

September 26, 2022
Faculty Senate Business Meeting (Informational)

Via TEAMS

In attendance: President Maxwell, Secretary Killman, Past-President Luna, President-Elect Allen, Senators Meadows, SSmith, Comer, Liu, Manginelli, Ding, Brachey, Fornehed, Burch, Canfield, Mullen, Ojo, Park, Hajdik, Weathers, Hermann-Turner, Isbell, Upole, Hutson, Null, Reames, Lee, Pickering, Frye, Langford, Swartling, Mills, Alley, Winkle, O'Connor, Spears, Sisk, Loftis, TSmith, Rajabali, Hasan, Crockett, Rand, Howard, Adams, Craven, Shipley, Fennewald, Allcott, Smith-Andrews
Guests: Bedelia Russell, Matthew Trengove, Jerry Gannod, Kevin Harris

Absent: Duncan, Witcher, Turner

Call to Order 3:35pm

President Maxwell called the meeting to order at 3:35 and introduced two informational presenters for this meeting, Kevin Harris and Jerry Gannod.

There is no formal agenda today. Policy 206 will not be reviewed until the October business meeting. Any questions for President Oldham should be submitted in writing by Friday at noon. Such other matters will be addressed at the end of the presentations.

Topic: IDEA Evaluation

Dr. Harris is addressing the senate about IDEA evaluations. There have been concerns for the last couple of years with the course evaluation process. He shared a brief overview of the process, the current tool and how it's used as well as current priorities of the course evaluation process and work that is being done. Putting together a working group related to the evaluations to potentially gain ideas and perspectives related to IDEA.

Focused on as indirect measure of student learning. Opportunity for students to give feedback about what they feel is going on in the classroom. IDEA is a general measure of student perception. These allow us to look at info about what is going on in our courses and make comparisons at our institution and nationally. IDEA is used as one of multiple measures in faculty eval for promotion and tenure. Why do we use IDEA? We began use of this evaluation tool in Fall 2000. Academic council approved it for use to help inform decisions for professional development, improvement in instruction and future teaching assignments. Was administered in the paper/pencil format until fall 2017 when it moved to online format. Some benefits include instructors having some control because they can select learning objectives for their courses. Reports are focused on student perceptions of things instructors value in their courses. What you select for Learning Objectives has high impact on your reports because it allows us to make comparisons on what you value in a particular course.

Many may not be aware of the impact that the objectives you select has on your evaluations. There is substantial weighting based on selected objectives. If it's marked as minor, it has zero weighting. Essential is doubly weighted. This alone makes it essential that faculty members are completing the form prior to the end of the course. If faculty do not complete the form, all objectives are marked as important and everything is weighted equally, which causes lower overall IDEA ratings. Kevin can see which faculty are selecting objectives and it's not very high. Unfortunately, that is on par with student response rate which is about 40%. There are 2 forms of the survey: the short form and long form. The

short form is default. The long form is diagnostic and provides opportunity for faculty to add questions. Faculty have to self-select to complete the long form.

Both take into account student motivation and effort which is weighted in the final scores. The long form asks about difficulty of the course during the rating. IDEA does a lot to remove biases of students related to difficulty and more. All courses for all faculty are evaluated with some exclusions. Labs with associated lecture, internships and practicum courses can be excluded. Courses with 3 or fewer students are also excluded.

They are trying to build a data set of courses that can be excluded.

They pull the list of courses and sections from banner then email faculty about which form they prefer and work with department chairs and directors on exclusion lists. Faculty get email about selecting objectives and then multiple reminders. Kevin's office is holding a training on Oct 14. Information is placed in Tech Times as well as emails. Evaluations open 2 weeks prior to finals week. After grades are posted, reports are available for download.

The office is trying to be more transparent in which course are and are not being evaluated. Department chairs and directors are getting complete lists of what is and is not being evaluated to help build a good set of courses and to help with process reliability.

Faculty concerns – 1. All courses for all faculty evaluated every semester. 2. Bias specifically related to gender, race and ethnicity. 3. Research shows that instructors who are female and of color consistently receive lower evaluation scores.

Kevin stressed that course evaluations are one of many tools used to evaluate someone. How the information is used rather than the tool itself is key. It's become apparent that some faculty want to look at alternatives.

He's here to review current process and see if some folks are interested in leading a faculty working group to investigate this matter. That group would identify areas of concerns – in general or specific to the current tool and current process, make recommendations and lay the ground work. His role will be support only not lead the group. The university signed a shorter-term contract with IDEA to give faculty opportunity to identify concerns and evaluate potential options. 3-year contract was signed in July. Things to think about - change product? change process? Now's the time for any modifications to be investigated and recommended. Faculty evaluation is to support faculty members. There is priority to increase the response rate from 42% to higher. IDEA is also a good place to gather data for accreditation.

Question:

Can faculty still add additional questions if we want?

Answer:

Yes, individuals can add their own questions, but if a dept chair wants the same 5 questions added to all courses, Kevin Harris can do that. It's a new function that is currently being done in the music department.

Question:

Where does IDEA fit in with the plans of Dr. Gannod's group we are about to listen to? Have you been working with them? Is there communication? Can you give more information?

Answer:

Excellent question. Short answer is no. We administer the survey and take care of back-end work. Also make sure all faculty and chairs have access to reports. As far as how the info is used or moved afterwards, we have historically NOT had a role in that.

Question:

The contract has been extended for 3 years with the idea to decide if we want a new metric. If someone were to step forward, it seems like it would have to be this academic year to fit the current time line. Does that sound right?

Answer:

If someone is interested, they need to express their interest this fall so we can start looking at options in the spring. Potentially a lot of ideas and how to increase the student response rate. A working group could be looking at a new tool or modifications of the old tool. Looking at changes or recommendations about the current process are valid. If going with something new we need to pilot test next fall.

Comment:

We have to have national norms to compare our data too. Choices are to keep a non-perfect instrument, adding in questions as appropriate or forming a working group to investigate results. In house only doesn't seem appropriate.

IDEA is one of the only instruments providing a national comparison. Outside of that we would potentially develop our own internal comparison, which is a significant amount of work.

Trengrove: We don't want to control this process, rather prefer it's cooperative and engaging. We do want to get needed data and focus on key elements common to most surveys. It's not a flip of a switch, but a very long process. Ultimately, want faculty to have the data they need and be happy.

It's important for chairs to not be committed to only using IDEA for evaluations. It should be only one of multiple measures. Potentially a working group with guidelines could be beneficial as well.

Question:

This is not just an ask for faculty senate but others could join a working group? Is the take away for today is potentially identifying senators to form or be part of a working group to investigate course evaluation processes and make recommendations for the future?

Answer:

Senators or other faculty that are interested in coming up with ideas and/or evaluating other instruments that are out there, knowing that the charge is to figure out what tool we will be using in 3 years.

Comment:

Thank you. Contracts often get renewed without any faculty input. The fact that you are asking for input from faculty for the future, whether we change the metric or keep it the same is huge and we appreciate being included.

Topic: Revisions for Annual Evaluation Process and Watermark and Potential for moving T&P online.

Dr. Gannod shared background of revising the annual evaluation process. Now is the time of pilot work to 'try to break the system' to make sure the product (Watermark) does what we want/need it to do. Provost's academic calendar was screen shared showing that annual reports are due to chairs on January 15. The software support system is part of but also separate from the process that we will be following. Training will be required at all levels so all parties better understand what the process will look like.

Changes from the historic agreement on responsibility to a new format that is more – things an individual wants to achieve/do as part of my development as a faculty member. There will be specific goals for the academic year. Examples: Want to include more experiential learning as a goal with that come certain actions, like have a co-instructor who is a practitioner or invite someone from industry to come to class(es). More of a goal centered document that will require individual thought. Evaluation will be based on achieving metrics. There will be a shift in scheduling, with Activity Report and Activities and Goal Planning (AGP) document being due to chairs January 15. The AGP document will have goals for a given year in all the areas. There will be training on how that will look.

The process will evolve as everyone becomes familiar with the new system. Add in use of Watermark system to track activity reports.

Calendar year 2023 will still be using paper process. Will be available for those who want to use it, but will have to be printed. In 2024 should see full implementation of the Watermark system.

Question:

Does this run on a calendar year, which is different from how faculty think about this process (academic year)?

Answer:

Yes, that is one of the things that is going to happen. There has always been confusion on the AoR and Annual activity report work because they are misaligned. People are confused by how we do this now. We've recommended that they align January to January both on goal setting and the annual activity report.

Question:

When we put together for Tenure and Promotion, which align with academic year, how will that information be split out?

Answer:

Will see with Watermark system, reporting happens automatically. You put your info into the system and when reports are needed, the system can generate the report. The process will determine how the report is pulled. There will need to be some policy changes (wording) to align the process(es).

Question:

When we enter the data in, is it in a form that can be manipulated for specific reports and timeframes?

Answer:

Yes. The beauty of this system is that templates can be defined to align with accrediting bodies as needed. When the chair needs something, they can just pull the data.

The transition to an online tenure and promotion system is in pilot mode this year and open to any faculty who wish to begin to upload their dossiers to the Watermark system can reach out to CAFÉ and Dr. Bedelia Russell to assist with the process. Within departments, we encourage people to begin to work on their new annual effort reports and they can reach out to anyone on the committee with questions.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm

Respectfully submitted by Christy Killman