Teaching and Advising Committee
Minutes
25 September 2017

Phinney 102 Conference Room
Present: Stephan Flores (Chair), Cynthia Castro, Erin Chapman, Christine Slater, Karen Launchbaugh, Brian Smentkowski
Stephan called the meeting to order at 11:33 p.m.

Following continued self-introductions, the Minutes of the meeting of September 18 were approved, with abstentions from those who were not able to attend that meeting.

The first topic for continued discussion was about the Starfish advising and retention system, and the process for its implementation/rollout.

-Brian shared his familiarity with the use of such systems at other institutions, including its importance for retention, and the importance of frank feedback from academic advisers about the system’s configuration, with anticipated advantages as well as any reluctance to adopt/use such a system.

-Cynthia explained UI’s aim to improve retention rates (especially first to second year) and graduation rates, through strengthening early advising intervention and other proactive strategies. The schedule for rollout is as soon as this Spring 2018 for basic implementation, with analytics and additional configurations in place for Fall 2018. Starfish is a product of the “Hobsons” company—the Hobsons Team will offer a demo to the UI community scheduled for October 19, 3:30pm-5pm in the Borah Theater. An onsite visit by Hobsons is scheduled for October 25-27, to include visiting with up to 15 academic advisers (including faculty). Cynthia is conferring with Cher Hendricks and Jeanne Stevenson about the composition of faculty to be invited to meet with the Hobsons Team.

-Discussion included the importance of ensuring that faculty who are active advisers meet with the Hobsons Team. The UI’s core implementation group for Starfish includes some representation of faculty. Other discussion distinguished between UI’s Degree Works and Degree Audit, and continued to look ahead to what degree the Starfish system can be adapted to interface with our data systems.

Discussion turned to review of the Rating Sheets for the annual awards for Teaching Excellence, the Hoffman Award, and Advising Award rating sheet. Stephan had taken the lead to revise the rating sheet last year for the Teaching Excellence Award, and he sent the committee drafts of further revisions (including tightening some of the prose language of the criteria for the Teaching Excellence and the Hoffman awards), and additional revisions intended for all three ratings sheets.

After discussion, the committee agreed with the rationale to shift to ratings sheets that provide for a preliminary tracking of points assigned for criteria and also wording that indicates the committee is not guided by points alone, “because perspectives differ about how to weight/evaluate each of the ten criteria, the committee—in their discussion—may determine finalists in a holistic manner rather than according to strict point totals.”

Karen and others shared their experience on how committees work to reach consensus, the process, final decisions about recipients of these awards, and the feedback that committees may offer to those who may wish to apply again if nominated again.

The revised ratings sheets were approved in two motions, with the Teaching Excellence Award ratings sheet approved first M/S Karen/Erin, followed by a motion M/S Karen/Erin to amend the rating sheets for the Hoffman and for the Advising awards in an identical fashion.

Based on conversation among nominees and committees from last year, Stephan also suggested increasing the page limit on the Supplemental Materials packet for the teaching awards nominees, from a “ten page maximum” to a “fifteen page maximum.” After back and forth discussion over whether to extend the page...
limits and to what extent, including Erin’s views as a recent winner of the Hoffman award, the committee approved a motion M/S Karen/Christine to approve the revision to a “fifteen page maximum.”

With discussion that also wondered whether additional guidance and examples might be provided to nominees on putting together a strong application packet, Stephan suggested that rather than seek immediately to consider whether past winners would be willing to share their application materials with future nominees, that the committee review the application packets from the four winners from last year, to see if we might glean what qualities stand out as strong components, and whether we might then revise the wording of the letters sent to nominees to provide more directed suggestions/guidance. Stephan stated that he would find and send these materials to the committee in advance of our next meeting.

Discussion of the teaching awards also brought up whether the criteria for the Hoffman Award, and presumably its endowment fund, specifies that it go to as yet untenured tenure track faculty. It appears that this is so, but Stephan will check on this. The wording and PR call for nominees for the Teaching Excellence Award also prompted the question of whether this award has any restrictions as to position/status for nominees/applicants (for example, it does not appear to restrict non-tenure track teaching faculty, including clinical faculty and instructors, from being nominated and applying)—Stephan will check on this too.

We didn’t get to discussion of the committee’s functions, including review of Stephan’s initial proposals (handout—see related attached document “TeAC_Proposed_RevisionsToFunctionsStructure.pdf”) for amending functions in view of the recent development and creation of other units on campus that have taken the leading in centralizing Advising, Teaching, and classroom use/technology.

Next meeting:
When: 12:30 p.m. -1:25 p.m. Monday October 9, 2017
Where: Phinney 102

The meeting adjourned at 12:33 p.m.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Stephan Flores.