

# Grand Valley State University

## Executive Committee of the Senate

### January 23, 2004

**Present:** Yatin Bhagwat, Douglas Chung, Jay Cooper, Gayle Davis (ex officio), Rob Franciosi, Richard Hall, Robert Hendersen, Harold Larson, Paul Leidig, George Lundskow, Jean Nagelkerk (Chair), Allison Reynolds, Ellen Schendel, Rachael Voorhees

**Guests:** John Constantelos, Priscilla Kimboko

Agenda Items	Discussion	Action / Decisions
1. Approval of Agenda		The agenda was approved as presented.
2. Minutes approval for December 5, 2003	Minutes reviewed.	Minutes approved unanimously.
3. Report of Chair	<p>a. Reminder that ECS will host a reception with the Board of Trustees next Friday, January 30, 2004, at The Meadows.</p> <p>b. A proposal to change the guidelines for graduate students taking courses on a Credit/No Credit basis was presented. The proposal seeks to change that a grade of B or better would be needed in order to receive Credit for the course. It further proposes to establish a maximum number of credits that may be taken on CR/NC basis. The Deans Council recommendation is that only the proposal to have students earn a grade of B or better to receive credit be approved. The proposal has been sent to the APSC for review.</p> <p>c. A memo from Catherine Frerichs regarding Student Evaluations and Student Learning was distributed and will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.</p> <p>d. The Graduate Council Final Plan will soon be submitted.</p> <p>e. The Winter 2004 Enrollment Report has been issued.</p>	
4. Report of Provost	<p>a. Enrollment for Winter semester is slightly lower than what was projected although enrollment still increased.</p> <p>b. The CLAS Dean Search Committee has not yet been established but will soon be announced.</p>	
5. Report of Student Senate President	<p>a. The first Freedom of Speech Forum was held last week with about 75 students in attendance. It is hoped that additional</p>	

	<p>sessions will be held.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. GVSU will host a statewide public university student association meeting in February.</li> <li>c. Appreciation was extended to Provost Davis for attending yesterday's Student Senate meeting.</li> <li>d. The Presidents' Ball will be held February 6th and faculty are encouraged to attend.</li> </ul>	
6. Report of Standing Committee Chairs	<p>FSBC and APSC have asked Jean Nagelkerk to attend a meeting in February.</p>	
7. Old Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strategic Planning Goals: Steps to Enhance Quality Education.</li> <li>b. Workload Equity.</li> <li>c. Visioning the Next Level.</li> <li>d. Discuss Faculty Representation on Deans Council and Budget Committee.</li> </ul>	<p>No discussion. No discussion. No discussion. No discussion.</p>
8. New Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Elect Faculty Advising Committee Members.</li> <li>b. Reorganization. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Transition Plan</li> <li>ii. Faculty Governance Representation. John Constantelos, Political Science Department Chair, attended the meeting to present examples of different voting models.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Principles to be discussed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elections/Mechanisms</li> <li>- Stability (transition)</li> <li>- Student Representation</li> <li>- Faculty Status</li> <li>- Length of Term</li> <li>- Staggering of Terms</li> <li>- Term Limits</li> <li>- Prerequisites (FPPC)</li> <li>- Service Demands (Base representation)</li> </ul>	<p>By consensus Pat Parker, Scott Grissom, and Kate Remlinger were selected. One additional faculty-at-large representative is needed. Harold Larson will serve as the ECS representative.</p>

It was determined that representation of faculty from the CUII was important and should be included in some form on standing committees.

UAS Discussion

Discussion ensued on Faculty Governance representation. It was agreed that the UAS Membership will be based on the following formula:

- 1 – 19 faculty = 1 member
- 20 – 39 faculty = 2 members
- 40 – 59 faculty = 3 members
- 60 – 79 faculty = 4 members
- 80 – 99 faculty = 5 members, and so forth.

It was agreed that language in Section 1.2.1 of the Bylaws would be updated to delete language pertaining to base membership and to naming the Colleges.

It was agreed that language would be inserted in Section 2.2.1 of the Bylaws to indicate that ECS representatives elected are automatically UAS representatives.

It was agreed that the students should maintain five seats on the UAS. Rachel Voorhees will discuss with the Student Senate the possibility of student representation by major.

It was agreed that language would be inserted into the Bylaws that students will not vote on any action item involving faculty personnel policies, nor will they serve on the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee.

It was agreed that Administration Membership will be updated to include Associate Vice Presidents and Assistant Vice Presidents.

ECS Discussion

Discussion centered on what the appropriate representation should be between CLAS and the other Colleges.

College Representation Discussion

Provost Davis will provide the number of tenure track faculty teaching in the CUII.

Approved unanimously.

Approved unanimously.

Approved unanimously.

Approved unanimously.

Approved unanimously.

Approved unanimously.

	<p>Discussion centered on what the appropriate representation should be between CLAS and the other Colleges. It was agreed that as new Colleges are formed, they will have one (1) UAS representative, one (1) ECS representative, and one (1) representative on each of the standing committees.</p>	<p>Approved unanimously.</p>	
<p>9. Adjournment</p>	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.</p>		

# Executive Committee of the Senate

January 23, 2004

1:00pm to 5:00pm

Amway Board Room – 5<sup>th</sup> floor

DeVos Center

## Proposed Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes - December 5, 2003 (*attachment*)
3. Report from the Chair
  - a. Faculty Governance Website (Discussion Board)
4. Report from the Provost
5. Report from the Student Senate President
6. Reports from Standing Committees
7. Old Business
  - a. Strategic Planning Goals: Steps to Enhance Quality Education
    - i. Advising
    - ii. Freshman Seminar and Orientation (input from student services)
  - b. Workload Equity - Release time equity - Accountability re: release time, unit projections, sabbaticals, administration promises
  - c. Visioning the "next level"
  - d. Discuss faculty representation on Deans Council and Budget Committee
8. New Business
  - a. Elect Faculty Advising Committee Members
    - i. ECS Member (1)
    - ii. Faculty at Large (4)
  - b. Reorganization
    - i. Transition Plan
    - ii. Faculty Governance Representation (*attachment*)
    - iii. Length of Terms – 2 vs 3 years or other
    - iv. Personnel Process
    - v. Other Issues
  - c. Final Plan for Minor In Entrepreneurship
    - i. UCC Recommendation
    - ii. FSBC Recommendation
  - d. FTLCAC Memorandum on Adjunct Faculty Salaries (*attachment*)
  - e. FSBC Charge for Winter 2004 Semester
  - f. Administrative Manual

## **Ideas for Future Fora**

- Workload Equity and Enlarging Regular Faculty
- The "Next Level": What is it?

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR? \_\_\_\_\_

ECS  
Dishu

## **Proposal for Catalog Copy Revision**

### **Credit/No Credit Grade (p. 31 in Graduate Bulletin)**

Add new paragraph as follows:

Graduate students may elect certain graduate coursework on a credit/no credit basis (CR/NC). A maximum of 9 semester hours of graduate courses may be taken on a credit/no credit basis with the consent of the student's major department. A maximum of 25% of a student's hours of Grand Valley courses earned to fulfill graduation requirements may be taken on a credit/no credit basis (Credit= B or above). Courses that are graded CR/NC as the standard grading scheme do not count in the maximums stated above. Changes from a grade to credit/no credit (or the reverse) will not be allowed after the drop/add deadline, usually the first week of the semester.



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

AB ✓  
KK ✓  
JM ✓  
LS ✓

IRRC:  
ABC ✓  
CTM ✓  
JN ✓  
VS ✓

October 3, 2003.

To: Academic Deans, Unit Heads, and Chairs of DPCs  
From: Catherine Frerichs, Pew FTLC *Catherine Frerichs*  
Subject: Student Evaluations and Student Learning

A week ago, the Pew FTLC sponsored a workshop on student evaluations and student learning, done by Barbara Walvoord from Notre Dame. The workshop was extremely well-received, and I have enclosed a copy of Barbara's handout.

Page 2 includes a wise and clear summary of the primary questions to consider when evaluating teaching and the appropriate evidence for doing so. Here, the strengths and limitations of student evaluations are apparent. Later parts of the handout include summaries of the factors that influence student evaluations and the best ways to use them for both developmental and evaluative purposes.

I have also included a copy of the A & H pilot plan for evaluating pre-tenure faculty, developed by a group of A & H faculty and me last spring. The plan emphasizes development as well as evaluation, along with a variety of measures for evaluating teaching. This fall, two faculty were evaluated under this plan.

I'd be happy to discuss issues in either of the above documents with you and your faculty.

Enclosures

Cc: Wendy Wenner, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

## Alternate Plan for Evaluating Pre-Tenure Faculty

Division of Arts & Humanities, April 2003

### *Guiding Assumptions:*

1. Policies and practices for evaluating teaching should reflect well-documented research findings.
2. First-year faculty will flourish best if they are not evaluated for the record in any way.
3. Pre-tenure faculty will flourish best if they can develop their own goals for teaching, scholarship, and service in consultation with their unit head.
4. Student evaluations are over-valued although still necessary in the formal evaluation of teaching; some are designed poorly.
5. If student evaluations are de-centered, other aspects of evaluating teaching must be more prominent and faculty must be trained in how best to do them.
6. Any new practices must be consistent with the Faculty Handbook.

The plan below lays out a schedule for a full six years of review. It makes a fundamental shift in the purpose of evaluation: that its first function should be to aid in the development of teaching, not the summative judgment of it, although the latter is necessary. The number of formal reviews is maintained although the function of the first review is primarily developmental.

The sub-committee discussing this plan thought it was too risky to try it out on a few incoming faculty. Rather, we would like to invite about 5 pre-tenure faculty currently on staff to participate in a pilot program that would use this process. Some form of it could also be used for faculty up for promotion. When the pilot process is complete, we would expect to publicize our work at a teaching conference.

### *Year One*

Fall: Mid-semester evaluations (or some other kind of informal feedback) done in all classes; results discussed with a unit mentor.

Winter: Mid-semester evaluations done and discussed. At end of semester, faculty member discusses syllabi, major assignments (including grading criteria), and student work with unit mentor; writes reflective essay which includes one-year plan for teaching, scholarship, and service, which is agreed upon with mentor and unit head (a mini-teaching portfolio).

### *Year Two*

Notes: Mid-semester evaluations are always only developmental. They will not go into a personnel file. Discussing them will occur every semester through the sixth year. Peer

review is primarily for developmental purposes although observations from class visits should be included in unit discussions.

*Fall: First formal review occurs.* The focus in the unit response is on development. Syllabi, samples of assignments and student work are included and evaluated according to specified criteria. Comments about teaching from peer reviews are to be included in the unit's statement. No student evaluations of any kind are to be used in this review. The candidate's reflective statement considers work this year in light of last year's goals; identifies new or revised goals.

University student evaluations begin at the end of this semester and continue every semester. Only the *numerical* part of the evaluation is used in personnel decisions. Written comments are to be used for developmental purposes.

#### *Year Three*

*Second formal review occurs in Winter semester following format in Fall of Year 2.* The focus is more obviously summative. The numerical parts of student evaluations are used.

#### *Year Four*

Peer review and mid-semester evaluations continue. Faculty member re-visits reflective statement, making modifications as necessary.

#### *Year Five*

Same as for Year Three. *Third formal review.*

#### *Year Six*

*Tenure review.* Same material as for other reviews with emphasis on development over the six years and evidence for current level of teaching excellence.

#### *Committee Members:*

Catherine Frerichs (Pew FTLC), Gretchen Galbraith (History), Alessandro Giovanelli (Philosophy), Karen Libman (Theatre), Melissa Morison (Classics), Chuck Norris (Music), Gabriela Pozzi (Modern Languages), Dan Royer (Writing), Mack Smith (English), Renee Zettle-Sterling (Art & Design)

# **Student Evaluations and Student Learning**

## ***How to Enhance Student Learning Through Student Evaluations While Maintaining Your Standards and Integrity***

Barbara E. Walvoord, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of the North Central Accreditation Self-Study  
Fellow of the Institute for Educational Initiatives  
Concurrent Professor of English  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN 46556  
e-mail: [Walvoord.3@nd.edu](mailto:Walvoord.3@nd.edu)

### **Description of workshop:**

The workshop's goal is to help faculty enhance student learning and appropriately use student evaluations, while maintaining their standards and integrity. It is not a discussion of university promotion and tenure policy, but a guide for individual faculty about how to use student input for feedback and improvement. What can students appropriately evaluate, and what can they not? What other measures should be used for classroom feedback in addition to student evaluations? What do student evaluations actually measure? What is the relationship between student evaluations and student learning? What factors influence the evaluations--class size? expected grade? race or gender? others? How can the faculty member best administer student evaluations? How can the faculty member best analyze and use student evaluations?

## Agenda

9:30-10 a.m..

**What Can Student Evaluations Appropriately Evaluate, and What Can They Not?  
What Additional Measures Should be Used to Evaluate Teaching and Learning?  
How Much Should Student Evaluations Count?**

A framework for classroom feedback: three questions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Is the right stuff being taught? Is it sufficiently rigorous, current in the field, consonant with the course description, appropriate for students' future needs?	Evaluation of syllabi, exams, reading lists, etc., by colleagues in the discipline; Comparison with similar courses at peer institutions
Is it being learned?	Evaluation of student work by colleagues in the discipline (direct evidence); Students' and/or alumni perceptions of their own learning (indirect evidence); Students' success in future courses, jobs, etc.; Standardized exams where relevant
Do students perceive themselves well-taught?	Student evaluation questions concerning whether the instructor was well-organized, clear, available for help, enthusiastic, etc.

All three questions should be addressed.

For the third question, student evaluations are the instrument of choice. For the second question, they are an indirect measure, useful but not as valid as direct evaluation of student work. For the first question, students are not able to judge.

Classroom visitation by a colleague is somewhat useful for #1 and #2, but not useful for #3. Classroom visitation is more useful to provide a supportive network and to help diagnose teaching problems than as a tool of formal evaluation. It does not correlate well with other measures. If you are going to use it, train the observers and conduct observations over the course of the semester, in collaboration with the teacher.

The first question is basic: if this is not in place, fix it first.

The second question should count more than the third.

Yet the third question is very important. Students' perception that they are well-taught and are meeting the learning goals of the course is important to classroom morale, to learning, and to recruitment/retention.

Discussion and Planning: How do you answer the three questions in your classroom or your department? What changes might you want to make?

**10-10:30 a.m.**

### **What Do Student Evaluations Actually Measure?**

There is an extensive literature on student evaluations.

#### Typical Types of Questions:

- Questions about instructional behavior: organization, clarity, helpfulness, etc.
- Questions about course difficulty or time demands
- Questions about expected grade
- Questions about achievement of course learning goals, enhancement of interest in the subject
- Questions designed to control for variables: requirement vs. elective, expected grade, student effort and time-on-task, race and ethnicity, gender, etc.
- Umbrella question about overall instructional effectiveness

#### Use of Discursive Questions:

- Best used for instructor improvement, not evaluation

#### Advice:

- Get a good instrument (IDEA is a good choice. [www.idea.ksu.edu](http://www.idea.ksu.edu)).
- Add questions pertaining to your particular teaching style and needs
- Ask for discursive comments as well as bubble-type multiple choice

Discussion and Planning: what student evaluation instrument would you like to use?  
What additional or discursive questions are important?

**10:30-10:45 a.m.**

### **What is the Relation between Learning and Student Evaluations?**

- There is a slight positive correlation between student overall evaluation of the instruction and their perception of the course's difficulty or time demands. In other words, if the course is perceived as difficult or time-demanding, the instruction is slightly **MORE LIKELY** to be rated high. This suggests that faculty cannot buy higher student evaluations just by making the course easier or less time-demanding.
- There is a correlation between student perceptions of their learning, their learning as measured by tests administered externally, and their learning as measured by course grades. Expected grade has a rather strong correlation with student rating of the faculty member. However, teacher behaviors explain significantly more of the variation on the umbrella question than expected grade.

This suggests that teachers cannot buy high student evaluations just by giving unmerited high grades, but rather by teaching well so that students perform well.

Advice:

- Ensure that to get a high grade, students must exhibit the learning you value most. Then their high grades will be an accurate measure of their learning, and any correlation between the grade and their evaluations of you as a teacher will be desirable.
- In discursive questions, do not ask students what they LIKED. Rather, ask how such-and-such teaching method "helped you learn." Ask for suggested changes in the class "that will help you learn more effectively."

Discussion and Planning: How will you ensure a healthy relationship between learning and student evaluation in your class?

**Coffee Break: 10:45-11 a.m.**

**11-11:30 a.m.**

**What Factors Appear to Influence Student Evaluations?**

Variance in the umbrella question is most fully explained by student perceptions of four teacher behaviors:

- Being well organized
- Being clear
- Being available and helpful to students
- Being enthusiastic about the subject matter

These four factors at Notre Dame account for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the variance on the umbrella question. That corresponds to national findings.

Other variables:

- Elective vs. required course (a proxy for motivation)
- Race and gender do not affect umbrella evaluations in the national literature. However, some have argued that the statistical methods used for large aggregated studies disguise the actual race and gender bias that may be present in particular situations. At Notre Dame, we have found that race and gender of the faculty member do not affect overall ratings, but that students are slightly more likely to rate highly the faculty who are of their own race and their own gender.
- There is no literature that I know of, dealing with influence of age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Advice:

- Compare yourself only with those classes that resemble yours in discipline and elective/required status
- Use discursive questions to help you get more detail about the four teacher behaviors
- If you suspect that race, gender or other factors are influencing your student evaluations, take several steps
  - Talk the situation over with a respected colleague or a member of your institution's diversity office

- Talk the situation over with your students or with a small representative student group that you have chosen to advise you.

Discussion and Planning: Where are your weakest and strongest points in the four teacher behaviors listed above? Where would you most like to improve? Do you suspect that other variables besides teaching practices are influencing your student evaluations? What steps can you take?

**11:30-11:40 a.m.**

**How Best to Administer the Evaluations?**

- Give students enough time and good motivation to fill it out
- Get student feedback every week or two throughout the course. Motto: no surprises on the end-of-semester student evaluations
- Ask a trusted colleague or teaching-learning center staff to look at student evaluations with you
- Protect anonymity
- Inform students how the evaluation will be used
- Use discursive questions to expand the quantitative questions

Discussion and Planning: Plan how to administer your student evaluations next semester

**11:40-12:30 a.m.**

**How Best to Interpret and Use Evaluations?**

- Ask a trusted colleague or teaching/learning center staff to analyze student evaluations with you. Research has shown that there is greater teacher change after such a shared discussion than when the teacher reviews his/her evaluations alone.
- Best single piece of advice to improve student evaluations: take the area of teacher behavior on which you have the weakest scores, and work on improving that area
- As the basis for improvement, you may need more specific information than the quantitative questions provide.
  - Use the SDIG service
  - Ask students to write anonymously for 5-10 minutes in class, on questions such as:
    - “In the preparation, grading, and commenting process that we have just completed for your first paper, what aspects helped you learn? What changes in this process might help you learn better, and why?”
    - “What aspects of the course so far have helped you learn? What changes might help you learn better, and why?”
  - Consult with the teaching/learning center
  - Go over discursive comments very carefully, constructing a tally of each type of question. Sample tally:
    - Readings too heavy
    - Too much discussion in class

- Too much lecture, not enough discussion
- Tests not fair
- Tests very fair
- Instructor comments not helpful
- Instructor comments helpful

Discussion and Planning: What area of teaching practice do you most want to work on?  
How can you get more specific information from students? What other sources of help do you need?