Faculty Development and Evaluation Committee
Minutes of Meeting, November 4, 2011

Members present: Mike Andreychik, Jessica Davis, Joel Goldfield (Scribe), Meredith Kazer (Chair), Mary Frances Malone, Valeria Martinez, Aaron Perkus, Emily Smith
Guests present: Will Johnson, Prof. Danke Li, Prof. Larry Miners, Roben Torosyan

Chair Meredith Kazer called the meeting to order at 8:16 a.m.

1) President’s Institutional Diversity Council
Will Johnson outlined a brief history of Diversity Council. It is focused on students of color, 1st-generation college students, disadvantaged, others. Over the last three years, there has been a change in campus climate and the nature of recommendations to the President. Will then explained what the Council is and is not and how the FDEC might help break misconceptions of the PIDC. The Council is not an operational body: no budget, no pay, no true authority. Its primary responsibilities are research and assessment at Fairfield and compared to other colleges and universities. Recommendations have been relayed as desired by the President. The Council struggles to maintain consistency. That has been achieved this year with two graduate assistants. On the Council there is representation from various divisions. There are meetings sometimes as frequent as on a weekly basis, and there are work groups as well.

Danke Li: The Council has come to the FDEC because it is a Handbook committee. Another “piece” of the Council is the role of faculty: involvement and pedagogical diversity through the curriculum. The FDEC is a leader, as Roben and Larry have pointed out. The PDIC is seeking advice on how it can better prepare recommendations on pedagogy and curriculum in order to promote diversity; what students learn in their classrooms is important.

Roben Torosyan: Pointed out his role as ex officio on the FDEC and on the PDIC (not a Handbook committee). We could discuss the peer review of teaching. Could we treat diverse pedagogy since “everybody benefits”?

Larry Miners: Likes the idea of connecting with other existing structures on campus. He had just talked about this within the CAE: connecting with diversity and students at risk.

Emily Smith: It’s a tremendous asset to focus on curriculum and pedagogy. There is a “huge cultural shift to thinking about how to educate those bodies.” Multicultural curriculum, peer review of teaching: What counts as effective teaching and a demonstration of this? Learning styles are important.

Mary France Malone: How would we actualize some of these things as a committee, in concrete terms, by the end of this year for the report?

Emily: As the FDEC works with other committees, we should be considering, “What is good teaching?” CAE can play a role in the choice of workshops and types of pedagogies considered for meeting diverse needs on campus. How can IDEA give faculty better information on how their pedagogies are meeting their students’ needs?

Roben: Institutional data can be embarrassing, like knowledge of and ability to get along with people of different races and cultures. Our (student) rates are lower than in
comparison groups. Class content and even course management can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes. We could have workshops on learning styles.

Aaron Perkus: Our effort could benefit from strategic planning structure incorporating these needs.

Danke: At 3 p.m., Tues., 11/29, there will be a meeting about diversity.

Will: The PDIC is able to influence structural diversity changes. How can they work together with FDEC?

Jessica Davis: What about a Faculty Development Day?

Meredith Kazer: Great idea. Even though we can’t talk about diversity this year, there’s a strong relationship between this topic and the FDEC. We can plan a workshop and something more specific next year.

Aaron: We don’t want the appearance of yet another “widget” that never comes off display. One strategy would be to find where logical links already exist. We could also look at Rank and Tenure criteria to see if diversity plays any kind of role.

Mary Frances: R&T is preparing a proposal. Let’s look at that first. This is the first time that R&T has made more than procedural requests.

Joel Goldfield: A recent e-survey on diversity seems to relate directly to the PDIC. Will commented on Joel’s question saying that the survey came from the PDIC.

Danke: Asks that faculty make their voices heard.

Valeria: Put diversity information in common Merit applications.

Mary Frances: We need criteria for gauging attention to diversity.

Mike Andreychik: Part of our strategic conversation: We need to have reliable measures. The FDEC could help, but background reading is required, and it’s time-consuming, followed by consideration if we’re getting the appropriate data.

Danke: We’d like diversity considerations to be part of life, of being human.

(8:57 a.m.: Following thanks from the FDEC, Danke Li and Will Johnson departed.)

Meredith: Asked about questions about minutes. No changes. Aaron moved to approve. Mary Frances seconded. Approved.

Meredith reported that Larry, Roben and herself conducted workshops this week, (introductory). There were many questions about the actual procedure for using IDEA. One faculty member from VPA had difficulty accepting use of computers in a studio; they will use paper. There are problems with not filling out the FIF (Faculty Information Form), so the processing defaults to all “Important” goals and yields subsequent “bad results.” Larry reported that everyone at his workshop was a new user of IDEA, while Mary Frances recommended that faculty look at the IDEA site. But she noted that faculty already have much on their plate.

Meredith, Emily, Mary Frances and Roben discussed ideas for a smoother evaluation process using above thoughts plus e-mailing students. Faculty could improve scheduling, and the release of grades could be postponed grades until students had finished evaluations. The faculty member controls the URL for the evaluation. There’s a personal URL for each class even though students get reminders from IDEA.
Aaron: This procedure does no good because students get the URL in the IDEA message. We could have just one URL per faculty, withheld till desired, but we don’t yet have the culture for this approach.
Jessica: We wouldn’t want students to wait till a moment when they had had a bad class day at which point they would then fill out the form waiting for them. Could we withhold the e-mails to classes?
Mary Frances: No.
Emily: When we arrange for our choice between paper and electronic use, could we specify the date?
Mary Frances: IDEA is a commercial operation, and that may be a commercial burden.
Emily: Can’t Tracy (Immerso) implement the release of e-mails?
Meredith: Tracy can set it up by school, and the students will get the e-mails every three days.
Mike: Adverse to the environment for online. He tells them to come in to evaluate online on a certain day without any e-mail reminders. Many schools use IDEA, have they dealt successfully with these constraints? Could we check?
Meredith: This matter arose in the Florida conference last year. We are a little ahead of most faculties.
Mary Frances: We can have a list of questions for Jessica, who is attending next year’s conference.
Aaron: Blackboard (Bb) was seen as having a role within a course management system. You’d turn on the link at a certain point. Problems were: the vast majority of classes weren’t using Bb. Bb would bypass Banner. It’d have to be re-entered from Banner to Bb.
Mary Frances: There were bad data (apparently in a test situation).
Aaron: A new portal will be ready in the Spring. That might solve the problem.
Larry: We could ask students not to heed e-mails and only to do the survey through Bb.

Mary Frances and Roben noted the availability of loaner laptops through the Registrar’s Office. Meredith reported on our subcommittee work, including discussing paper versus online evaluations: we’re not in a position to recommend eliminating paper. We will recommend continuing with paper as an option for the foreseeable future, given faculty’s concerns. Meredith and Mary Frances further discussed the possibility of not releasing grades until the evening of the last final (last day of the semester) across the board.

Meredith: There’s an advantage of e-copy results from online for faculty’s R&T applications. We are inclined not to survey individual faculty at this time.
Jessica: She’d be swamped with requests for grades.
Emily: For everybody? Grad students and undergrads sometimes have tests on different days.
Mary Frances: The dates will be the same next academic year.
Meredith: Our 2nd subcommittee, on aligning criteria, will meet later. Peer review of teaching will meet on 11/28 for pilot teams.
Roben: One team suggests that each team do a micro-presentation then allow concurrent sessions like how to discuss each other’s activities, writing a teaching philosophy with cards, and sorting values.
Meredith: There is sometimes low attendance at concurrent sessions.
Emily: Dec. 1st is the deadline for input from the larger committee. Working groups may be models, but we need to gather ideas and suggestions from attendees. Small groups can still be helpful. We’re not ready to share peer review results after only 4 months. We should appeal to the faculty for input. Working from the ground-up and faculty buy-in are vital.
Aaron: Hearing the narrative is important. What kind of decisions had to be made, even if there aren’t results yet?
Roben: We have actual videos of teaching that could be viewed and syllabi that can be read.

Meredith announced that our next meeting is on 11/28. We can talk about a more sophisticated mentoring program for faculty, learning from each other. FDEC could help CAE. Jessica has some ideas given her recent experiences. Emily, Meredith, Valeria, and somebody from CAE, as needed, can help with this project. Mary Frances recommends a “firewall” between what the FDEC does and the actual work of R&T. We should create guidelines on what faculty should expect for mentoring. CAE already has a program, and Roben recommends a CAE member for the 1st meeting of this FDEC subcommittee. Meredith concurs, given that the FDEC’s purpose is to enhance existing program, not to develop a new program. Aaron reports that Larry asked him to present the e-portfolio to new faculty. If this component is of interest to the subcommittee, he’d be happy to explain.

Aaron moved to adjourned. Emily seconded. The motion was approved, and we adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel Goldfield (Scribe)