Faculty Affairs Committee Minutes of the Academic Senate
2013-09-05

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Minutes for the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate  
Meeting for 5 September 2013

In attendance: Shawn Cassiman, James Ervin, Ralph Frasca, Linda Hartley (chair), Emily Hicks, Carissa Krane, Tony Saliba, Yong Song, Eric Taglieri, Joe Watras, Abdullah Alghafis, Patrick Donnelly (ex officio)

Absent: Harry Gerla, Paul McGreal, Kurt Mosser

Dr. Linda Hartley called the meeting to order at noon in St. Mary’s Hall room 113B and began by asking the members to introduce themselves. Everyone responded in turn by giving his or her name, department affiliation, and University constituents. Dr. Hartley also requested FAC members to volunteer to take minutes at the fall FAC meetings. A sign-up sheet was distributed.

1. The first order of business was to approve the minutes of 25 February 2013. Emily Hicks moved to approve. Carissa Krane seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. The discussion turned to the University intellectual property policy. According to Dr. Donnelly, the main question concerns ownership of materials designed for on-line courses for which the faculty members receive extra compensation to develop. Materials that faculty members create for face to face class for which they do not receive extra compensation are not involved in the controversy. Dr. Donnelly added that other faculty members may use those materials to teach the same course for the University. The conditions of extra pay and free exchange among University faculty make ownership difficult to ascertain. At this point, the UD policy does not reflect the Senate's recommendation regarding these concerns. One possibility is that the FAC will create a subcommittee to consider the policy and make recommendations for revision. Discussion followed about who should participate on the sub-committee and how it would be formed. There was no motion nor vote. Linda Hartley said that she would form a subcommittee from FAC along with Matt Willenbrink (UDRI), for further study of the matter.

3. The final item of business was the policy for the student evaluation of teaching. The Academic Senate may vote on this issue and the discussion was an effort to make everyone in attendance aware of the work that transpired. The Academic Senate had charged a committee to determine: whether to deliver the evaluations on-line or on paper in class and to develop a new instrument based on available information about best practices. The committee accomplished both of those tasks and made four recommendations:

   a. The Academic Senate should adopt the evaluation form the committee created.

   b. The Academic Senate should accept the decision to conduct the process of student evaluation of faculty on-line.

   c. The Academic Senate should assign the Learning Teaching Center in Roesch Library the task of maintaining the instrument, disseminating it to the students, and collating the information.

   d. The Academic Senate should assign a committee to correct the University Faculty Handbook to make it consistent with the new evaluation form and the new procedures for administering it.
4. The discussion that followed concerning the Student Evaluation of Teaching Report was extensive. A brief overview follows:
   a. Students wanted to know if the instructors paid attention to the results. They were concerned that the students filling out the instrument would understand the important role it could play in instructional reform.
   b. Faculty members noted that the four recommendations from the committee that considered student evaluation of teaching do not mention any guidelines as to the way it would be implemented or how the evaluations would be conducted. People mentioned several aspects that could lead to misinterpretation of data. For example, the evaluations allow comparisons of averages of a professor with other professors in the same department and across the University.
   c. Although misinterpretations could harm faculty members’ applications for promotion or tenure, there were no guidelines that might obviate such problems. If the Academic Senate votes on the four recommendations, the members will approve a program without considering how to guide it.
   d. Another faculty member asked if the data would allow for researchers to determine if or how variables among the students, such as gender, previous experiences, or age, influenced the types of instruction they found effective.

There was no conclusion because this discussion was not part of motion. Instead, it may continue during the next meeting of the Academic Senate.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Watras