Fairfield University
FDEC Meeting
Wednesday, March 4, 2015
CNS 8
1:30-3:00 pm

Present: Cinthia Gannett, Tracy Immerso, Suzanna Klaf, Eileen O'Shea (Chair), Amalia Rusu, Christine Siegel, Ying, Zhang.

Regrets: Gwendoline Alphonso, Carol Ann Davis

AGENDA ITEMS:
  I. Approval of Minutes
  II. FUSA Survey Questionnaire
  III. IDEA Online Recommendations
  IV. FDEC Day
  V. Other

Meeting called to order at 1:37pm by the chair.

I. Amalia made a motion to approve minutes. Cinthia seconded. Motion approved with 6 in favor and 1 abstention.

II. FUSA Survey Questionnaire

Eileen: I have been in correspondence with Ryan Duffy, the FUSA student who is spearheading a change to the FUSA Survey Questionnaire. As a follow up to last November’s presentation, Ryan is eager to move forward with assistance from FDEC. I contacted Christine Siegel to learn more about the prior history concerning this potential change, as she and David Sapp worked with this student group last year. Christine recommended that I reach out to Dr Yohuru Williams (replacing David Sapp) to see if he would work with this student group in designing new FUSA survey questions. Yohuru was very responsive and agreed to be a part of a working group to assist the students; he will also contact David Sapp, to find out more details as to what the process was last year. Cinthia Gannet also said she would serve on this work group, representing the FDEC.

Christine: The only other thing that I recommend is checking the language in the Journal of Record, concerning the FUSA questions.

Eileen: I did. I reached out to Susan Rakowitz and she forwarded a page for the JOR; I will forward the page to Cinthia.
Christine: What the Journal of Record states is that FUSA can ask these specific questions, because Academic Council approved the questions. The existing FUSA questions went through a formal University approval process. If the students want to change the existing FUSA questions, they will have to go back through the University process.

Cinthia: When the students made their presentation last fall, we did not really understand and their process in developing new questions. When we queried them, they did not really understand either any longer, why they were asking the questions. They did not have a rationale for why/how the questions were developed.

Christine: What I recall from a meeting last spring is that the FUSA students wanted to ask new questions so that the general student body would be better informed to know which professors to choose for classes, based on different styles of teachers. They could be asking questions such as: what does the teacher do and would that be good for me. Rather than, this is good professor so you should take it, this is bad professor so you shouldn’t take the class. They were suggesting that new FUSA questions would move students away from using RateMyProfessor and other types of venues that have less accurate information. They want students to have a choice and to be informed of teaching styles.

Cinthia: They did offer that rationale. When we started asking them as a group about how these questions were actually developed they could not answer that question with any kind of serious rationale. That was another reason why I felt we might go back to that work.

Christine: I think the rationale came after the questions. We were trying to move them to using different language, but then we came to a stopping point, when we realized that they would have to go through official University process to make a change.

Cinthia: Good. That is very good instruction.

Christine: I guess that students didn’t know what the rationale was initially. But I feel like certain innovation is able to do this. But if they do this, they will need guidance from us on how to do it.

Eileen: It makes sense for students to seek information about teaching styles of professors, if that is the underlying rationale for changing the FUSA questions.

Cinthia: The other thing we asked them was if they read any of the literature about what other institutions have done concerning student survey questions. For instance, did they look at the educational efficacy and consequences, if they are going to do this? This may have real effects and consequences. They have to do their
research. And so we said, we will work with them to make sure they were actually doing the research they needed to do to be better informed.

Christine: The students had to decide which questions they need to ask and how would they put their efforts into it? I would recommend though that if effort is towards changing general record language that we do make it more informed.
Cinthia: We have a process for them to work with faculty to ensure that the questions are informed questions.

Here is another question: we don't have shop-around time on this campus. In many campuses, students have two weeks, in which they can actually attend the class and they can see if the learning styles are for them in real time. And then, they can make the decisions. We have just one week to add or drop, so it is not even clear how the students assess the course. For example, if students had questions about a class and there were three different professors teaching, then the student should be able to go and try one class and then try another. Then you would actually be able to use that data to dive away. But if you just have one professor teaching then maybe it does not matter, regardless of that professor's teaching style.

Christine: These are all learning opportunities for the students.

Cinthia: Then we need to ask them to think about these questions.

Tracy: If we want to make these FUSA results available to the students for the fall 2015 semester, we have to know what the FUSA questions will be by about October and approved by academic council by October. We need to be 3 months ahead. We will have to have a serious communication campaign to the faculty to explain what the new FUSA questions are, how the information will be used, what the purpose of change was for the students. And we need to have that communication campaign prior to faculty deciding whether they will check yes or no to FUSA questions. So we have a tight timeline.

Eileen: To summarize, if new FUSA questions were to be developed and approved by Academic Council, Tracy Immerso and Kim Bauer would need 3 months lead time to incorporate the changes onto the IDEA Evaluation form.

Cinthia: Who else from FEDC will be on the taskforce?

Christine: I am ok to serve on the taskforce and I will do it.

Christine: These FUSA questions should be additive. They shouldn't be asking things that are already being asked by the survey. But the students do not get the regular results, so then do they need these sorts of questions or do they need access to the IDEA results, or parts of them?
Cinthia: How the FUSA questions are related to the IDEA and the yellow narrative are interesting.

Suzanna: I agree with Christine’s point; it is useless to collect more data than you really need. What is the ultimate purpose if we already collect this information? Why would we ask the students redundant questions?

Tracy: However, we get into the murky water of who has access to what data? We don’t want the students to access even aggregate data when faculty themselves and administrators don’t have access to certain data. So it is murky.

Eileen: To be continued. I will follow up with student Ryan Duffy, Cinthia Gannett, and Yohuru Williams. David Sapp is to provide Yohuru with more information about what was accomplished in spring 2014.

III. IDEA Online Recommendations

Eileen: Last meeting, we talked about how we would like to disseminate “best practices” of the IDEA ONLINE Evaluation Survey. Carol Ann offered to draft a letter for Deans and Chairs recommending this information be disseminated during departmental meetings. Do we still agree that this is a good move? As committee members, we all would need to be willing to support the departments; they may request that we attend their meetings and make a brief presentation. I believe that this would be a nice service to offer the Chairs of the department. Do you agree and will everyone be willing to make a presentation if called upon? Excellent...let the minutes reflect that FDEC committee members are willing to come to the departmental meetings and talk about “Best Practices” for implementing the IDEA ONLINE Evaluation.

Eileen: Any other suggestions in communicating this new process to the university at large?

Cinthia: Do we have appointed people in every department where there are a large number of contingent faculty who will be willing to make sure that they not only get the information but are available to answer questions about it? There are some departments with a large number of contingent faculty who don’t routinely attend the faculty meetings so they may not know about the changes, as we discussed.

Christine: Chairs are responsible for the adjuncts and for informing them of this change.

Eileen: The letter will go to the Deans and we will recommend that the Deans share with the chairs.
Amalia: Maybe we can also designate a point person from the FDEC. Each of us would take care of a certain number of departments to give support and answer whatever questions they might have.

Eileen: We will list the point person from FDEC, that is willing go attend a specific departmental meeting to share and/or consult with the chairs.

Tracy: I will make a few more changes to the Best Practices. I have been talking to the ITS group regarding how we will post the URL on Blackboard. We are going to recommend that faculty post the URL, just to copy and paste, while they are on campus. However, while they are off campus, there is a firewall issue so the rule gets messy. So we are going to change the Best Practices regarding the copy and paste of the URL while you are on or off the campus. I will send it to Eileen for the FDEC to vote on.

Eileen: Please remember to share with faculty that the Yellow narrative evaluations will still come in paper copies.

Tracy: About laptops for distribution, do we want to have some kind of central communication to the faculty to explain that it is in the case of extreme need only, because we have just 12 laptops available for the entire faculty for undergraduate and graduate students? Do we want to make it very bold communication or do we want to keep it with the Best Practices? I would like to ask opinions from this group.

Cinthia: I would like to see that bolded in the Best Practices along with a list of computer rooms that are available for faculty who want to do it in the computer rooms. Those are the resources that faculty might need to know, if students can’t bring in their laptops. Or, here is where they can get them. Does the library also have laptops you can sign out? We should check this out or if there are other resources available on campus, we should list those. We should list these computer rooms and how to contact the person if you need to make an appointment for the day you need to use that classroom. If those are the resources they need, I would like to have them listed.

Amalia: Is there a way we can ask all our students to have their own laptops when they come to Fairfield?

Christine: Jay said that around 98% of our students own a laptop.

Tracy: Maybe that statistics from Jay is something we want to put it in this communication. For example, stating something such as: according to our ITS, XX number of students actually have access to laptops, so there should not be a great need for additional equipment.

Cinthia: I think a lot of people like to take their students to the computer room because they have to pull out exactly that email, click on exactly that URL.
Ying: Can we send an email and broadcast to all the students to see who does not have a laptop or IPad before we do this. For instance, in my class, I require my students to bring their laptops to do trading. I asked them if you don't have a laptop, let me know. But so far nobody said no.

Eileen: Tracy, will you reach out to Jay and ask for the percentage of students with computers on campus and then put a pre-statement such as: XXX percent of Fairfield students have computer access.

**IV. FDEC Day**

Eileen: For the spring FDEC workshop, our committee considered the proposal that was suggested by Kathy Nantz, Bob Hannafin, and Jay Rozgonyi: “From Flipped to Hybrid to Online: Making Good Decisions about Course Delivery.” Our FDEC committee had continued discussion via email as to whether we were in favor of going along with this proposal. My understanding of our email exchange, is that our committee was in favor of their idea, but perhaps Kathy, Bob and Jay would consider the following: incorporating the University water-theme; allowing for inclusion of writing strategies; and making the focus of the workshop more “integrated.”

Eileen: So what shall be the next steps? Do we want to contact Kathy Nantz and say yes but...? They are offering to further develop this workshop.

Cinthia: Why can’t we just offer them our suggestions to enhance it a little bit to see if they like our ideas? I don't think anything we offer contradicts anything they have proposed. If you could offer some applications to deal with the water-theme as we are doing this that could be nice.

Suzanna: The section of the proposal that was focused on technology was a suggestion form Jay and the CAE, to share outcomes of the faculty that have worked with IPads in the classroom, this year. The other suggestion for the FDEC workshop, came about from Kathy and Bob. They were proposing a workshop to discuss faculty decision-making related to course design. When it comes to the pedagogical sort of overarching decision that we make, I don’t see that is in conflict with what we have suggested, but I also don’t think that it should be deluded because those conversations have not been had on our campus.

Suzanna: If we are making broad decisions about how our course is designed then, we need to make sure that it makes sense. For example, I understand that a lot of faculty wanted to recoup the time they lost due to snow days this semester, and they wanted to use technology for online delivery, but they shouldn’t then move the entire class online all the time. We don’t want to encourage that kind of “freedom”. The department should decide which courses are more appropriate with online delivery, which ones are relevant to hybrid courses, and which ones should be face-
to-face courses. We need to build our relationship with our students regardless of whether it is online or offline.

Suzanna: Kathy and Bob definitely would benefit from knowing how to move forward with their proposal. I have already said that I would like to see CAE sponsor this conversation this semester, if they do not present this program as part of the FDEC workshop day. But, hopefully you will help to get people to attend this important conversation, regardless of whether it occurs on this day or not.

Cinthia: I think that is what we were all thinking; it is a good idea.

Suzanna: I don’t think Bob Hannafin and Kathy Nantz are well positioned to be able to talk about the water-theme. I am not sure how those two pieces (water-theme and technology) would necessary come together. I leave it up to FDEC.

Eileen: Bob and Kathy’s proposal is a timely and an important conversation for the university faculty at large, and I am in favor of their presentation. The spring FDEC workshop tends to attract a decent number of people and I see this workshop as a means to gather faculty, to have a broader conversation about course design.

Eileen: I think we all agreed that our Spring FDEC day would be on the same day as the general faculty meeting on May 1, Friday from 12:00-2:00, followed by the CAE IPad showcase (2:00-3:00pm).

Christine: I will book the Oak room in BCC from 12:00-2:00 for the workshop and arrange for lunch.

Eileen: The Ipad showcase with Jay and selected faculty members will follow from 2:00-3:00pm in Bannow room 124.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ying Zhang