

Student Faculty Policy Committee Year-End Report for AC Year 2009-2010

Members: Roxanne Doty (Chair)
Richard Bauer
Tannah Broman
Lupe Cardenas
Cristi Coursen
Holly Huffman
Leslie Pardo
Michael Pearson
Eugene Schneller
Deiter Schroder
Ann Sebren
Brecka Estes
Brendan O'Kelly (student member)
Justin Boren (student member)
David Hurst (student member)

Meetings Held Face to Face: 2 (11/09/09 and 4/12/10)

Issues Addressed this Academic Year:

- I. According to information from our student representative the ASU textbook rental program has come to a standstill because the Bookstore determined that the rates they would charge under a rental agreement would be higher than what a student could get by selling the book back at the end of the year.
2. The Senate passed a resolution encouraging all departments and schools not to engage in unlimited rationing of items such as access to copying machines, paper, etc. for teaching assistants, lecturers or any other faculty so as not to interfere with teaching responsibilities.
3. At our first meeting, 11/09/09, student representative, David Hurst, presented proposals regarding (1) a teacher profile and (2) the creation of a task force for the following purpose; "The primary operations of the task force will be to collaborate with department chairs to create common assessments based on the minimum course competencies prescribed for the specific courses, or any other measure deemed sufficient enough to verify instructional consistencies. The task force will then be responsible for selecting, at random, students from various sections and administering the assessment in a neutral testing area. Depending on the level of cooperation, the assessment may be offered as a substitute for the students' final examination. The variance in student response will be used as an indicator for instructional consistencies." After much discussion the committee advised David that he would need to provide evidence that teaching standards were not being met and would need to identify specific courses where a common assessment would be advisable as well as evidence that teaching profiles were not available.

4. At the April 12, 2010 meeting, the entire meeting consisted in discussing 2 proposals submitted by student representative, David Hurst: (1) Instructor Profile Proposal and (2) Common Assessment Proposal. The two proposals are posted on the SFPC blackboard site and are also part of this report. The committee determined that there were numerous problems with both of these proposals that precluded them going forward to the full Senate. The problems are outlined below:

1. Instructor Profile Proposal

- The major problem with this proposal is that most of the information requested is already available on department websites and with a little searching on the web students can obtain the information they want. Evidence was not presented to support the notion that students cannot find information on faculty.
- Information on teaching philosophy can best be determined from prior syllabi which is generally made available upon request.
- Requiring faculty to take and post a personality test such as a Myers-Briggs would be highly objectionable and likely not legal.
- It is not at all clear that it is in the best interests of the students in terms of learning and preparation for graduate educations or careers in the workforce to only search for faculty with whom they are "comfortable." This does not prepare students for jobs or life. Once out of college they do not get to pick their bosses, co-workers, etc. It can be a valuable experience to learn to work with and learn from others that one may not always be comfortable with.

2. Common Assessment. Numerous strong objections were made to this proposal.

- Common finals would seriously violate academic freedom.
- Course evaluation tools are already in place and no evidence was presented that these were not effective.
- No evidence was presented that students taking a higher level class had not been prepared adequately by the lower level prerequisite to which this proposal would apply.
- The committee considered the requirement that having a committee not involved in teaching a course compile a final exam was not sound pedagogically.
- Students themselves would likely raise strong and justifiable objections to being required to take a final exam crafted by someone not involved in the class.
- There may be good pedagogical reasons for teaching the same course in different ways, especially in the social sciences.