University of Dayton

Faculty Affairs Committee Minutes of the Academic Senate 2010-09-24

University of Dayton. Faculty Affairs Committee

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FAC members absent: Laura Hume, Kevin Kelly, Lisa Kloppenberg, Heidi McGrew, Andrea Seielstad, Pat Donnelly (ex-officio)
FAC members present: David Biers Brad Duncan, Sheila Hughes, Stephen Richards, Shawn Swavey, Kim Trick Rebecca Wells (Chair)

Approval of minutes:
- The minutes from the 9/17/2010 meeting were approved as submitted.

Old Business:
- David Biers confirmed that the FAC, at a Spring, 2010, meeting approved proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook, as regards Lecturer positions only. The “Faculty and Instructional Staff Title Revision” proposal being prepared by Heidi McGrew and Jim Farelly is otherwise still a work in progress.

Student Evaluation of Teaching:
- The FAC is currently focusing on developing a fundamental philosophy, or rational, which ought to underpin the University of Dayton’s student evaluation of teaching policy. This will in turn drive potential revisions to the student evaluation instrument.
- The FAC agreed that the overarching goal of student evaluation of teaching is to enable faculty members to better serve their students and to provide a means of continuous improvement as a University community.
- After a long discussion, five broad categories of “purposes” for student evaluation of teaching were identified. These were…

1) Faculty Development:
- Student evaluations can provide formative input to faculty who wish to improve their teaching.
- However, paragraph IV.4.E. states that “[faculty] development is an individual concern that cannot be imposed upon a faculty member but must derive from his or her own felt need for growth…”
- Faculty can use student evaluations to make/strengthen their cases when applying for promotion and/or tenure, and when seeking merit raise increases.

2) Evaluation of Student Learning:
- Teaching does not equal learning.
- To some extent students can self-report learning, though they may sometimes comment that they aren’t learning when in fact they simply don’t like a particular course.
- The FAC members present for the discussion were in general agreement that a primary purpose of teaching evaluation should not be to assess student learning. In fact, the Faculty Handbook makes no mention of assessing student learning in section IV.4.H “Student Evaluation System.”
3) **Evaluation of Student Satisfaction:**
- evaluating student satisfaction is different than evaluating student learning.
- students are paying customers and should have a voice in evaluating the product they have purchased.

4) **Assessment of Instructional Methods and Professionalism:**
- Does the course conform to best practices in higher education (presumes the faculty member is aware of these best practices)?
- Do assignments relate to stated course goals (presumes that course goals have been shared with students).
- Does the course adhere to approved departmental syllabi? Are prerequisites for subsequent courses satisfied? (This presumes that approved departmental syllabi are shared with students.)

5) **To Facilitate Administrative Reviews:**
- Tenure, promotion and merit raise considerations are affected by student evaluations.
- Student evaluations can be used to obtain a sense of a faculty member’s daily practices: e.g., are they prepared, do they show up to class, do they meet stated course goals, are there “red flag” issues that need to be addressed, or are there systemic/continuous problems that need to be resolved.
- The committee was unanimous in agreeing that the practice of reducing student evaluations to simple numbers for purposes of merit raise, tenure and promotion considerations should stop.

No vote was taken to approve or limit this list of purposes.

**Next meeting:**
October 15, 2010
1:00 – 2:30 PM
Miriam 710

Respectfully submitted by Bradley D. Duncan (9/28/2010)