

University Advisory Council on Teaching Meeting
December 5, 2002 4:00 p.m.

In attendance: Maryam Alavi, Arri Eisen, Carol Hogue, Kim Loudermilk, Walt Lowe, Michael Lubin, Bob McCauley, Helen O'Shea, Alan Otsuki, Gary Smith, Darrell Stokes, Kirsten Rambo. Guest: Allan Cattier, ITD.

1. Guest Speaker, Allan Cattier, on campus-wide technology resources. Gary explained the problems that UACT has been having recently in attempting to secure computer support for some of our events. Alan, who is one of the directors of ITD, explained that ITD is paid to support college classrooms only. Alan believes that George Nikas, upon whom UACT has often relied in the past, is a freelancer who works university-wide. Alan further explained that the Academic Technology Group consists of three units: Faculty Support Services, Classroom Technologies, and Academic Communications. He believes strongly that the University should be employing more coordinated technological efforts campus-wide, for both cost-saving as well as pedagogical reasons. Unfortunately, while his job is to see that services get offered campus-wide, individual schools often view him as infringing on their autonomy when he suggests or tries to implement more coordinated approaches. He has submitted a proposal to the administration detailing numerous areas for potential centralization and improvement of services, but has not yet received a response about it. He has pledged to work with UACT to make sure that all of our events are fully supported, and he is interested in maintaining conversation with UACT going forward about the more ongoing issue of centralization and coordination of media and technology services.

2. Update on POD conference. Kim and Kirsten related their experiences at the POD conference here in Atlanta. Overall, their experience was extremely positive. Kirsten noted that she had gone to several valuable sessions, including a workshop on event planning and a session on evaluation that seemed especially timely for UACT. Kim also went to several sessions on faculty development that were very worthwhile, and she noted how helpful the conference was for putting our experience at Emory in the context of other universities, because there was such a diverse range of universities represented at the POD conferences, from small liberal arts colleges to some of our peer institutions. Both Kim and Kirsten agreed that one of the most valuable lessons learned from the conferences had to do with interconnectedness. Given the budget constraints afflicting so many colleges and universities in recent days, several folks spoke about how the way in which they were able to maintain their programs (and safeguard them from budget cuts) was by making sure they were interconnected with other groups and services on campus, such as ITD. By forming larger umbrella groups devoted to faculty development (rather than totally separate groups for computer support, teaching, research support, etc.), they made sure that their work was seen as indispensable. This worked for several institutions that reported at the conference. Also, Kim and Kirsten noted that the keynote speech by Beverly Daniel Tatum, the new President of Spelman College, was excellent, and that UACT may want to consider her as a speaker for next year.

3. Update on recent events. Arri, Carol, and Michael all led roundtable discussions at the recent Teaching Portfolio workshop that UACT co-sponsored with Passages. The event was highly successful, and both participants and roundtable leaders felt it was a valuable experience. Bob and Kim both reported on the Craig Nelson visit. Overall, both his lecture and workshop received rave reviews from participants, who were enthusiastic in their evaluations of the events. At the same time, both Bob and Kim noted that some of his critical thinking workshop (particularly the morning session) seemed to be geared toward an audience who had not previously considered this issue in depth, and thus some folks from the humanities might have been too advanced for it. The committee agreed we should try in the future to elicit information from speakers that will help us to target specific audiences in specific ways.

4. Subcommittee reports:

Master Teacher – This committee distributed a draft of their most recent formulations, based on their conversations with Harvey Brightman. They asked the group to be thinking about possible names of faculty who might be willing to co-lead the sessions with Harvey. In addition, the group agreed that while these co-facilitators should be financially compensated, the thirty or so “students” who participate in the program should not. Finally, this subcommittee noted that if any UACT members wish to participate in the program as either “students” or co-facilitators, they are most welcome.

Programming – Not present; no report.

Evaluation – Carol had a correction to the previous month’s minutes, which should state that the Evaluation subcommittee had agreed to conduct a focused and a university-wide survey, and also that the next step for this committee was for Daniel to provide them with a budget for this project. The minutes will be amended to reflect this. Gary also noted that we will incorporate approval of the minutes into future meetings.

Promotion and Tenure – This group is continuing to investigate tenure & promotion policies and have noted some important discrepancies across schools in several areas (for example, who serves on the promotion committees and how they are chosen to do so). Their work is still in the investigative phase.

Remember: No meeting in January. Next meeting February 6, 2003.

Happy Holidays!

Submitted by Kirsten Rambo.