

Minutes of Notre Dame Faculty Senate Meeting  
April 5, 2016  
DeBartolo Room 141

Attended: Rebecca Blais, Mark Caprio, Dominic Chaloner, Christopher Chowrimootoo, Xavier Creary, Meredith Doellman, Mary Frandsen, David Galvin, John Gaski, Nasir Ghiaseddin, Michael Hemler, Michael Kirsch, Howard Lanser, Byung-Joo Lee, Hai Lin, Adam Martin, Mary Ann McDowell, Paul McDowell, Paul McGinn, Walter Nicgorski, Chris Pratt, Joe Urbany, Sandra Vera-Muñoz, Nidia Ruelas, Christopher Shields, Anna Simon, Cheri Smith, Marsha Stevenson, Aaron Striegel, Meng Wang, Hannelore Weber, Richard Williams, Shauna Williams, Xiaoshan Yang, Guangjian Zhang

Excused: Matthew Capdevielle, Matthew Devine, Hildegund Müller, Natalie Porter, Jeanne Romero-Severson, Joshua Shrout, David Thomas, Sophie White, Samir Younes

Called to order at 6:00 pm

1. Opening prayer offered by Rich Williams, Vice-Chair
2. The minutes of the March 1, 2016 meeting were approved
3. Chair's remarks ( from Jeanne Romero-Severson, read by Rich Williams)
  - a. CIF committee update : The results of the survey are in and the comments were not as negative as anticipated. The preliminary impression is that ~30% of the faculty have no use at all for CIFs for two reasons: they do not measure learning and they are misused by administrators. The rest of the opinions may be classified as "meh" or "sometimes useful".
  - b. Circumstances under which SPF can be the faculty senate representative for his/her department –this will be left as a topic for next year. For SPF's to be a department's faculty senator, or for more at-large SPF senators the bylaws will have to be changed by the Academic Council.
  - c. Webpage update; Mary Ann McDowell presented new changes to the webpage. She also repeated her earlier request for any items people would like to see added to make the site more useful.
4. Chuck Hurley (registrar) - provided an update on Federal Regulations. Most of them concern financial aid. For example, faculty members should update their Dean's office and the registrar if a student is not showing up for class. The University has to keep federal agencies updated on class withdrawals as this impacts student loan pay back. In this regard, the university also has to report students' pace towards graduation (150% rule – student may not receive

Direct Subsidized Loans for more than 150 percent of the published length of their enrolled program). Federal agencies continue to ask for more data. For example, has a student taken a class more than two times? The government will only pay for two times. All data is reported to the National Student Clearinghouse. It is important that faculty check the enrollment in their class to be sure all students are on the list, and to make sure students have officially dropped a class.

5. Prof. Robert F. Easley (Management Dept.) – reviewed the request submitted to their Dean to split the management department into two departments. The rationale is to make it easier to manage a large (30 tenure track; 20 SPF) department that covers a wide range of topics. By all accounts this is supported by all the tenure track and SPF faculty. He answered questions from the audience. The undergraduate majors in the program now will be unaffected. At the close of his presentation the Senate unanimously approved an expression of support for this split.
6. Old business – John Gaski presented a resolution on CIF's. After much discussion and wordsmithing a resolution (attached) was passed with 30 voting in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstentions.
7. Committee Reports – committee meetings were not held due to time constraints. Instead there was discussion concerning the Academic Affairs resolution on internationalization. Gretchen Reydam-Schils presented a document being discussed by the Academic Affairs committee. It was noted that there has been non-use of the University Committee on Internationalization in evaluating the global gateways. An animated discussion between Prof. Reydam-Schils and Prof. Christopher Shields followed. The Academic Affairs committee will try to produce a refined version of their document for review by the full senate at the next meeting.
8. New Business –
  - a. Mary Ann McDowell asked senators to please think about whether we should continue to have a president's dinner.
  - b. Elections Nominating Committee – a nominating committee was formed from volunteers. Marsha Stevenson will chair the committee. Other members include Nasir Ghiaseddin, John Gaski, Paul McGinn, and Nidia Ruelas.
9. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

The Next Regular Meeting will be at 6:00 pm, Tuesday, May 3, 2016 ; 136 DBRT

Respectfully submitted,

Paul McGinn  
Professor of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering  
Co-Secretary

Motion approved by the ND Faculty Senate 30-1 on April 5, 2016

The Course/Instructor Feedback (CIF) instrument the University has created appears to be mainstream by student evaluation measurement standards. The problem is that those industry norms, represented by the entire history of validation of such instruments as reported in the Educational Psychology literature, are weak.

The presumed validity evidence developed by the Notre Dame Advisory Committee to the Provost on Evaluation of Teaching in its 2007 creation of the present CIF instrument is primarily reliability evidence, which is insufficient for a conclusion of construct validity. So, across higher education as well as within Notre Dame, it should be recognized that the true validity of conventional student evaluation measures of teaching is unknown at best.

For any university to treat student ratings such as the CIF as embodying stronger evidence than merited intrinsically is dangerously simplistic. Moreover, the University's non-nuanced use of the CIF results may create other specific dysfunctional consequences, such as a stifling effect on pedagogic innovation. Junior faculty, in particular, may be reluctant to experiment with teaching innovations or new ideas for fear of jeopardizing high-stakes semester evaluations.

The present CIF instrument and its use may have contributed positively in some ways to our educational environment. Yet in view of the methodological questionability of extant student evaluation technology, we urge the University to be more cautious in applying such an approach to professional assessment decisions, to avoid unjustified career-damaging outcomes. For instance, better adherence to the University's own stated emphasis on a portfolio approach in promotion decisions, instead of rigid over-interpretation of inherently *ordinal* data, would seem to serve this just aim.

Accordingly, we support the efforts of the University Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching to improve the state of measurement practice for faculty evaluation purposes.