UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PLANNING COUNCIL
2011-12 CHAIR: ERIC LIFSHIN

OCTOBER 28, 2011
MEETING MINUTES


GUESTS: Members of the Course Assessment Advisory Committee, including
Heidi Andrade (co-chair) - Associate Professor, Educational Psychology and Methodology
Bruce Szelest (co-chair) - Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness
Laura Benson-Marotta - Research Analyst, Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness
Richard Hamm - Professor and Chair, History (also attending regarding a proposal from the History Department)
Joseph McAneney – Undergraduate Student

MINUTES: Minutes of October 14, 2011 approved with corrections

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT
No report was given

CHAIR’S REPORT
No report was given

OLD BUSINESS

DOCUMENTARY STUDIES PROGRAM

Professor Richard Hamm, Chair of the History Department, attended the meeting to explain that the change to the Documentary Studies Program has no new resource implications at this time. With the new information, Chair Lifshin called for a vote on forwarding the Documentary Studies Program proposal to the SEC. The council voted unanimously to do so.

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SYSTEM FOR RECORDING SIRF SCORES

Members of the Course Assessment Advisory Committee attended to provide an overview of the charge to the committee and recommendations of the group. Historically, course evaluations by themselves provide useful but limited data. The Committee made 7 major recommendations to improve the relevance of evaluation data, descriptions of which were distributed to the council. The document is available at https://wiki.albany.edu/display/irpe/Course+Assessment+Advisory+Committee. Feedback from council: as a student, Ms. Khan praised the use of discipline specific questions as well as monitored comments. Dr. Wagner applauded the work of the committee. Instructor designed questions were popular with the council. Dean Bangert-Drowns expressed concern with the potential workload involved with establishing a multi-method, evolving course evaluation program. Dr. Lifshin inquired if there was a metric which captures emerging technologies. Not at this time, but there is an acknowledgement that this metric needs to be developed. Suggestions for revision included an
opportunity for an electronic response via cell phones and consultation with ITS on how to implement such methods.

Since the introduction of electronic SIRFS, there has been a noticeable drop in response rates, prompting discussion of the possibility of providing an incentive for students to complete the evaluations. Students in attendance at the meeting responded that compulsory evaluations might prompt rebellion. Additionally, there is faculty frustration with electronically submitted evaluations; they are not confident that these evaluations are made by students who actually attend class, and would therefore provide the most meaningful feedback. Dr. Szelest explained how publication of feedback might work around making the quantitative SIRF results public. Discussion ensued regarding whether written comments would/should be shared publicly along with quantitative data. Among the issues raised was the relative value of written comments compared to numerical ratings for students and instructors. Classes with a 60% or better response rate would have the data published as an incentive for students to complete the evaluations.

Council members asked about the risk to a faculty member being libeled or slandered in evaluations? They are being used for HR decisions now; publication of narrative comments is still in discussion. SIRF ratings are used by CPCA to evaluate faculty for tenure and promotion now; overall course and instructor ratings most valuable to that body. Dean Bangert-Drowns argued against publishing narrative comments. Details of SIRF data publication has not been worked out yet.

Chair Lifshin asked the council whether UPPC should forward a motion to the Senate to review/approve the recommendations put forth by the Course Assessment Advisory Committee. The council will defer comment until a later date.

**COURSE PROPOSAL FORM**

The University does not currently have a viable campus impact statement in place that would provide information that UPPC needs to evaluate the resource implications of a program. Dr. Fessler suggested that we consult with UAC, GAC and LISC to see what they look for. Dr. Lifshin asked the committee to think about this some more and respond to Ms. Stern with information that they would like to see for course action forms.

**Action Items**

Committee members will submit suggestions for items to be included on a new course action / impact form

Ms. Stern will compile suggestions from the committee and create a draft form for the committee to review

Meeting adjourned at 4:46pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy Stern