

Minutes FTLC Advisory Committee Meeting

April 10, 2017; 1pm – 2:30pm (CHS 540)

In attendance: Lara Kessler (Seidman Accounting—backup for Vijay Gondhalekar; left early at 1:30pm for family emergency), Julia VanderMolen (AHS; left at 2:20pm), Russell Rhoads (Anthropology—newly elected for 2017/2018; left at 1:40pm), Melissa Villarreal (Social Work), Mostafa El-Said (Padnos), Matthew Hart (Chemistry), Tyler Kanczuzewski (Graduate Student rep), Emma Sluiter (Student Senate; left early at 1:55pm), Cathy Meyer-Looze (Education), Christine Renner (FTLC), Patty Stow Bolea (FTLC; left at 1:35pm), Matthew Reidsma (Library), Rachel Peterson (Brooks), Janet Vigna (Biology; arrived at 1:35pm), Robert Talbert (joined at 2pm)

1. The meeting was called to order at 1pm.
2. Lara Kessler motioned that the minutes be approved; Matthew Reidsma seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without change.
3. Those present introduced themselves for the benefit of newcomers and visitors.
4. Changes to the FTLC awards process
 - a. Patty Stow Bolea introduced proposed changes to the awards process.
 - b. One suggested change is that the nomination process be entirely electronic.
 - c. Another proposal is to decrease the required documentation, focusing on an example of teaching excellence, an example of impact on student learning (which could include peer evals or student teaching evaluations), and three letters of support (two from colleagues and one from a student).
 - d. The committee discussed the value of placing more emphasis on including student evaluations, including results from more than one year.
 - e. Christine Renner noted that the proposed changes apply only to the FTLC's own awards, not the University Outstanding Teacher award (which requires a more substantial portfolio).
 - f. Several comments were made about how the switch to the LIFT system should positively impact the award process, including making it easier to gather evaluation data. Up to this point, many departments had been relying upon photocopies of hand-written student comments which were physically added to the nomination binder.
 - g. An extended discussion took place regarding the value of student evaluations of teaching, including how seriously students take completing the evaluations and how to interpret their results.

- h. The FTLC will take the committee's feedback and put together a comparison of the old and new requirements—which will be submitted to the committee for further comment.

5. Report on SoTL Commons Conference

- a. On behalf of herself and Karyn Butler (not present), Cathy Meyer-Looze reported on attendance at the recent SoTL Commons Conference in Savannah, Georgia—a conference which FTLC staff have not attended in the past.
- b. The conference was a very positive experience and there was a general consensus that it would be good to encourage attendance at this event in the future.

6. Discussion of large class survey

- a. Several members of the committee identified comments from the survey that emphasize the problems of communication, personalization, and engagement in large courses.
- b. Matthew Hart noted that in large courses, communication can be simplified by merging Blackboard sites for multiple sections—streamlining the time it takes to send out announcements.
- c. Christine Rener identified three specific areas that the FTLC could begin emphasizing to improve experiences in large classes:
 - i. Strategies for building incremental changes to pure-lecture pedagogies
 - ii. Strategies for getting to know students
 - iii. Strategies for improving communication
- d. Rachel Peterson discussed how the results of the survey overlap with efforts to ensure justice for part-time/contingent faculty and asked if the results of the survey could be shared outside the FTLCAC. The committee chair and FTLC director agreed that the sharing of any data would need to wait until an aggregated summary of the research is completed.
- e. The committee discussed other strategies for getting to know students, such as taking student photos, adding “see me” feedback to graded items (such as exams), and requiring students to visit faculty offices as part of their grade.
- f. Matthew Hart observed that the results of the survey are interesting in light of a point circulated in a paper early in the academic year—namely that a major way to encourage student retention is to have senior faculty teach the lower-level (often large) introductory classes.

- g. The committee discussed ways to disseminate information on improving the experience in large enrollment courses, such as targeting unit heads.
- h. Janet Vigna suggested that one way to further the discussion may be to link the conversation about the challenges in large courses to the conversation about challenges in introductory courses.
- i. The discussion of student retention went on to include the values of different staffing structures (such as having a dedicated course coordinator for large enrollment courses) and the relationship between academic freedom and attempts to ensure uniformity in instruction.

7. Old Business

- a. Robert Talbert reported on FPPC/ECS feedback about the proposed handbook changes.
 - i. On the one hand, ECS was concerned about conflicting language used within the changes.
 - ii. The proposal lead to a discussion about the need for a clearer definition of scholarship overall.
 - iii. The proposed changes were rewritten in a way that would only require approval by UAS. The proposal was passed by ECS and will be voted on by UAS on Friday April 14.
 - iv. Talbert also indicated that he received assurances that language in the administrative section of the handbook would be addressed in the future.

8. Review of the committee's charges and work over the year

- a. Robert Talbert reviewed the list of charges for the year. The committee completed, delegated, or made substantial progress on most of its charges. The details will be included in the chair's year end report.
- b. Robert thanked the committee for its hard work and made a few parting remarks.
- c. Robert moved that the meeting be adjourned; there were multiple seconds. The committee adjourned at 2:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
—M. Roberts