

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: February 9, 2006

PRESENT:	Agnes Samples	Lorrie Steerey (<i>via phone</i>)
	Sandie Rietz	Audrey ConnerRosberg
	Keith Edgerton	Randall Gloege
	Craig McKenzie	Matt Redinger
	Lewis Rife (student)	Dan Hansen (student)

ABSENT:	Mark Hardt – <i>excused</i>	Paul Bauer – <i>excused</i>
	Ben Marschke – <i>excused</i>	Bruce Brumley – <i>excused</i>
	Noreen Lee – <i>excused</i>	
	David Garloff (ex-officio)	Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)
	Mary Susan Fishbaugh (ex-officio)	Mary McNally (ex-officio)
	Kirk Lacy (ex-officio)	John Cech (ex-officio)
	George White (ex-officio)	Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)
	Curt Kochner (ex-officio)	

GUEST: Brent Roberts

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:48 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

The minutes of February 2 were accepted as presented.

I. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Item 55 Emeritus nomination of Dr. George Madden, Professor, Department of Educational Theory and Practice, College of Education. For information.

⇒ Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Sandie Rietz to **accept Item 55**.

⇒ Motion carried.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Academic Senate Initiative: Student Evaluations of Faculty

It was stated that periodically the student evaluations are brought up, but nothing has really been done about them.

In the subcommittee formed a couple years ago, there was a debate about whether the student evaluations are market surveys with no bearing or if they do have some bearing on quality. Some ways to make the evaluation better would be to reduce the number of questions on it and do not prompt answers. Let students answer in their own words.

It was cited that years ago, the results of the student evaluations were not too important in a faculty evaluation, but now they can be used to fire or deny tenure. That is a big transition.

It was noted that the COT faculty have tried to revise their student evaluation (which is very similar to the main campus evaluation) 4 times in the last 12 years, and have not come up with anything. They are still using the same old survey.

It was observed that the current evaluation gathers too varied data to nail anything down, and may falsely represent an instructor as good when she or he is just popular with students. A more straightforward evaluation would come from faculty reviewing each other.

It was noted that the evaluation does reflect professional elements of teaching, but the form is so rigid that the resulting data is inconclusive. Perhaps a solution is to have instructors or departments choose from a list of questions, allowing them to customize the evaluation to be appropriate for each course. It was stated that the current evaluation is basically a popularity contest and it can easily be abused by administration. It was noted that faculty can also cherry-pick which question results they include in their evaluation materials. It raises the question of what the faculty member may be trying to hide. A customized evaluation would possibly eliminate much of the cherry-picking.

It was noted that the comment section of the evaluation is also misleading. One angry student can make five different comments, and the faculty and administration don't know if that is one or five students.

It was cited that the Senate can only recommend, and then the Faculty Association must take the issues to the FACC, where we will have to compromise with the administration. The administration may not want to lose their neat, easy-to-use numerical data.

It was noted that some instructors are giving their own, separate evaluations to students. These evaluations are often much simpler, asking only three things: what did you like, what didn't you like, and what would you change about this course? The results of such

surveys are much more helpful to the faculty. It was noted that this approach could be used for all courses.

The question was raised as to whether the students should be required to sign their evaluation. It would treat them as responsible adults instead of children. It was noted that most students would probably fear retribution for negative comments and thus comment dishonestly or not at all.

It was suggested that the Senate ask for all the second surveys that instructors are using. Perhaps they could be a basis for a new evaluation.

Keith Edgerton stated that he would send out a message to the faculty, administration, and students that the current student evaluation is useless and ask for ideas on a revised evaluation.

B. Term Limits on Senate Standing Committees

It was explained that there are two- or three-year terms on the standing committees, but many faculty members have served multiple terms on the same committee. It was noted that it really is a problem trying to get anyone to serve on committees. It was cited that after a three-year term is completed, that opening is announced and if no one else is interested, the same faculty member can be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

rjrm