SoS Steering Committee Minutes  
Nov. 7, 2014

Voting members: Michelle Salyers/Psychology/President of the Steering Committee; Pratibha Varma-Nelson/Chemistry and Chemical Biology; Beth Neal-Beliveau/Psychology; Barry Muhoberac/Chemistry and Chemical Biology; Vitaly Tarasov/Mathematical Sciences; Andy Barth/Earth Sciences; Dennis Devine/Psychology; Snehasis Mukhopadhyay/Computer and Information Science; Randall Roper/Biology

Non-voting members: Associate Dean Doug Lees; Lin Li/Earth Sciences/Secretary of the Steering Committee

Guest(s): Anusha S. Rao, STEM Instructional Design Consultant, Center for Teaching and Learning and Pratibha Varma-Nelson, Director Center for Teaching and Learning/Professor/Dept. of Chemistry and Chemical Biology

1. Approval of agenda.

President Michelle Salyers (MS) mentioned we have visitors today who are part of our agenda. She suggested we could introduce ourselves, and then she will do the motion for approval of the agenda and minutes, and continue with the rest of the agenda. After the introductions, MS announced Lin Li (LL) had sent out the agenda today for the next Steering Committee meeting. She asked if there were any additions or corrections. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the agenda as presented.

2. Approval of minutes from October 10, 2014

MS then presented the minutes from the last meeting and asked for any changes or corrections.

--- Vitaly Tarasov (VT): noted the misspelling of his last name. The correction should be made.
--- Barry Muhoberac: noted in the minutes where it states at his departmental meeting, a large number of newer faculty members attended, he prefers it to say newer faculty members were included in the discussion, not just that they were in attendance of the meeting.
--- BM: referring to when Dean Simon Rhodes spoke of the chemistry faculty saying, some of the faculty said, go IU, BM felt it was better than most of them said go IU. MS stated the Dean had edited these minutes prior to presenting them and he did not make changes. BM commented, that it was a little more positive response than some, but was close to unanimous. Randall Roper agreed.
--- BM: has an addition to the peer evaluations of teaching section of the minutes. He stated he was trying to advocate that lecturers must evaluate themselves during this process, as well as being evaluated externally. Some self-reflection is necessary at the same time they were being
evaluated. The lecturer must do an independent self-evaluation as part of this overall process. BM asked if others remembered him stating that. Randall Roper (RR) replied not remembering that, however, he said he would not feel bad with adding it to the minutes.

MS said that these changes will be made to the minutes, and then sent to VT and BM for their approval. A motion was made, seconded and all were in favor to accept minutes with these revisions that will be made.

3. Updates from the Dean’s Office

MS stated there were no updates from the dean’s office given to her (and later Doug Lees also stated that were not updates to provide).

4. Speaker Anusha Rao from CTL on Peer Evaluations

MS turned to Anusha to present to the committee about how to start developing a peer review evaluation system.

Anusha stated that she has handouts, and a feedback form; and she will also send electronically her power point presentation slides. She presented a short and condensed presentation for the best practices for developing a peer review evaluation system. She said she built on materials from different universities, other resources, and the book written by Nancy Chism, “Peer Review of Teaching”.

She distributed handouts for everyone consisting of:
-- Copies of her PowerPoint presentation,
-- Guidelines for peer review of teaching from Cornell University (as a sample),
---A list of references and resources from other universities, and
-- Feedback forms to be completed at the end.

The handouts include more details, but the topics she covered were:

Best practices for developing peer system
- Begin with establishing discipline-specific effective teaching criteria, evidence and standards
- Acknowledge differences between summative and formative peer review, use both at different time points, but complimentarily.
- Draw on multiple sources of evidence, methods, and at different time points.
- Appropriately identify and train reviewers.
- Develop a Peer Review Statement/Guidelines that all stakeholders understand and support.
After her presentation, Anusha and the Steering Committee members discussed questions.

Snehasis Mukhopadhyay (SM) asked, What is the value of peer reviews? Is there any study showing the peer reviews present more valuable information as compared to student reviews. Which is more valuable, peer reviews or student reviews? A peer review is a snapshot, student reviews cover entire semester. Anusha relied that student reviews have a very different role. They can tell you patterns, and are usually done at the end of the semester. Peer reviews are done more frequently than student evaluations.

Someone mentioned that peer reviews tend to be bland. Instructors being evaluated do not receive any information after evaluations. In order to evaluate someone’s teaching, it takes a lot of effort and resources. Just because someone is a higher ranked person, he is not always a better teacher. Classroom visits comes down to mannerisms, rather than the content of the teaching. Four reviews in a six-year period may resort to low level details. Anusha relied that its up to your department with respect to what you value most.

Someone asked whether by using a variety of reviews (students/peer review), it could be possible that the instructor may get a good review from students, and peer review may be evaluated as a fair instructor? Anusha agreed that it was possible.

Doug Lees (DL) asked if it should be used for merit pay decisions? Anusha said that the center generally, does not answer that question. It would be up to the department.

MS asked, what do you think the next step should be, based on what you heard today? BM asked: what are we expected to generate, a report, or something we would give to Department chairs, and/or faculty members? This would help him answer what the next step should be. MS said that is what we have to decide. Do we prepare a simple sheet for each department, and have them come up with their own system? Also, it was asked if this is “a done deal,” or are we just exploring what options are out there. MS responded we are just exploring. She asked whether we need another Steering Committee meeting for this, or a smaller group of people who are really interested in this topic, and have them come up with a plan and present to the Steering Committee?

Andy Barth (AB) asked how did this discussion come about? What is the impetus for having this discussion? MS responded that it originally came from the Unit Committee regarding promotion and tenure. Members indicated there were inconsistencies within departments regarding faculty reviews. MS said also that the School of Science Promotion & Tenure guidelines are not consistent and may need to change. Our bylaws do not specify what’s involved in peer review.
DL stated, additionally, some were still dissatisfied with the most recent update of the student evaluations. MS agreed, and added that since we updated our student evaluations, we should also update our faculty evaluation.

Randall Roper (RR) felt more discussion was necessary prior to writing a proposal or making a decision.

MS said that she had scheduled the Unit Committee representatives for the December meeting to discuss collaborative research. We could move that meeting to January as a possibility. BM suggested the formation of a subcommittee to discuss Peer Review. AB suggested we take this topic back to our departments, get feedback, and then bring it to the Steering Committee.

BM asked if the Unit Committee representatives could come and discuss both issues (peer evaluation and collaborative research) at the same meeting. MS said she thought the two topics would have long discussions, and would not recommend having a meeting to discuss both topics. Vitaly Tarasov (VT) suggested to form a committee work on a document and to bring the proposal to the Steering Committee.

We discussed whose responsibility is it, judging what satisfactory - Faculty, Dean, Steering Committee? We suggested perhaps asking Rajeev Raje to come to a spring meeting or to ask the Unit Committee to have a discussion regarding peer reviews. MS said it would be nice still to hear what each department does now for peer evaluations.

5. Old Business

- a. Emergency Procedures – Update: Kathy and Michelle are scheduling a meeting with Police
- b. Collaborative Research – Update: Speakers from Unit committee will come to December meeting.
- c. Voting Issue from Math Department - Discussion topic: (Review excerpts from Spring Assembly Meeting attached)

MS presented the next topic for discussion: changing the School of Science By-laws regarding voting faculty. BM, RR, and AB asked about an update from the last discussion.

MS read an excerpt from Spring Faculty Assembly minutes. The plan would be that Departments would have to supply the proof of why this particular person should be granted voting rights. That case would be presented to the faculty assembly. Then there would be a vote. That is the proposal from the Math Department.

RR expressed concerns regarding criteria for changing the voting status. What criteria would be used? Would the same criteria be made for each department? Another of his concerns is: when you bring them up, list their credentials, but vote them down. What happens to that individual?
MS said that she wondered if a particular faculty member could vote at departmental level already, why is the proposal needed? What are the major school issues that it would matter?

AB questioned by changing the by-laws, and if that individual moves from one position to another, do they keep voting rights? VT noted that in the second case in the Math Department, one person did change position.

It was suggested to have each individual case evaluated, and that each department can only nominate only a certain number of cases for changing their voting status. RR stated the problem with that is there is a benefit to nominate as many as they want.

MS asked if we should bring this to a faculty vote. BM stated maybe we should finesse it prior to putting to a vote. MS asked finesse it in what way, and more discussion followed, including problems brought up in the Spring Faculty Assembly (too many within a department or if they get voted down, what will it do to the individual, if denied voting privilege?).

MS stated that we need to decide as a Steering Committee whether to bring this to a full faculty vote. If so, then we would have to worry about the specific wording later, when we would present it to the full faculty. MS called for a motion to have the Steering Committee vote just on the first issue of whether to bring this to the faculty. There was a motion, second, and all agreed. MS said she would create a SurveyMonkey so that the Steering Committee can vote just on whether or not to bring the proposal to the full faculty for a vote.

The meeting adjourned.
1. Approval of agenda
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3. Updates from the Dean’s Office
4. Speaker Anusha Rao from CTL on Peer Evaluations

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7. Subcommittee for Administrative Reviews (SAR) (If needed)