

Salameh (Chair, Slavic & Eastern Languages and Literatures)

The agenda of the March 14 meeting was course evaluations.

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### Course Evaluations

There was a brief recap of the previous meeting with student representatives of UGBC. We have found so far that course evaluations are used for three purposes with different levels of success:

- for the individual instructor, to improve teaching;
- for chairs and committees, to aid in tenure and promotion decisions;
- for students, to find information about courses (readings, assignments, content, lecture vs. seminar, cost of materials, field trips, etc.), and learning outcomes.

The guest attendees were asked what they thought of course evaluations, what they use them for, and how they might be improved.

The consensus was that course evaluations have been useful in tenure and promotion decisions in getting a broad view of an instructor's teaching profile. But departments have also had anxious conversations about the way in which they do and do not measure well. The Chronicle of Higher Education has had several articles on biases that come into evaluations (i.e., women and minorities are evaluated differently), especially in the two questions that are most used for promotion (Questions 7--how would you rate this course overall; Questions 14--how would you rate this instructor overall).

at them in relation to each other, e.g., whether a junior faculty member improves over time, from year one to three to five, etc. Questions 7 and 14 are most carefully reviewed, with #14 having the most weight. There is a lack of clarity when students respond to Question 7. Are they saying that they don't like the course itself (i.e., the course as a core requirement) or ho

Departments also put a lot of weight on Question 13 (intellectual challenge).

The Carroll School uses the evaluations extensively and consistently across all seven departments. In addition to tenure and promotion, they are utilized for development and diagnostic reasons. Every faculty member is assessed and meetings to discuss their teaching are set up to evaluate the instructor, the course, course workload, and intellectual challenge. But even looking at those areas, the evaluations don't give good diagnostic information for the sake of helping faculty improve teaching. Students

than only those who love or loathe the course?

Should departments be able to add questions specific to their needs? Can course evaluations help with learning assessments and outcomes? Should the UCT be communicating and collaborating with the University Committee on Learning Outcomes?

Are junior faculty pressured into giving higher grades to get better course evaluations for tenure?

### Questions to Consider

Should the UCT recommend a completely new course evaluation or modify the existing questions? The Carroll School's recommendation is to start over: there are many questions that are now better designed that were not available when the BC form was first devised (also, the questions were designed to be completed in class, not online). What is the best delivery system? Should evaluations, or at least a brief version, be done in mid semester?

Should BC subscribe to a service such as IDEA?

<http://www.ideaedu.org/Services/Services-to-Improve-Teaching-and-Learning/Student-Ratings-of-Instruction>

### TAM Update

Eighteen TAM applications requesting \$190,660 have been received, and applications are being reviewed. The total to be awarded is \$62,000.

### ATAB Request

The ATAB committee requested that the UCT website be updated to include committee membership, mission, grants supported by the UCT, and any other relevant information, as well as meeting minutes. The UCT will discuss this request at its next meeting.

### The Teaching Retreat Update

23 faculty members were invited. 21 have committed. 2 are in the process of confirming. 2 have not yet responded.

Rebekah Levine Cole (LSOE)

May 2, 12:00-1:15, CTE. Our guest is Kelli Armstrong, VP for Planning & Assessment

TAM recipient lunch: May 9 at noon in Waul House Presentation Room