Teaching and Advising Committee
Minutes
7 February 2018

Phinney 102 Conference Room
Present: Stephan Flores (Chair), Allan Caplan, Erin Chapman, Helen Joyner, Matt Doumit, Sara Mahuron, Dean Panttaja, Brian Smentkowski, and Joana Espinoza

Stephan called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m.

The Minutes of the meeting of December 4, 2017 had been distributed, with hard copies available at the start of the meeting, but Stephan forgot to ask for a formal motion for review and approval of those Minutes.

Members present who had participated on the sub-committee evaluations of candidates for the Advising Awards, for the Hoffman Award, and for the Teaching Excellence Awards, shared their recommendations for recipients of these awards, as follows, with expressions from several folks that frequently rankings were very close, so that sub-committees were faced with needing to make fine distinctions to reach consensus about the finalists:

Staff Advising Award: Lisa Hill
Faculty Advising Award: Amin Ahmadzadeh

Hoffman Award: Dilshani Sarathchandra
Note: for this award, the university’s legal office also asks for the name of a first-runner up —this is Dan Hickman, who was the sub-committee’s candidate ranked second for the Hoffman.

Teaching Excellence Awards, including identifying the individual ranked #1 for first place, followed by two more candidates for the remaining two awards:
1. Frank Wilhelm
also (in alphabetical order), Denise Bennett and Karen Thompson.

As chair of TeAC, Stephan also had done a bit of ‘pinch-hitting’ to provide the Advising sub-committee with his rankings for the Staff and Faculty awards, which were the same as the sub-committee’s rankings, and he concurred in addition, with the Hoffman sub-committee’s ranking of Sarathchandra as first, followed by Hickman in second place.

Note: information on the identities of all awards recipients remains confidential for now.

Discussion followed, with committee members sharing their process and deliberations, and with substantial conversation ensuing about a range of possibilities for taking another look at what information candidates are asked to provide and how well the letter as well as the evaluation rating sheet/rubric that they receive works effectively and clearly to prompt nominees to address and to include in specific terms, the information and perspectives most useful for the evaluation of their ‘application packets.’

Suggestions included looking for/wanting—at times—clearer evidence for claims about good teaching and growth or improvement of teaching in relation to desired goals and outcomes, sufficient context for understanding the candidate’s teaching and pedagogical intentions, a clear presentation or fit or prompt for matching the rating sheet criteria to what candidates express and provide, and also observations about wishing that so many excellent practices and ideas could be ‘captured’ for wider sharing and consideration for strengthening teaching and the teaching environment at the University of Idaho. Also, as occurred to some degree last year, the committee is open to providing feedback to candidates who were not selected for awards,
particularly to encourage anyone who was a runner-up to apply again, if possible. We agreed that TeAC will return to these issues in future meetings.

TeAC’s next meeting is Wednesday February 28, 11:30am, room TBD but likely again in Phinney 102.

Prior to that meeting, Stephan will share his working draft compilation of research on Plus/Minus grading, including summary-review references to documents and studies already shared with the committee in emails for the December 4th meeting.

Stephan also stated that Faculty Senate has forwarded a request for TeAC to explore research on any statistically significant differentials in the ways that students respond on evaluations of faculty teaching, that may indicate bias where female faculty members may be evaluated unfairly relative to male faculty members. He will forward this request to TeAC, and already Brian has expressed that he is familiar with some of the research on this question.

The meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Stephan Flores.