Faculty Development and Evaluation Committee (FDEC)
Annual Report
2013-2014

1. **Name of Committee Chairperson:** Michael R. Andreychik

2. **Committee Membership:** Gwen Alphonso (replaced by David Winn, Fall 2013), Carol Ann Davis, Deborah Edelman, Cinthia Gannett, Valeria Martinez, Eileen O’Shea, Christine Siegel (ex-officio).

   Invited Members: Kim Baer (IDEA), Patricia Calderwood (Fall 2013; CAE), Tracy Immerso (IDEA), Suzanna Klaf (CAE), Larry Miners (Spring 2014; CAE), Bill Taylor (SoE).

3. **Number of Meetings Attended by each Committee Member:** Gwen Alphonso (3 meetings), Michael Andreychik (7 meetings), Carol Ann Davis (6 meetings), Deborah Edelman (6 meetings), Cinthia Gannett (6 meetings), Valeria Martinez (5 meetings), Eileen O’Shea (6 meetings), Christine Siegel (4 meetings), David Winn (2 meetings)


5. **List of Principal Topics Considered by the Committee:**
   (in rough chronological order)
   - **Reconstitution of University College (UC) slot on FDEC:** With the dissolution of University College, and the needs of part-time students represented by faculty from each of the schools, the committee submitted a proposal to Academic Council (AC) to reconfigure the UC slot. The proposal, which was passed by AC in April 2013, removes the designated UC slot and instead designates one of seven faculty slots for a faculty member from the School of Engineering. The proposal was accepted by the General Faculty in October 2013. The committee voted to invite a representative from the School or Engineering to attend committee meetings and ensure representation from the SoE until the designated SoE slot became active for the Spring 2014 election cycle.
• **Mentoring:** Continuing the FDEC’s focus on mentoring of both full- and part-time faculty, the mentoring subcommittee from 2012-2013 was reconstituted. The primary action taken by the subcommittee was a recommendation to solicit input from the faculty before moving forward with further mentoring initiatives. Members of the mentoring subcommittee worked with the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research to add questions specific to faculty development issues at Fairfield University to the HERI (Higher Education Research Institute) faculty survey, which was administered by Institutional Research in Spring 2014. The subcommittee, as well as the full FDEC and the CAE, plan to use the data gathered from these surveys to help inform faculty development efforts moving forward.

• **Part-time faculty:** The FDEC continued its focus on part-time faculty issues in 2013-2014. As one part of this focus, a subcommittee on part-time faculty issues was formed. The work of this subcommittee, along with the input of the full FDEC, produced draft recommendations for changes to the manner in which issues of faculty development and evaluation are addressed with part-time faculty, and the deans, chairs, and program directors with whom they work. These draft recommendations will be taken up in next year’s FDEC with the foreseeable end goal of actionable recommendations passed on to AC. Among other things, these recommendations addressed:

  o Questions of best practices in evaluating the teaching effectiveness of PT faculty, including the question of how student evaluation data should be used in this process of formative and summative evaluation. The FDEC is working to make recommendations to increase consistency and transparency in the types of evidence for teaching effectiveness and the processes of evaluation and formative development.
  o Questions around the specific professional development resources and opportunities for PT faculty, with an eye toward ensuring that both the development and evaluation systems in place for PT faculty parallel those for FT faculty in appropriate ways, taking into account the Fall 2013 Task Force Report on PT Faculty on issues of voice, security, equity, and respect.

• The HERI faculty survey was also circulated this year to ALL faculty for the first time this year in an effort to include the voice of PT faculty more fully.
• The subcommittee also decided that, although the 2012-2013 FDEC had considered inviting PT faculty as guests to the FDEC meetings, given the already heavy demands and lack of additional remuneration for PT faculty, a better approach would be to invite PT faculty representatives to meet with the subcommittee when appropriate.

• **FUSA Questions:** The committee was made aware of a problem with the FUSA questions that appeared on the Spring 2013 IDEA forms. Specifically, despite stipulation in the faculty handbook that FUSA questions must be approved by AC, four of the five FUSA questions that appeared in the Spring 2013 IDEA evaluations had not been approved by AC. Working along with the Office of Academic Affairs, the committee responded to this issue in two ways. First, only data from the one, AC-approved question was released to FUSA leaders. Second, FDEC Chair Andreychik, Christine Siegel, David Sapp, and Tracy Immerso met with FUSA leaders to explain the situation and to help work with them to craft new questions to meet their goals with respect to the FUSA questions, and to work with them to help work with AC on the approval of the questions. This process is still ongoing.

• **IDEA Short-form proposal:** The FDEC recommended to AC that the IDEA short form be adopted as an option for end-of-semester student course evaluations. The rationale for this recommendation was two-fold: (1) Adoption of the short form will provide faculty with the option of selecting an evaluation instrument that may be more appropriate than the long form for particular faculty or particular courses; (2) Adoption of the short form should reduce the amount of time students spend completing end-of-semester evaluations, thus reducing student evaluation fatigue. The proposal was passed by AC in April 2014.

• **Data-driven Faculty Development Efforts:** In an effort to help ensure that faculty development efforts and resources are directed at real areas of faculty need, the FDEC worked with the CAE, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of Institutional Research to gather data from the faculty regarding their needs with respect to faculty development. In addition to gathering data from the regularly-administered HERI faculty survey, additional questions specifically relevant to the Fairfield context were created and administered. The hope is to use these data to inform faculty development efforts in the future, and to make the data available to other University committees and task forces to aid in their work.
• **IDEA Education**: The committee undertook a number of steps to continue to educate various constituencies on campus about the IDEA evaluation forms.
  
  o Try to introduce new faculty on campus as early as possible to the IDEA form in an effort to help them get the most out of the form, use it effectively, and understand how it can be useful both for formative purposes and for purposes of tenure and promotion. Although the specifics of these efforts are still in the works, a number of options were discussed including adding information about IDEA to new faculty orientation in some form and conducting an IDEA workshop targeted at new faculty in the early part of the fall semester.
  
  o Work more directly with chairs and program directors to see what questions/feedback they have about the IDEA form. Chair Andreychik and Suzanna Klaf from the CAE worked on a communication to Chairs, with the expectation that this communication will be disseminated in the near future.
  
  o Work more directly with students to educate them about the IDEA evaluation process. Tracy Immerso and David Sapp entered into discussions with the Dean of Students Office to introduce an IDEA-education component to the required first year seminars.

a. **Other IDEA Issues**

• The Committee identified strategies for increasing response rates from students, and FIF completion rates by faculty, particularly part-time faculty.

• The committee discussed the possibility of moving IDEA to all online. It appears inevitable that commercially-available evaluation systems will move to all online soon, and so a move to all online now, before such a move becomes a more reactive necessity, may make sense. Related to such a move, the committee discussed various advantages and disadvantages of online vs. paper. Overall, online evaluations offer a number of advantages over paper evaluations (in particular, the ability to quickly access data, which can be helpful for chairs and program directors charged with making hiring decisions for the next semester’s courses, and for faculty who want to inform their next semester’s course design by looking at their last semester’s IDEA evaluations). And, most apparent disadvantages of online forms can be overcome with the use of best practices (e.g., having students complete the online forms on laptops in class; using the URL only option to distribute links to course evaluations). CAS Associate Dean Jim Simon also presented some informative data to the committee about the online evaluations, and recommended, based on this information, a move to all online.
• The committee agreed to revisit the current default system in place now that the short form has been adopted as an option for end-of-semester evaluations. Currently, full professors and adjuncts default to the short form, and associate and untenured professors default to the long form.
• The Committee continued to consider the need/value for faculty to educate themselves about IDEA and how IDEA can be used as a tool for formative assessment and professional development. CAE hosted eight IDEA workshops, 6 on Getting Started with IDEA and 2 on interpreting and using IDEA results; total attendance = 19.
• On the recommendation of last year’s FDEC, the Office of Academic Affairs added IDEA to my.fairfield, greatly streamlining the process of selecting IDEA options and providing an easily-accessible, central location where online IDEA data can be accessed.
• The Committee consulted with some of the CAS Associate Deans to consider ways to use IDEA data in aggregate; we reviewed a sample subject report looking at averages across courses.

b. Faculty Development Day

• It was decided that the Spring FDEC Day would focus on writing (broadly conceived) within the Jesuit tradition. The day was structured to provide participants with an ability to engage with and think about writing in the realms of scholarship, teaching, and personal and civic transformation.
• To help the planning process for the Fall faculty development days, the committee recommended that topics for the next Fall’s faculty development day (typically not addressed until the new committee is seated) be discussed by the current committee membership. This should help to alleviate the difficulties of having to plan and execute a faculty development day in what can often be a short time frame (e.g., often the new committee does not meet until the end of September, leaving only two months to plan the day).
• The committee agreed that a recommendation should be made to AC designating dedicated faculty development time (likely a few hours on the first reading day of each semester, but the specifics have yet to be worked out). This would ensure that all faculty have availability to attend faculty development events.

6. List of Decisions Taken by the Committee:

• Reconstituted Committee Membership to include a slot for a faculty member from the School of Engineering.
• Create a proposal regarding efforts at development and evaluation of part-time faculty.
• Gather data (using the HERI faculty survey and additional questions specific to the Fairfield context) to help inform faculty development efforts going forward.
• Submit a proposal to AC setting aside dedicated faculty development time each semester.
• Consider the possibility of moving the IDEA evaluation process to all online.
• Work on new education efforts surrounding IDEA. In particular, reach out to new faculty, chairs and program directors, and students, to educate them about the importance of the process and how to get the most out of the forms.

7. **Anticipated Effects of Committee’s Decisions:**

• SOE faculty are now represented on FDEC on a regular basis.
• The voice and development and evaluation needs of part-time faculty will be more regularly addressed by the FDEC. Efforts are underway to ensure that development and evaluation efforts, including the manner in which teaching evaluation data is used in decisions about re-hire, are more parallel for full and part time faculty.
• Faculty, departments and schools will begin to use IDEA for individual and program evaluation and development.
• Improved completion rates of IDEA evaluations by students and faculty.
• Faculty development efforts will be guided more by data from the entire faculty, rather than just the perceived needs of the FDEC membership.
• Faculty will be able to more easily work with selecting IDEA objectives and defaults and will be able to more easily access their online IDEA data through my.fairfield.
• Faculty will have the option of selecting the IDEA short form, which should lessen student evaluation fatigue and provide some faculty with an evaluation instrument more appropriate for their course structure or evaluation goals.
• The process for Fall FDEC day planning should be more efficient.
• All interested constituencies (i.e., faculty, chairs and program directors, students) should be more educated about IDEA and their voices heard.
• FUSA questions will be more informed by best practices in survey construction. FUSA questions should more closely match the goals FUSA has for the questions.
8. **Unfinished Business:**

- Help faculty to interpret IDEA results and use them for formative assessment and program development.
- Support adjunct faculty to use IDEA (implement and interpret).
- Finalize recommendation on faculty development and evaluation with respect to PT faculty.
- Finalize a recommendation on dedicated faculty development time.
- Further explore the possibility of moving IDEA all online.
- Consider ways of using the HERI data to help inform faculty development efforts.
- Continuing working with all interested constituencies (e.g., chairs and program directors, faculty, students) on IDEA.

9. **Future Agenda Items:**

- Finalize AC recommendations on faculty and development for PT faculty.
- Further consider moving IDEA to all online. This will include educating faculty about best practices when using the online evaluation system.
- Consider the best ways to evaluate small courses (e.g., independent studies).
- Finalize recommendation on dedicated faculty development days.

Respectfully Submitted

*Michael R. Andreychik*

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