Faculty Development and Evaluation Committee
Minutes of Meeting, March 30, 2011

Members present: William Abbott, Joel Goldfield, Angela Harkins (Chair), Mary Frances Malone, Aaron Perkus, Emily Smith, Vishnu Vinekar, Meredith Wallace.
Guests Present: Tracy Immerso, Roben Torosyan

The meeting was called to order by Chair Harkins at 11:05.

Minutes of Previous Meeting
Vishnu’s minutes of the March 2 FDEC meeting were read. One change was approved: FPLC = “Community”, not “Circle”. DECISION: The Minutes were approved as amended, with hearty thanks to Vishnu Vinekar.

Agenda
Chair Harkins requested that the agenda be re-ordered, reversing 2 and 3. The Committee approved.

IDEA Update
Angela reported that the Academic Council did not get to our motions at its last meeting, but will do so at the April meeting.
Angela will give a general announcement and update on IDEA at the General Faculty meeting on Friday. She will explain that part of the delay, and part of the problems with the DSB and SON faculty’s forms, are the result of the errors by the U.S. Mail. She will show a slide of the damaged box. She will also explain that the personnel in OCC Tracy Immerso’s office were unaccustomed to the logistical procedures, and that the operations at our end will improve as these personnel become more accustomed to them.

ROBEN’S INSERTION:
Most forms went through OK (Tracy if you have a % success rate that may help, even if only a rough est.), that 52 faculty registered to date for 1 or more of the 4 workshops facilitated by FDEC members & CAE (1 more Apr. 8 at 12:15p), and that for admin issues they should contact Tracy Immerso, and for help interpreting or using IDEA, contact CAE or FDEC members trained w IDEA.

Angela asked whether anyone had not received his/her Diagnostic Report Form. Answer: apparently everyone has received theirs.
Joel asked whether the procedure could be more automated, by having the Faculty Information forms pre-filled out. Answer: yes, but what about the learning goals? Joel said that they rarely change with Modern Languages.

[Tracy stated, later in the meeting, that she will have everything on the form filled out except the learning goals]

Angela continued: More people are doing the form online than in-class this time. Total registrants: 473. Total in-class paper form requests: 250. Total courses: 1200.
This means that 223 courses are online by choice, and the remaining 727 are online by default.

Meredith reported on one of yesterday’s DRF workshops, which she and Suzanna Klaf ran. There were lots of questions and some angst. People asked about adjusted versus raw scores, and particularly whether FDEC or anyone else was working on an “accepted” raw score (with regard to scenario #3 on p. 2 of the IDEA DRF Guide). People also had three global issues:

1) Some faculty wanted to have their classes do the forms online all at once, in a laptop-equipped classroom. However, because the emails started going out to the students long before professor’s scheduled date to use the laptop classroom, some students sent in their forms prior to the date, whereas the professor wanted them done all at once and in class.

2) Faculty are interested in getting data over time.

3) Faculty are interested in using more specific discipline codes, so that elementary and advanced courses could be separated: English composition courses, for example, would be lumped separately and not with every English course.

Angela stated that #3 had come up at the IDEA meeting Wednesday. We could use local codes to capture group reports. Modern languages is a classic example of how a local code could provide a group report. Local codes are what we do here at the university.

There are thus two goals, and they clash: (1) getting group information, and (2) allowing greater specificity of course categories. This conflict of goals must be worked out. We as an institution have to decide how to use the data.

**Angela: discussion of the discipline codes is a pending item for FDEC.**

Tracy suggested, with regard to #3, that she not fill in the discipline code field when she pre-marks the forms. **GENERAL CONSENSUS: APPROVAL.** Tracy affirmed that that is how she will proceed.

Aaron noted that 727 courses are going to be online by default, and said that we need to be prepared for outrage on the part of those faculty. It is true that we are covered, because we told the faculty about this, but we should still be prepared for a backlash. Perhaps Angela should mention this at the GF meeting on Friday.

Meredith agreed with Aaron, saying that there was lots of discussion yesterday at the DRF workshop about student compliance.

Angela stated that the online response rate was not that different.

**Peer Review**

Emily reported on the work of the Subcommittee for Peer Review (Emily, Vishnu, Bill, Suzanna Klaf, Kathy Nantz, Roben Torosyan). It has produced three proposals, for which it would like feedback:

A. That the CAE will offer funding to two or three departments that wish to create a formal peer-review system over the course of a summer, an academic
year, and a following summer. The FDEC will assist these departments during this period.

B. That the FDEC take the initiative on peer review next year by devoting both Development Days to Peer Review. At these Development Days the aforesaid departments will report on their progress.

C. That the FDEC will propose to the Academic Council that the AC appoint a subcommittee of the Academic Council, on which some FDEC members will sit. This subcommittee will be charged to ask every Fairfield University school and department what the state of their peer review system is. (The FDEC should probably come up with set of questions for this AC Subcommittee to use, as part of the proposal).

Aaron said that he does not see the long-term strategy. At the end of this year, will there be a formal report? A second wave of pilot departments doing this? At what point is this going to be an institutional proposal? Emily replied that we have not gotten to such decisions yet. We have been struggling with the top-down versus bottom-up problem. Roben said that we are working on criteria and guidelines. Bill said that we are at the same stage with Peer Review that we were at with IDEA in 2007. It is going to take time.

Mary Frances asked whether item C entails the creating of various models for peer review, or simply to get AC endorsement for the process of Peer Review creation generally? Bill replied: both. The Subcommittee worried about getting faculty buy-in, at a time when everyone is busy. As far as top-down approaches are concerned this gentle start appeared to be the best way to go.

Further questions: How do we get people to work on this? Will the piloting departments be coming up with models that other departments can adopt and adapt to their needs? Are we creating peer review plans within departments, or across the university? Bill replied that the FDEC will provide guidance to the piloting departments. We are looking at a central core of rubric requirements that every department should be using, and an outer range of rubric requirements tailored to the needs of the specific department.

Mary Frances asked whether we know what various departments are doing? Emily replied that that is the point of item C: the AC subcommittee goes around and finds out. Mary Frances said that this is something that the deans could do, rather than AC.

Emily reminded everyone of the difference between classroom observation and peer review; the latter is the big category into which the former fits. Emily is being judged by the system that is in HER DEPARTMENT, although she has outside reviewers. GSEAP has a school-wide system as well.

Roben urged people to sign up for the Summer Institute on peer review.
Aaron stated that Rank & Tenure and merit submissions on peer review need to have integrity: a reliability and credibility that makes such submissions similar in strength to the data from student evaluations. It must be institutional, not just departmental. Vishnu replied that we are discussing a summative instrument; we need feedback before we can move in this direction.

Angela asked whether, in this context, she should urge people at Friday’s GF meeting to document their teaching for this semester? General consensus: no. The two issues are not related. Mary Frances said that most people do this anyway.

Aaron suggested that the FDEC acknowledge, in its proposals, the goals of (1) achieving a peer review system that has the same integrity and consistency that the student evaluation forms do, and (2) improving teaching.

Mary Frances asked what was the point of the memo to the AC (item C)? Emily replied that it was to add institutional muscle and endorsement: making it official. Mary Frances reiterated that the deans could do this.

Aaron said that the FDEC has the authority to do this survey of departments off of its own bat. We do not need the blessing of the AC, and it may be unwise to get them involved and give them control at this point. We did not do this with IDEA; we waited until the pilots were finished before going to AC with a proposal.

Emily suggested that the FDEC Chair request this survey of the deans. Mary Frances agreed; we could ask them “For each of your schools, what systems are in place, at the departmental and school levels?”

Mary Frances added that SVPAA Fitzgerald is passing out NEASC forms asking what we are doing to measure student outcomes; Aaron said that doing our survey at this time might mesh well, because everyone is in the assessment mode.

Angela asked concerning item A: How do we pick the departments? Emily replied that we will issue a call for applications, and wait and see what happens. The CAE has the money. How many departments we select depends upon the size of those departments; the money is granted on a per-faculty-member basis.

Aaron suggested that we make clear that the selected departments must report back at the Development Days.

Mary Frances asked: What if the English Department applies? Emily replied that we’ll probably have to put a cap on the number of faculty involved per department.

Suggestion: in selecting among applicants, we should choose at least one department that is fairly advanced at peer review, and one department that has done nothing at all and needs to develop a peer review system.
GENERAL CONSENSUS:

(1) That the Subcommittee write up items A and B as motions, in accordance with today’s feedback, and present them to the FDEC on April 13. Assuming that the FDEC accepts item A on April 13th, the offer will be made to all departments and schools before the end of the semester.

(2) That item C be altered: we abandon the motion to AC for a subcommittee, in favor of having the FDEC Chair ask the deans to conduct this survey.

Chair Harkins heartily thanked the Subcommittee on Peer Review for all of its hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02.

Bill Abbott