

Minutes of the
Faculty Senate Academic Policy Committee (APC)
January 15, 2013 - 3:00 pm in 206 Mann Hall

Senators Present: Co-chair Warren Jasper, Co-chair Dimitris Argyropoulos, Roy Borden, Jane Lubischer, Ann Penrose, Beverly Tyler, Jeannette Moore

Unable to attend: Harald Ade, Richard Spontak,

Guest: Mark Newmiller (Director of the Disability Services Office), Jeff Joines (Chair, Evaluation of Teaching Committee).

1. Disability Accommodation Issue IOC 1211c

The issue: The committee invited Mark Newmiller, director of the DSO to speak on Jan 15, 2013. Since the 2009 ADA amendment, the number of students identified with disabilities has increased from 730 to 1080 at NCSU. The DSO currently has 12 spaces and can accommodate 38-50 students per day. There is one full time coordinator, while 3 other staff members handle all the other functions of the office such as determining accommodation for the 1080 students. The DSO hires additional proctors during final week to proctor tests for up to 72 students per day. Extra space was allocated in Park Shops during finals to help alleviate the extra demand. The majority of accommodations involve extended time and/or a distraction-free environment. The peak demand for DSO testing services is during finals. It was noted that UNC has a dedicated testing facility to handle testing accommodation. Even with the extra spaces in Park Shops, Mr. Newmiller stated that extra space is needed to meet our legal compliance with the law, as testing space is the limiting resource. Extra proctors can be hired during final exam week at a nominal cost, but it is difficult to find extra space. Because final exams are 3 hours long, there are no classrooms available during finals week to accommodate extended time and a distraction free environment.

Action Item: A letter will be drafted (and presented to the Executive Board of the Faculty Senate) from the APC to the Provost asking that his office coordinate with the DSO to provide resources for additional space that can be used for testing accommodation. Recognizing that it is difficult to coordinate proctoring in multiple locations across campus, it is hoped that space all in one building (or as near as possible) will be created.

2. Classeval IOC 12045a, guest speaker Dr. Jeff Joines, Chair of the Evaluation of Teaching Committee)

The issue: After the adoption of online surveys of teaching and course evaluations, the response rate has been declining to a University wide average of around 30%. In addition, analysis of the respondents indicates that their distribution is not representative of the University student population as a whole, either by gender, cohort, GPA, etc. In classes of 24 or less, a 30% survey rate correlates to 7 students, and one outlier could skew the statistics. In addition, in some departments, these survey tools are being heavily weighted in RPT decisions, bonuses, and teaching awards.

Dr. Joines has looked at how other schools evaluate and analyze data from online student evaluations for teaching and courses and how to improve student participation. Current University policy forbids the use of incentives to encourage students to fill out the surveys. Dr. Joines made the following suggestions:

- Give a mid-semester evaluation. Data has shown that by the middle of the semester, students have formed an opinion of the class and the instructor. Useful and timely feedback would give the instructor time to act on student feedback as opposed to after the class is over and this sometimes encourages students to fill out the survey
- Reduce the number of questions on the survey. Survey fatigue seems to be a common complaint among students, especially those to take a 5 or more courses, each with dozens of questions. For example, do not include lab questions if the course did not have a lab component. Courses with multiple instructors also increases the number of questions, but does not always reveal .interpretable data.

The following table shows the number of respondents needed to achieve a margin of error of $\pm 10\%$ at a 95% confidence interval assuming a normally distributed sample of the student population:

Margin of error	Class size	# of Respondents required	Response rate required
$\pm 10\%$	25	20	80% (20/25)
$\pm 10\%$	50	33	66% (33/50)
$\pm 10\%$	100	49	49% (49/100)
$\pm 10\%$	200	65	33% (65/200)

Table 1

Thus for example, for a class size of 25, 80% of the class must respond to the survey to have a 95% confidence that the average on any given question is within 10% of the true class average. Obviously, with a 30% response rate, this level is not met.

Student surveys are being used for many different purposes, and the data from the students are being analyzed and interpreted differently in different Colleges, Departments, and Administrative Units. A primer detailing the survey instrument, its strengths and shortcomings that would be common across the University would be useful, along with statistical tables, as shown in Table 1.

3. Updates from APC members on University Standing Committees

Jeannette Moore, Richard Spontak: **EOT (Evaluation of Teaching)**
No Report.

Roy Borden: **UCCC (University Courses and Curricula)**
No Report

4. Adjourn