varieties of Full Professorships

Lewis Gordon shared a summary statement that might guide a discussion in March. Some of the ideas were to encourage promotion to Professor at an earlier stage and consider tiers within the rank to encourage ongoing growth, innovation, and productivity in the period after promotion to the rank of Professor.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Preston Britner.