

## PSC MINUTES – November 21, 2016

Present: Jennifer Neighbors, Denise Despres, Garrett Milam, Amanda Mifflin, Matt Warning, Kris Bartanen, Fred Hamel

1. Minutes from the November 7th meeting were discussed and approved.
2. The PSC Chairperson reported on her November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Committee on Diversity, whose charge to educate students about potential bias in student evaluations of faculty complements the PSC charge to review the faculty teaching evaluation form in view of bias:

The PSC has been given the following charge: Recommend to the Senate specific, concrete changes to the evaluation process to mitigate well-documented bias in student evaluations during the evaluation process.

The Committee on Diversity has been given the following charge: Develop and implement a strategy to educate students about bias in course evaluations.

The PSC Chair discussed with the Committee on Diversity several potential avenues to lessen bias, including: providing students with supplemental information on bias prior to faculty evaluations; teaching faculty to discern patterns in and properly weigh student evaluations; educating faculty to read evaluations informed by current scholarship on evaluation bias. The Diversity committee seemed most drawn to the idea of gathering educational information on bias into a packet for faculty use. The Committee on Diversity, in discussions of evaluations, also noted that lack of advanced warning about evaluations in some departments has been an issue of concern for some students. The PSC chair noted that the PSC was concerned about that as well.

PSC Response: The PSC agreed to share information on evaluation bias with the Diversity Committee. Matt Warning has begun collecting links and data and will make these resources available on a Sound Net site. Per a suggestions from the Committee on Diversity, the PSC will look to the KNOW committee repository and most recent campus climate survey for additional useful materials. The PSC might produce abstracts or an annotated guide to this material next term.

The PSC discussed ethical problems with faculty educating students in evaluation bias, specifically a conflict of interest. Committee members agreed that this task should fall to the Academic Dean. Timing of education also presents a problem as first-year Orientation is already congested. Students might receive a written document explaining how evaluations are used so that they understand that their input matters. However, any preparatory statement has the potential to oversimplify the evaluation process. The Student portal might be a place to post this document, particularly before the tenth week of term when course evaluations can be scheduled. A drawback with this means of educating students is the lack of means to encourage or require a reading of the document. One PSC member suggested that if evaluations were electronic, then a

bias statement/reminder from the Academic Dean might usefully be inserted at the beginning of the electronic evaluation process – i.e. as a prelude to filling out the actual form.

3. The PSC representative on the University Ad Hoc Committee for Sexual Misconduct updated the PSC on the work of updating the Faculty Code Interpretations to make them current with the Sexual Misconduct Policy. The PSC discussed Interpretations to Chapter 6 of the Faculty Code, specifically the need to change the term “harassment” to the more encompassing term “misconduct.” The PSC also discussed the difference between a “faculty originated complaint” and a “University originated complaint.”

The Ad Hoc committee will submit its revisions of the Interpretations to the University legal department for consideration; only then will the revisions come before the PSC for consideration before being passed on the Faculty Senate.

4. The PSC returned to last meeting’s subject of revised evaluation forms for team-taught courses. The committee has discussed the creation of a specific evaluation form for these courses, as well as reorganization of the form currently in use and the addition of a section on team taught courses. The PSC debated the value of soliciting information about both instructors for every team taught course; the possibility of identifying three to five characteristics of effective team teaching for students on forms; the complexity for students of evaluating complementary team teaching styles; the ways forms might garner accurate information on the division of responsibilities, grading, and student observation in team taught courses.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Despres