

Minutes of the University Council on Teaching
Monday, February 11, 2008
Waul House

Present: Sue Barrett, Pat DeLeeuw, Don Hafner, Chris Hepburn (Chair), Paula Mathieu, Bill Petri, Danny Willis, Pete Wilson

Chris reported that all the TAM and TAME applications were funded to some level, although not all received the full application amount. The committee will request follow-up reports from last year's TAM winners. It was clarified that all full-time faculty, including full-time adjuncts, are eligible to apply for TAM and TAME grants.

Most of the meeting was devoted to discussing student evaluations. The UCT was asked last spring (2007) to survey faculty about what questions they would want to see on a student evaluation. After extensive meetings with faculty, the UCT developed a proposed evaluation which is now ready to be sent to on for consideration by the Provost and consultants with expertise in testing. UCT members discussed final issues, especially in light of two pieces on student evaluation: an article by Ken Bain and a section of BC graduate Carolyn Fidelman's dissertation.

Several issues were discussed:

Most of the questions on the evaluation concern minimal standards for a class, but may miss out on discovering whether a course was truly great or inspiring. The committee recommended replacing Question 3c, regarding class attendance, with a question from the Bain article: "Rate the effectiveness of this course in challenging you intellectually."

At least some of the evaluation results will be released to students, but it is not clear whether this will include the answers to all the questions or to only a selected few. The UCT recommends that all the information be released to students, since they need it to choose classes wisely. If it is not all released, students may still use PEPs.

There was consideration of whether all faculty members should have their evaluations released or if new teachers should have the option of not releasing them. The UCT recommends that graduate student teaching assistants and teaching fellows, faculty teaching at BC for the first time and anyone teaching a course for the first time be given the option of not releasing their evaluations. It was further recommended that only the most recent time a course was taught by a particular faculty member will be readily available.

Making student evaluations public will probably cause some anxiety among faculty. The UCT recommends enhancing the current resources for faculty who want to improve their teaching and also holding sessions that will help faculty

interpret the results of student evaluations. The UCT will discuss ways to develop workshops and consultation resources at our next meeting.

The next meeting of the UCT will be at noon on May 9th.

Sue Barrett recorder.