

Faculty Personnel Policies Council Minutes  
Meeting #11  
March 19, 2021

Present: Al Colburn, Richard Marcus, Jalal Torabzadeh, Don Haviland, Terry Ross, Jo Brocato, Robin Richesson, David Wallace, Kirsty Fleming.

1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Agenda approved without revisions.
- Minutes approved without revisions.

2. Announcements

- Survey results [<https://tinyurl.com/a47f64bt>]
- Senate passed Univ Awards Policy
- Chair attended President's Equity Commission to discuss RTP. Good meeting, though some unfamiliar with RTP issues.
- Kelly Young's draft mentoring guidelines (handout)

3. RTP Policy revision

- Revising 1.0 Guiding Principles (preamble)
  - Discussion of 1.2 Introduction paragraph. The agreed goal was to 1) make clear that with each level the specificity increases 2) colleges are required to create more specific policies. Discussion of "requirements" vs "guidelines" vs "standards" 3) whether departments are "expected" or "encouraged" to create policies.
  - David: arguing for "standards": the ultimate standard is in the university document; at the college level departments turn to the college policy and often borrow language.
  - Kirsty: the rationale of department obligation doesn't match the wording. Arguing for stronger expectation on departments. Specific guidelines. If the college level is specific. Removing the word "more," departments can use the specificity of the college where relevant and just be specific.
  - David: There are many issues where a college-level policy will suffice.
  - David: Colleges and departments are "expected" but for departments it is "as relevant or necessary." (?)
  - Kirsty: "Colleges and departments, in the cases where department policies exist, are expected to create specific guidelines for faculty fulfilling..." (?)  
Broad support.
- Discuss 2.1 Instruction and Instructionally-Related Activities or 2.2 RSCA
  - Feedback from survey on downplaying / contextualizing SPOT

- Kirsty: there isn't a requirement to use SPOT, but students need to be opened and closed ended feedback (CBA language). It is a choice to use a form like SPOT.
- Jo: Weight of instruction needs to be changed. The weight of the SPOT is very heavy in some departments, some colleges. Grades are another piece.
- Al: What we need to address in 2.1 – how should we revise – address student responses to instruction (2.1.3) as people don't like them. David: Is there a standard in this section?
- Jo: Departments have latched on to "effective" driving the narrow use of SPOT. "Was the instructor effective in this course."
- David: Teaching Effectiveness will be evaluated by multiple methods.
- Don: suggested language for "multiple measures"
- Richard: Not "Teaching" but "Instruction and Instructionally related activities" because the materials, design, and innovation are such a rich portion of effectiveness.
- Richard: Something about not just the multiple use but the holistic read and probity of the different evaluation tools.
- Kirsty: The process part is important as in Richard's example. The philosophy, the process.. But also needs to have outcomes.
- David: Whether we call them "instructionally-related activities" in nomenclature, but we need to include these elements. We need formative but also outcomes. And, we need multiple tools. An example: I see in RTP files in terms of teaching where the person keeps trying and there is no change. That is different from those who are doing that sort of evaluation all the time and there are outcomes. And then, in between, as Richard said, there may be a process someone is going through. Continues to improve courses but won't be in top end in SPOT. I want a policy that says did this person give us evidence of being an effective student?" If I am a stellar mentor, stellar in leading a lab, etc can put things over the top. What bothers me is when I can't convince myself that a person understands how to be an effective teacher. Also, sometimes one gets the sense that the person is not deeply engaged in those activities.
- Al: Yes, tension between formative vs summative assessment. The tension is about , to me, how we want to define effective instruction.
- Jalal: What is the definition of teaching effectiveness? Who measures it? (Faculty, Chair, RTP Committee, Administrator) How do we measure it (what are the tools; are we quantifying it clearly)?
- Kirsty: Parallels with other groups. We don't assign students grade based on the effort we do on the outcomes. We reward outcomes, but we need

to consider both. Equity and bias can come in when you assess behaviors. Also, we use SPOT because it is easy to look at numbers. Every other possibility is more time consuming even if they are right.

- Jo: Looking at the SPOT in one place; this is then compared to the department and college. But, that could be the only course that is taught like that so how can you compare it?
- Don offered this as what does effective teaching look like:
  1. Develop: has the faculty member invested in own learning and growth around teaching (PDs, conferences, feedback from colleagues perhaps via observation)
  2. Reflection: have they reflected on their teaching
  3. Impact/Outcomes: are students learning (student work samples, changes/evolution in materials and content, SPOT scores.)
- David: like this as a menu of things for instance maybe a senior scholar focuses on #3 because doesn't need to do as much #1-2 Reflection: does it belong? It's not actually evidence but I do look at to see if someone is serious or just being perfunctory in their teaching
- Kirsty: All 3 components should be there, even experienced teachers should be developing and reflecting - perhaps as a leader, so it might look different
- Al: likes all 3; it's not just reflection - it is reflection tied to action; continuous improvement
- Kirsty: Book on grading for equity might suggest that *Outcomes* is the most important part; grading student success behaviors (e.g., attendance, participation) can create inequities; the key is to focus on outcomes - if they succeed that's enough; notes irony because she suggested all 3 pieces have value.
- Robin: what do we mean by student success behaviors? (see parentheses above)
- Al: So if I'm a faculty member and I read this book on equity, and then I make these changes as a result in my classes... am I an effective instructor? Is that enough?
- Don: I think it's promising. I might like to see evidence of outcomes - but it might also be too soon to have those outcomes.
- Jalal: adding 1 more question: how do we measure the outcome of what students learned? Is it what they need or what they expect? Also - what action do they take to improve based on feedback?
- David: Answers for Jalal:
  - Who are the evaluators: those in the RTP process (chair, committees, dean, provost)

- What are the measures of instructional effectiveness: whatever the candidate brings forward. And maybe we give a menu of things that are acceptable
  - We want this policy to be broad – to lay out multiple measures so that candidates have options in different colleges
- David: we have to write a standard about what is effective teaching? Then, what activities count toward that? Then, what kind of measures or evidence can be brought to bear.
  - Kirsty: what does success look like in teaching? Then, what measures do you provide? These are not easy answers to get.
  - Jo: key is that we need to be clear that more than 1 measure be used; that might be most we can do
  - Al: current policy does not specifically call for multiple measures; it's implied but not explicit
  - Jo: yes, different measures often aren't taken into account; there is over-reliance on the SPOT
  - Don: Maybe we mention requirement for multiple measures in section 2.1 – right at the start? Also – what about changing the terminology of “Student Response to Instruction.” Seems to invite over-reliance on SPOTs.
  - Kirsty: Much of this is about implementation, we can only do so much in this policy
  - David: What if we provide clearer directions. College policy *must*, Department policy *must...*
  - Kirsty: a lot of times, candidates submit lots of materials but reviewers often don't really attend to the finer details like syllabi and signature assignments.
  - David: In CLA, the department committee really gets at that level of detail, but then as you move to levels with less content expertise, it might get less attention. Also it is important to look also at outside of the classroom activities where they make instructional contributions.
  - Kirsty: A lot of what will need to change is expectations we hold of evaluators. So let's make the statements that we know to be true, but know that it may or may not happen in implementation; there is only so much this committee can do.
  - David: very first sentence of Section 2.1 – are we happy with that? That is the standard?
  - Al: No, I think we can be more specific, not ultra-specific, but we can give more clarity that people are asking for

- David: are we happy with the way the current standard for teaching/instruction is in the RTP document?

Closing discussion about next steps. Meeting adjourned at 2:26 pm.  
Next scheduled meeting is April 16, 2021.