Faculty Senate Academic Policy Committee (APC) Minutes
September 3, 2013 - convened at 3:03 pm in 125 Polk Hall

Senators Present: Jeannette Moore, Co-chair; Montserrat Fuentes , Co-chair; Roy Borden, Patricia Morgado, Nancy Penrose, Rich Spontak.
Unable to attend: Harald Ade (on sabbatical), Jim Knopp, Beverly Tyler (on sabbatical).
Guests: Shawn Troxler, Tommy Griffin, Jeff Joines

Note: Numbers 2 and 3 were reversed so Shawn Troxler and Tommy Griffin would not have to stay

1. Welcome and introductions [all]

2. Summary of 2012/2013 issues and discussions [Moore]
Website: http://ncsu.edu/faculty_senate/faculty-senate-committees/faculty-senate-committee-academic-policy.php
   - Advising of student athletes; adequate safeguards in place? [resolved]
   - Low class evaluation submission rates & concerns over using numbers in promotion [ongoing]
   - Study Abroad –justification for dropping programs? [resolved]
   - No tests during dead week; cuts off too much time at end of semester? [resolved]
   - Chancellor's list; create one at NCSU? [resolved]
   - Disability accommodations (lack of space); get more space for DSO? [resolved]
   - SIS grade displays; TR with letter grade, F with qualifiers [resolved]

3. Diversity statement for discussion [Fuentes]
Guests = Shawn Troxler from legal and Tommy Griffin (Director of Undergraduate Admissions).
See Appendix 1 for the statement provided to the committee

The university is required to describe how we use race in Admissions, and this must be updated every few years. It is time to conduct the periodic review now, and a statement from faculty indicating diversity is appreciated and helps with the educational mission of the university should be included with the report. The Supreme Court has reaffirmed that diversity is important, but the courts will not just take us at our word and we need to write the report. This is for racial diversity in undergraduate admissions/enrollment.

Discussion: Why is Sexual Orientation not included? Answer: There is no checkbox on the admissions form for sexual orientation, which means there is no way to distinguish students. We could use the resolution as a springboard to come up with a more general statement on diversity for the university, and other aspects of diversity (such as gender and geographical diversity) could be included.

Discussion: What about socio-economic background? Answer: This is not a protected class, so we can use socioeconomic status as a consideration in admissions. Race is a protected class, which means consideration of race during the admissions process must be justified. The Faculty Senate is being asked to affirm the importance of diversity in the student body, and to affirm that we have not reached "critical mass" for racial diversity. In other words, racial consideration for admission is justified to improve the learning environment and to provide educational benefits.

There was a motion and a second to bring the Diversity Resolution to the full senate (without any modifications). Motion passed.

4. Evaluation of Teaching Committee materials and recommendations for improving Class Eval response rates [Moore]

Guest (arriving at 3:55 pm) = Dr. Jeff Joines, 2012/2013 Chair of the Evaluation of Teaching Committee.
See Appendix 2 for the handout provided to the committee

Response rates and Peer Review of Teaching were the main topics for the Evaluation of Teaching (EOT) Committee last year. There is considerable negativity when it comes to evals (from students and faculty). Progress made recently that should help:
- By combining lecture and lab evals, the number of evaluations a student has to fill out in one semester has dropped from an average of 11.1 to 5.7
- Students can now save and later edit their evaluations (right up until the deadline for them to be submitted).
- The process is mobile-friendly now, so students can do the evals on their phone or tablet. If they wanted to enter comments later, they can now do so.

A fact sheet was created to let people know how to increase response rates without violating university policy (see Appendix 2). The bottom line is that if you engage the students, there will be higher response rates. The APC discussed the handout and had a few comments:
- On the "Common Concerns" page, there was objection to the statement at the top of the second column that says: "As with paper evaluations, poorer teachers typically get more negative online comments...." The objection was that the numeric values were used to determine "poor teaching" when in fact that cannot be said; faculty may get lower scores when teaching a difficult course and/or a course that is required but students do not want to take it. Jeff Joines said he would amend that paragraph.
- Concern #3 on the first page conflicts with Method #5 on the second page. Concern #3 says: "Online surveys provide students the ability to respond honestly, free of teacher and peer influence." Method #5 says: "Book a computer lab or ask students to bring laptops/ tablets/ smart phones to class [to do the evaluations in class].

Jeff Joines asked what the best method to get the handout to faculty would be. The APC members agreed that having the Provost send it out would be the best mechanism. It was explained that Senators do not have a way of distributing information to faculty in our colleges.

5. University committees APC senators are on:
    Harald Ade - on sabbatical Fall 2013
    Roy Borden - University Courses and Curricula (UCCC)
    Montse Fuentes -Budget
    Jim Knopp - Council on Undergraduate Education (CUE) and University Common Reading Committee
    Jeannette Moore - Evaluation of Teaching
    Patricia Morgado - Council on the Status of Women
    Nancy Penrose - Admissions
    Rich Spontak – Commencement; Evaluation of Teaching
    Beverly Tyler - on sabbatical Fall 2013

6. Other Business - none

7. Adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

APPENDIX 1: Diversity Statement

RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY REAFFIRMING THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

WHEREAS, North Carolina State University (NC State) is a diverse community made up of people from different cultures, races, and ethnicities with differences that result in a diversity of ideas, knowledge and views that enhance our education and preparation for work in a global economy; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et. al.* affirmed the long-standing legal principle that the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body is a compelling government interest; and

WHEREAS, diversity enriches the educational experience through the exchange of different ideas, beliefs and perspectives; it promotes personal growth and a healthy society because it challenges stereotyped preconceptions, promotes cross-cultural understanding, helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds and strengthens the NC State Community by preparing students to become exemplary citizens and leaders in an increasingly complex pluralistic society; and

WHEREAS, as a research-extensive land-grant university committed to gaining the educational benefits that flow from a student body of significantly broad racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, we not only embrace diversity, but we believe it is central to the academic purpose of this institution.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in furthering the pursuit of achieving the diversity we seek, we will continue to reach out and make a conscious effort to admit, enroll, and build a diverse student body that enhances the learning environment and advances NC State's mission by demonstrating that our commitment to excellence and diversity go hand-in-hand; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly agree the educational benefits resulting from a diverse student body is a compelling interest not only to NC State but to the State of North Carolina; that we stand committed to furthering the goals of equal opportunity and diversity in education and will continue to seek ways to strengthen our efforts to obtain a diverse student body.

APPENDIX 2: Handout from the Evaluation of Teaching Committee
(see next 2 pages)

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

ClassEval
Concerns and Suggestions

"Teaching is not a profession; it's a passion. Without passion for your subject and a desire for your students to learn and be the best in the world, then we have failed as teachers and failure is not an option." John F. Podojil

Common Concerns/Myths of On-line Evaluations

Concern 1: Online evaluations lead to a lower response rate which may have negative consequences for faculty.[1]

- The majority of studies, including one at NC State, confirm lower response rates to online versus paper systems.[1,2]
- Students often lack the motivation to complete online evaluations. Additionally, online evaluations can be lengthy and students often have a large number of evaluations to complete. On average, students at NC State have to fill out 5.7 class evaluations per semester.
- With paper evaluations, instructor presence as well as peer pressure may lead to bias.

Concern 2: Dissatisfied/less successful students participate in the online method at a higher rate than other students.[1]

- Research, including a large study conducted at NC State,[2] refutes this concern. High-performing students complete course evaluations at a higher rate than less successful students.
- Dissatisfied students do not appear to be more likely to complete online evaluations than paper ones. At NC State, students with GPAs between 1-1.99 had an average response rate of 23% while the response rates for GPAs between 2-2.99 and 3-4.00 were 37% and 48.1% respectively.
- A study at NC State[2] showed that engaged students have higher response rates (e.g., students complete evaluations for classes in their major at higher rates).

Concern 3: Low response rates coupled with the higher participation rate of dissatisfied students will result in lower instructor ratings online versus in-class paper evaluations.[1]

- Online surveys provide students the ability to respond honestly, free of teacher and peer influence.
- Typically, since better students are more likely to respond, online evaluation ratings are more reflective of the teacher's true abilities than ratings on paper ones.

Concern 4: The lower response rate coupled with higher participation rate of dissatisfied students will result in fewer and more negative written comments.[1]

- Research shows that there is 50-75% increase in the number of written comments on online versus paper evaluations.
- Comments written online are typically longer and provide greater detail than comments on paper evaluations making them more useful for instructional improvement.

- There is not an overall increase in negative comments on online evaluations. As with paper evaluations, poorer teachers typically get more negative online comments while better teachers receive only a few negative comments.[1,2]

Concern 5: Low response rates will make the results from the data unusable or meaningless.

- Evaluation data is useful if meaningful comments can be used for the basis of improvement and increased student learning.
- If one has a representative sample of students, a confidence level of 80% is sufficient to validate results.

Class Size	McGill Accepted Response Rates	Nulty[3] recommended rates under liberal conditions[§]
5-10	Minimum of 5 responses	at least 75%
11-30	at least 40%	74-48%
31-50	at least 30%	47-35%
51-70	at least 30%	34-28%
71-100	at least 30%	27-21%
101-200	at least 25%	20-12%
201-300	at least 25%	11-8%

§-10% sampling error; 80% confidence level; 70:30 split of responses 4 or 5 compared with 1, 2, 3

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3. Nulty, D. D. (2008). The adequacy of response rates to on-line and paper surveys: What can be done?, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *33*, 301-314.

Where can I go for more information?

- **Office of Faculty of Development**
  http://ofd.ncsu.edu/evaluation-of-teaching-at-nc-state/
- **Faculty Information about ClassEval**
  http://upa.ncsu.edu/eval/clev/faculty-info

Created by the Evaluation of Teaching Committee
Authors: Jeffrey A. Joines, Ashley Grantham, Erin Robinson

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

ClassEval
Concerns and Suggestions

"There is no challenge more challenging than the challenge to improve yourself." ~ Michael Staley
"The secret of education is respecting the pupil." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Increasing ClassEval Response Rates

Method 1: Conduct a mid-semester evaluation

- *Time Commitment:* 10-20 minutes in class to administer. The time to review and discuss feedback varies based on size of class.
- Potential to improve ClassEval response rates by 9-16%.[1,2,3]
- Conducting mid-course evaluations can improve ratings on end of-course evaluations, as students become more able evaluators as well as more engaged in the course.[2]
- Students respond positively when their comments result in changes to the course, leading to improved student attitudes about the class and/or instructor.[3]

Method 2: Include phrasing about evaluations in your syllabus

- *Time Commitment:* 5-10 minutes to modify provided verbiage and mention how you have used the feedback.
- Showing students in multiple ways that their feedback is valued can increase response rates. In one instance, average rates rose to over 95% as a result of using this strategy along with several other techniques to demonstrate the importance of evaluations to students.[4,5]

Method 3: Discuss ClassEval with your students

- *Time Commitment:* Periodic announcements take less than five minutes at the beginning/end of class.
- Faculty discussion of the importance of completing evaluations was associated with an increase in online evaluation rates rose from 54% to 72% in one study.[6]
- Write the response rate on the board daily.
- Turn it into a competition with another section or last year's class. Compete to see which section or class receives the highest response rate.

Method 4: Send personal email reminders/announcements to the class during the ClassEval time period

- *Time Commitment:* Less than five minutes to send an email or announcement.
- Reminders from faculty, including emails and online discussion board postings, have been shown to increase evaluation response rates.[7]

Method 5: Conduct evaluations synchronously

- *Time Commitment:* 10-20 minutes during one class to administer. Book a computer lab or ask students to bring laptops/tablets/smart phones to class.
- Online evaluations completed in class have a 30% higher response rate than when completed outside of class.[9,10]

- The ability to update/save evaluations will make it easier for students to fill out the scaled questions of the evaluation during class allowing for comments/changes later.

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